

Over the Edge

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AVOID COLD WEATHER ILLNESS WASH YOUR HANDS

1. Use warm, running water and a liquid, soap. Antibacterial soaps may be used, but are not required.
2. Wet the hands and apply a small amount of liquid soap to hands.
3. Rub hands together vigorously until a soapy lather appears. Sing Happy Birthday! Be sure to scrub between fingers, under fingernails, and around the tops and palms of the hands.
4. Rinse hands under warm running water. Leave the water running while drying hands.
5. Dry hands with a clean, disposable towel.
6. Turn the faucet off using the towel.

Lessons Learned: Preventing Back Injuries PROPER LIFTING TECHNIQUES

More than one million workers suffer back injuries each year, with back injuries accounting for one out of every five workplace injuries. Four out of five of these injuries were to the lower back, and three out of four occurred while lifting. These injuries could be prevented by incorporating proper lifting techniques into every task.

How to Lift Safely

Before lifting, take a moment to think about what you're about to do. Ask for help if needed, or if possible, divide the load to make it lighter. Know where you are going to set the item down and make sure it and your path are free of obstructions. Then follow these steps.

1. Stand close to the load with your feet spread apart about shoulder width, with one foot slightly in front of the other for balance.
2. Squat down bending at the knees (not your waist). Keep your head and eyes up while keeping your back as vertical as possible.
3. Get a firm grasp of the object before beginning the lift.
4. Begin slowly lifting with your LEGS by straightening them. Never twist your body during this step.
5. Once the lift is complete, keep the object as close to the body as possible.



Back Injury Prevention FAQ's

Q. When carrying a load, is it okay to turn or twist my body as long as I turn with my torso?

- A.** No. You should try to minimize any turning or twisting, but if you must turn while carrying the load, turn using your feet.
- Q. Will wearing a back support belt increase my maximum lifting potential?**
- A.** No. Manufacturers of back support belts do not claim they increase maximum lifting potential.

Lessons Learned: Preventing Slips and Falls



Winter weather brings wet, slippery floors. Slips, trips, and falls continue to be the most reported type of injury in school districts.

A heightened sense of awareness should always be used when walking. SLOW DOWN and keep your hands out of your pockets – you will have better balance! If forced to venture outdoors most folks will innately 'pick up the pace' and do so with their hands in their pockets. **Slow Down!**

Injuries due to slips, trips, and falls are not only the most reported employee injury - they are the most expensive, too. These injuries can cost hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. Think of the ripple effect of the injury. The injured employee loses time from work. This may cause other employees to have to work overtime to cover the injured worker's job duties. This increases the workload on fellow employees, leaving the school shorter staffed than it already was. The increased workload could also have physical, mental and emotional effects on the staff. OSHA reports that nearly half of the workplace injuries are slips, falls, and sprains.



Although it is very difficult to list all foreseeable slip, trip, and fall hazards an employee might face, it is possible to create a shared responsibility of personal safety awareness.

Here are some actions that we, as individuals, can take to protect ourselves, as well as our fellow co-workers:

- Practice good housekeeping.
- If you find water pooled in a foot traffic area, notify someone.
- Notify your supervisor of slip and trip hazards if you cannot correct the condition.
- Use the handrails when going up or down stairs.
- Wear appropriate shoes with non-slip soles.
- Ensure that appropriate signage is used to alert staff of hazards.
- Show up for work mentally and physically prepared.
- Horseplay is never an option at work.
- Pay attention – many injuries from falls are the result of texting and walking. Avoid distractions when you are walking. If you must text, stop walking while tapping those texts!



ARE YOU INVOLVED IN SAFETY?

Safety doesn't just happen. It has to be thought about and planned into the job task. Think about your safety and the safety of your coworkers in every job you perform.

Think safety and act responsibly; your job, or your life, could depend on it.

DRIVING IN SNOW AND ICE

The best advice for driving in bad winter weather is not to drive at all, if you can avoid it. If you must drive in snowy conditions, make sure your car is prepared, and that you know how to handle road conditions.

