SEASONS GREETING FROM FOCUS ON RISKS

The staff at Focus On Risks would like to wish all our clients a safe, fun and wonderful Festive Season at work and home. Please remember the best gift you can give your family is YOU!

FESTIVE SEASON SAFETY TIPS

The festive season is here. Christmas parties and festivities build team moral and provide staff with the opportunity to celebrate their achievements. Whilst the Focus On Risks team love to party (all invitations will be gratefully received), we are also very conscious of the fact that accidents, and employer duty of care obligations, do no take time off during the festive season.

To help you make this a safe and happy holiday season, we have developed a list of safety tips. Remember, safety is achievable with a few simple steps, you can have great celebrations without any painful mishaps.

Planning

When planning festive season celebrations:

⇒ Undertake a risk assessment to identify foreseeable hazards and their consequences.
⇒ Ensure the venue is as safe as possible. If at home, check safety pool fences etc.
⇒ Involve your safety representative in an inspection of the venue before the event.
⇒ Implement strategies to manage foreseeable risks.
⇒ Ensure that all relevant safety information, including the ground rules for behaviour, is communicated to employees and relevant parties prior to any function.
⇒ Make it clear to employees that the employer’s responsibility ceases at the end of the function and if staff choose to continue the evening, they will be responsible for their own safety.
⇒ Maintain supervision of behaviour during the event.
⇒ Review your workplace policies (e.g. Drug and Alcohol and Harassment Policies) and remind employees of their obligations.
⇒ If young children will be present check chemical storage areas are locked and what other hazards could cause harm.
⇒ Allocate a responsible person to look after the children on a rotational basis.
⇒ Set a positive example by drinking responsibly.
⇒ Encourage your team and loved ones to space their drinks by following the ‘one for one’ plan i.e. one standard drink per hour.
⇒ Provide food, water and non-alcoholic drinks as well.
⇒ Do not force drinks on anyone. If they say ‘No’, don’t insist.
⇒ Ensure underage staff and loved ones are not served alcohol.
⇒ Advise waiters or others on limiting or denying alcohol to any person who is intoxicated.
⇒ Close the bar at least one hour before the end of the party. Offer coffee, tea or soft drink as the ‘one for the road’.
⇒ Use paper cups to avoid injuries from broken glass.
⇒ Encourage everyone to plan how they will get home safely.
⇒ Nominate ‘non-drinking’ drivers.
⇒ Do not let anyone drive away from celebrations under the influence of alcohol.
⇒ Choose a safe venue with access to public transport.
⇒ Provide cab vouchers or car pool.
⇒ Remind employees of your company’s safe driving policy and to be aware of the unexpected.

⇒ Make sure Christmas tree lights meet safety standards.
⇒ Add your Christmas lights and CD Player etc to the electrical testing and tagging procedures list if not recently purchased.
⇒ Check cords and plugs for wear, frayed insulation, cracks, and loose connections, especially if they have been packed away since last year.
⇒ Read all labels and warning instructions before use.
⇒ Only use lights in the approved manner e.g. outdoor lights for use outdoors.
⇒ Check that tree lights are turned off when you leave the office and your home.
⇒ Make sure circuits are not overloaded.
⇒ Place cords away from traffic areas and heat sources, not under rugs.
⇒ Check the lights before placing them on the tree.
⇒ Hang tinsel or garlands well away from lights, air vents and heat sources including computers.
⇒ Never use a regular string of lights on metal trees. The danger of shock is great.
⇒ Keep drinks well away from electrical equipment.
Trips, Slips & Falls

To reduce the chance of sustaining a serious injury:

- Clean up spills as soon as they occur. Use wet area signs if needed.
- Use a ladder, not stools or swivel chairs, for those out-of-reach decorating jobs.
- Remove tripping hazards on floors or stairs.
- Make sure that the Christmas tree is secure, and cannot be knocked over by people passing by.
- Remind staff that office furniture is not generally designed to be sturdy enough for dancing or standing on etc.

Security

Making sure your valuables, loved ones and colleagues are safe and secure:

- Ensure that employees know late night and working alone security arrangements.
- Review security arrangements for employees and the building, especially if reduce staff numbers are in place over the festive holiday period.
- Use a buddy system if using car parks at night or catching public transport
- Consider car pooling if late at night.
- If alone in a building, make sure the doors are kept locked.
- Review and place emergency contact details next to the telephone.
- If going on holidays, ensure you home and office is locked and secure.
- Ask a neighbour or loved one to check on your house and collect the mail.
- Make sure pets are cared for and not left alone for long periods, even if they are used for guarding your property.

Emergency Preparedness

Most Emergency Plan consider that most staff are present. However, during the festive season staff numbers are usually reduced:

- Review evacuation and emergency procedures and ensure reduced staff numbers do not impact on your plan.
- Check that employees know where the nearest exits and fire extinguishers are.
- Avoid decorating or blocking emergency exit signs and doorways.
- Review the office smoking policy with employees. The fire brigade will struggle to find their Christmas spirit if they’re called to put out a cigarette.
- Make sure Christmas tree lights are turned off before leaving the building.
- Turn off Electrical Appliances if not required (also will save on electricity bills).

Creating Healthy Workplaces Together

NEXT MONTHS NEWSLETTER

Asbestos Changes and WHS Harmonisation Begins on 1 January 2012—Are you Ready?

If you would like to know more, please contact Focus On Risks for a free one hour consultation on how these changes will affect you”.

Phone: 3847 1695 or 0401 294 123 or email your questions to del.wecker@focusonrisks.com.au

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