



Home for the Holidays

The Holiday season is upon us! Most of us like to decorate our homes to increase our sense of celebration during this time of year, but it is important to give some consideration to common safety hazards:

- As you pull light strings out of storage, check for frayed wires and broken bulbs. Make sure lights are approved for outdoor use.
- Don't plug too many light strands into one cord or circuit. Follow manufacturer's recommendations or ask an electrician for advice.
- When stringing outside lights, keep ladders and decorations away from overhead power lines.
- Don't use metal staples or nails as fasteners when attaching lights. These conduct electricity.
- Don't run electric extension cords across driveways, walkways, or other areas where people may trip on them.
- If you choose to have a real tree indoors, use a stand with a built-in water reservoir and make sure to keep it full. Trees can take a LOT of water, especially during the first few days.
- When candles are lit, make sure people are in the room. When you leave or go to sleep, blow them out. Keep all open flames away from combustibles, such as drapes, paper, and walls.



Inside this Issue:

Safety Focus: Safe Winter Driving	2
How to Shovel It...	3
Question of the Month	4

Shared Successes

The following is a sample of some of the things that your fellow SafetyTeam members have been working on in the past month:

- A light at the top of the stairs (not to be confused with the one at the end of the tunnel), in MNP, was found to be out. This caused the entire top of the stairwell to be dark and difficult to navigate. The problem was reported to Facilities Management and corrected soon after.
- Several areas of the Marquam Hill campus were noted to have significant accumulations of leaves built up in pedestrian areas. One SafetyTeam member reported helping a visitor up after having slipped and fallen down. Grounds was notified of the problem areas and prioritized cleanup.

You'll notice that both of this month's safety successes were outside of the departments that the reporting people work for. We LOVE to see that our SafetyTeam members are watching for these kinds of concerns... this shows a commitment to all of OHSU, not just where you work!

Thanks members... be safe!



Safe Winter Driving



Winter in Oregon is a beautiful time of year—with all of the snow and recreational opportunities, it's a very enjoyable season. Yet winter brings inherent dangers that cannot be ignored, like getting caught in a storm or losing control of your vehicle on icy streets. The following tips will help you prepare for and survive the winter season:

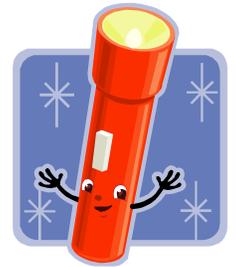
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid running out of gas and prevent any water, from the gas tank, from entering gas lines and freezing.
- If severe weather is threatening, avoid traveling, especially alone. Before traveling in winter, call ahead to your destination and let someone know when you intend to leave, what route you will take, and what your expected arrival time will be.



- Stock your car with basic equipment: an ice scraper and brush, small shovel, jumper cables, a basic toolbox, a bag of sand, tow cable or chain, road flares, and reflectors.
- Assemble a winter survival kit for your car, and keep it in your vehicle at all times. The kit should include: a first aid kit including any essential medication; bottled water and snacks for energy; a large coffee can, candles, and matches to be used for melting snow for additional drinking water; a metal cup; a red bandana and a plastic whistle to alert rescuers to your location; a pencil and paper and change for phone calls; a flashlight with spare batteries; two large plastic garbage bags and safety pins to use as insulation for feet; extra sets of dry clothing and blankets.



- Adjust your speed to safe driving conditions and increase following distances. Remember that bridges and overpasses can be more slippery than other parts of the road. If you begin to skid, remain calm, ease your foot off the gas, and slowly turn your wheels in the direction you want the car to go to correct the skidding.
- If you are stranded, stay calm and stay put—your chances of survival greatly increase if you stay with your vehicle. Run your engine for heat about once an hour (every half hour if extremely cold.) Make sure your exhaust pipe is clear to prevent the back up of carbon monoxide. Leave one window slightly open. Tie a piece of brightly-colored cloth to your antenna to alert others. Limit your sleep to short naps.
- Consider keeping a cellular phone for use during emergencies. For long trips, be sure the batteries are fully charged and bring a spare battery, and keep the phone and batteries warm to avoid quick power drain. Find a safe place to pull over when you need to make a call.



For more information or safety advice, contact 503-494-7795

Thinking about Shoveling?

While shoveling snow can be good exercise, it can also be dangerous for optimistic shovelers who take on more than they can handle. Here are some tips to help you get a handle on safe shoveling:

- If you have a history of heart trouble, do not shovel without a doctor's permission.
- Do not shovel after eating or while smoking.
- Take it slow! Shoveling (like lifting weights) can raise your heart rate and blood pressure dramatically; so pace yourself. Be sure to stretch out and warm up before taking on the task.
- Shovel only fresh snow. Freshly fallen, powdery snow is easier to shovel than the wet, packed down variety.
- Push the snow as you shovel. It's easier on your back than lifting the snow out of the way.
- Don't pick up too much at once. Use a small shovel, or fill only one-fourth or one-half of a large one.
- Lift with your legs bent, not your back. Keep your back straight. By bending and "sitting" into the movement, you'll keep your spine upright and less stressed. Your shoulders, torso and thighs can do the work for you.
- Do not work to the point of exhaustion. If you run out of breath, take a break. If you feel tightness in your chest, stop immediately.
- Dress warmly. Remember that extremities, such as the nose, ears, hands and feet, need extra attention during winter's cold. Wear a turtleneck sweater, cap, scarf, face protection, mittens, wool socks and waterproof boots.



Question of the Month - Answer

Last month's Question of the Month was from the Focus Topic, "Eye and Face Protection."

The question was, **"When should you wear eye protection?"**

1. **You should wear eye protection when blood and body fluid exposure is anticipated.**
2. **You should wear eye protection when exposure to corrosive chemicals is expected. (Ex.:glutaraldehyde (Cidex) or formaldehyde (formalin).)**
3. **You should wear eye protection when exposure to flying debris is expected. Ex.: around grinding wheels and other machinery.)**
4. **In all cases, before working with around eye hazards! Don't wait until you feel something hit your face.**

Thank you to everyone who participated! If you answered correctly, you earned 1 SafetyPoint! Contact Ben Richards at 503 494-2586 for answers to your questions.

Inclement Weather in coming!

Make sure employees are aware of your department's staffing policies, if snow or ice make the commute difficult.



OHSU maintains an information line for employees and patients to get details about road conditions and changes to operations:

503-494-9021



Slow down in Construction Work Zones!

SAFETYNEWS

4

December 2005

Question of the Month

The question of the Month is designed to challenge your safety knowledge and give you a chance to earn some cool, free stuff!

QUESTION OF THE MONTH



What are 3 things you should bring with you during holiday travel?

Write your answer to the question in the appropriate box on your SafetyTeam Member Update form. Correct answers to this month's Question will earn 1 SafetyPoint.

If you are not currently a SafetyTeam member and would like to participate, contact Ben Richards, SafetyTeam Coordinator, at 503 494-7795.

OHSU

OHSU includes four schools; two hospitals; numerous primary care and specialty clinics; multiple research institutes; and several public service and outreach units. OHSU is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution.

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