Driving safely on icy roads

- Decrease your speed and allow at least three times more space than usual between you and the car in front of you.
- Brake gently to avoid skidding. If your wheels start to lock up, ease off the brake.
- Turn on lights to increase visibility to other motorists.
- Keep your lights and windshield clean.
- Use low gears to keep traction, especially on hills.
- Don't use cruise control or overdrive on icy roads.
- Be especially careful on bridges and overpasses, which will freeze first.
- Don't assume your vehicle can handle all conditions. Even four-wheel and front-wheel drive vehicles can encounter trouble on winter roads.

If your rear wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the accelerator.
- Steer in the direction you want the front wheels to go. If your rear wheels are sliding left, steer left. If they're sliding right, steer right.
- If your rear wheels start sliding the other way as you recover, ease the steering wheel toward that side. You might have to steer left and right a few times to get your vehicle completely under control.
- If you have standard brakes, pump them gently. If you have anti-lock brakes (ABS), do not pump the brakes. Apply steady pressure to the brakes. You will feel the brakes pulse -- this is normal.

If your front wheels skid...

- Take your foot off the gas and shift to neutral, but don't try to steer immediately.
- As the wheels skid sideways, they will slow the vehicle and traction will return. As it does, steer in the direction you want to go. Then put the transmission in "drive" or release the clutch, and accelerate gently.

If you get stuck...

- Do not spin your wheels. This digs the tires in deeper.
- Turn your wheels from side to side a few times to push snow out of the way.
- Use a light touch on the gas, to ease your car out.
- Use a shovel to clear snow away from the wheels and the underside of the car.
- Pour sand, kitty litter, gravel, or salt in the path of the wheels, to help get traction.
- Try rocking the vehicle. Shift from forward to reverse, and back again. Each time you're in gear, give a light touch on the gas until the vehicle gets going.

DRIVING IN FOG

Fog can be thought of as a cloud at ground level and forms when the temperature drops to the dew point-invisible water vapor in the air condenses to form suspended water droplets. Fog can reduce visibility to 1/4 mile or less, creating hazardous driving conditions. If you can't postpone your



trip until dense fog lifts-usually by late morning or the afternoon-follow these tips:

- Drive with lights on low beam. High beams will only be reflected back off the fog and actually impair visibility.
- Reduce your speed-and watch your speedometer. Fog creates a visual illusion of slow motion when you may actually be speeding.
- Listen for traffic you cannot see. Open your window a little in order to hear better.
- Use wipers and defrosters as necessary for maximum visibility.
- Use the right edge of the road or painted road markings as a guide.
- Be patient. Do not pass lines of traffic.
- Do not stop on a freeway or heavily traveled road. If your car stalls or becomes disabled, turn your vehicle's lights off, and take your foot off of the brake pedal. People tend to follow tail lights when driving in fog. Move away from the vehicle to avoid injury.

Winter Holiday Safety

The winter holidays are a time for celebration, and that means more decorating, entertaining, and an increased risk of fire due to heating equipment.



- Each year, during the holidays, there are thousands of house fires and hundreds of injuries. This results in over \$20 million in direct property damage.
- Each year, 15,600 home structure fires started by candles are reported to local fire departments. These fires result in an estimated 150 deaths, 1,270 injuries and an estimated direct property loss of \$539 million.
- December is the peak time of year for home candle fires. In December, 13% of home candle fires began with decorations compared to 4% the rest of the year.
- Three in ten reported home fires start in the kitchen - more than any other place in the home.

Holiday Decorating in the Classroom

- Choose holiday decorations made with flame-resistant, flame-retardant or non-combustible materials.

Candles are not allowed in classrooms.

- Purchase only lights and electrical decorations bearing the name of an independent testing lab.
- Carefully inspect new and previously used light strings and replace damaged items before plugging in lights
- Do not overload extension cords.
- Check your strands of lights to determine the number of strands that may be connected.
- Always unplug lights before replacing light bulbs or fuses.
- Don't mount lights in any way that can damage the cord's wire insulation (i.e., using clips, not nails).
- Turn off all light strings and decorations before leaving the classroom at the end of the day.