Holiday safety toolbox talk

29 CFR 1910.37, 1910.334, 1910.23, 1910.22, 1926.21, 1910.157

Date _____ Trainer _____ Location _____

Opening question

What is most likely to get someone hurt here before the holiday break?

Why it matters

The holidays bring deadlines, short days, cold weather, parties, travel and a lot on everyone's mind. Rushing to finish before the break can lead to skipped steps. Decorations, extra deliveries, cords and ladders show up in places they normally are not. OSHA has no specific standard for holiday safety; the general duty to train still applies.

Key points

1. **Do not rush the last jobs before the break**
   Year-end deadlines can push people to cut corners. Plan the last week so nobody is racing the clock on a ladder, a lift or a forklift. Stress and short sleep make it worse, so look out for each other and speak up when you see someone skipping a step. If a task cannot be done safely before the break, it waits.

2. **Keep decorations away from exits**
   Exit routes must be kept free of explosive or highly flammable furnishings or other decorations. Keep paper decorations and dry trees away from exits, heaters and hot lights. Do not stack boxes, gift deliveries or party tables in hallways and doorways that lead out. Keep fire extinguishers in plain view and easy to reach.
   29 CFR 1910.37(a)(1)

3. **Inspect cords and holiday lights**
   Extension cords must be visually inspected before use on any shift for damaged insulation, crushed jackets, missing pins and loose parts. If a cord or a string of lights is damaged, take it out of service. Do not staple cords or run them through doorways where they get pinched, and keep them out of walkways.
   29 CFR 1910.334(a)(2)(i)

4. **Use a ladder, not a chair**
   Hanging lights and decorations is work at height. Ladders must be inspected before initial use in each work shift. Face the ladder, keep at least one hand on it while climbing, and do not carry boxes that throw off your balance. Never stand on chairs, desks or boxes.
   29 CFR 1910.23(b)(9)

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5 Watch for ice and early darkness

Walking and working surfaces must be kept free of hazards such as spills, snow and ice. Short days mean more work and driving in the dark, so light up work areas and slow down. Wear footwear with good tread, use handrails, and report icy spots right away.

29 CFR 1910.22(a)(3)

6 Get home safe and come back focused

Never drive after drinking, and plan your ride home before any party starts. Travel and late nights add up, so rest before long drives and before your first shift back. On the first day back, walk the site, recheck equipment that sat idle, and go over the plan before work starts.

Scenario

Picture this: It is the last afternoon before the break, and everyone wants to leave early. Two coworkers hang a string of lights over the office door by standing on a rolling chair. They plug it into an old extension cord with tape over a split in the jacket and run the cord across the hallway. A few minutes later, someone carrying a stack of gift boxes comes around the corner. What went wrong here, and what should they have done instead?

Crew discussion

1. What jobs are we tempted to rush before the break, and how do we slow them down?
2. Where do decorations, deliveries or cords end up blocking our exits or walkways?
3. How is everyone getting home after the holiday party?
4. What should we check first when we come back after the break?

Bottom line

Slow down, keep exits and walkways clear, check cords and ladders, get home safe, and come back with your mind on the job.

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Sign-in sheet / Hoja de asistencia

Topic / Tema: Holiday season safety / Seguridad en la temporada navideña

Date / Fecha: _____

Trainer / Instructor: _____ Location / Lugar: _____ Company / Empresa: _____

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