



### Safety at Christmas

Christmas is a special time for celebration and should not end in tragedy because of the extra hazards that are present at this time of year. The contents of this information sheet aim to give advice relevant to the workplace and to the home.

#### **Fire Safety**

There is an increased risk of fire in the home at Christmas time, so it's a good idea to check your smoke alarms are still working. Combustible materials such as wrapping paper, greetings cards and some decorations should be kept away from an ignition source and disposed of appropriately to prevent a fire.

#### *Christmas Lights*

- When buying Christmas lights check for a safety mark or British Standard mark on the packaging.
- Read and follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Use an RCD (residual-current-device) if possible.
- Inspect cables and bulbs for damage before initial use. If these are being used in the workplace then the inspection needs to be recorded on the establishment's inspection and testing register.
- Keep lights clear of decorations and other flammable materials.
- **Don't leave the lights on when you leave the office, go out the house or go to bed; always switch off at the main power supply.**



#### *Decorations*

- Decorations made of light tissue paper or cardboard can burn easily.
- Try not to attach decorations to lights or heaters.
- Don't have decorations immediately above or around a fire place.
- Keep decorations away from candles.

#### *Candles*

- Be careful where you place candles (not under curtains or close to greetings cards).
- Ensure candles are extinguished before leaving the house or going to bed. Candles should not be used within a workplace. If there is a need to use candles then this need must be considered within the risk assessment process and the findings of the risk assessment recorded.
- Try to put candles out at least half an hour before, leaving the house or going to bed and store in a safe place over night.

## Food Safety

When preparing and cooking food in the busy Christmas rush, particularly when entertaining family and friends at home, it can be easy to forget food hygiene.



### *Food Hygiene*

- Ensure kitchen surfaces, chopping boards and utensils are cleaned before preparing food.
- Check 'use by' dates before using any food.
- If packaging has been damaged consider not using the food contents.
- Remember to wash your hands regularly when preparing food, especially when you have been in contact with raw meat.
- Keep raw and cooked food separate at all times.

## Weather

Around Christmas time can be one of the coldest times of the year so it is important to protect yourself and your family. Winter can also present adverse weather conditions as we know.

### *Outdoors*

- Try to keep warm when heading outdoors at all times. Wear layers which will help keep the heat in.
- Sometimes hats scarves and gloves are thought of as too much, but at times may be necessary in the cold weather.
- Take care when walking outside as underfoot conditions can often become slippery due to ice and snow; consider wearing boots or wellingtons when conditions are at their worst.
- Also take care when driving in the winter as roads can become slippery due to heavy rain fall, ice or snow. Beware smaller streets and roads may not be gritted.
- Any journeys planned during the working day should have been considered within a risk assessment process. If weather conditions are poor the need for the journey should be properly evaluated.



## *Family and Friends*

- Take extra care of small children in your family; keep them safe and warm when going to outdoor activities.
- Watch out for the elderly in your family and neighbourhood at this time of year. They can become vulnerable and more susceptible to ill health because of the cold weather.
- Look after one another to ensure you all keep as healthy as possible in the winter and are able to enjoy the festive season.

## **Party Safety**

Around the festive season there is an increase in parties and events to celebrate the time of year which is excellent as long as people keep safe.

There have unfortunately been too many negative stories surrounding festive period parties but a few simple steps will significantly reduce the potential for injury or harm.



## *Heading out*

- Be prepared – ensure you have enough money for your day/night out and enough to get home if you plan on using public transport or a taxi.
- Carry a mobile phone with credit on it if possible.
- If you are drinking alcohol, be careful. There is nothing wrong with having a good time but be aware of what is going on around you.

## *Going home*

- Try to arrange how you are getting home at the start of the night, either a lift, public transport or a taxi. If necessary pre-book a taxi for later on.
- If you are close enough to home to walk then take care. Try to stick to busy, lit areas and not quiet, isolated areas. Also watch for underfoot conditions.
- Be careful with cigarettes in the home after a night out; ensure they are completely out before going to sleep.
- When drinking alcohol on a night out **always** have a way of getting home organised – **never** drink and drive. It takes very little to be over the limit.



**If you would like further information or advice on how you might enjoy the festive season safely within the workplace then please contact Safety & Wellbeing team [healthandsafety@northlan.gov.uk](mailto:healthandsafety@northlan.gov.uk)**

**In relation to home safety matters the following websites can provide more information.**



*Fire Safety –*

<http://www.rospa.com/homesafety/adviceandinformation/christmassafety/default.aspx>  
<http://www.fireservice.co.uk/safety/christmas>

*Food Safety –*

<http://www.nhs.uk/livewell/homehygiene/Pages/Homehygienehub.aspx>  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/Healthychristmas/Pages/cooking-turkey.aspx>  
<http://www.food.gov.uk/>

*Weather Safety –*

<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/winterhealth/Pages/Verycoldweather.aspx>  
[http://www.theaa.com/motoring\\_advice/seasonal/winter\\_motoring.html](http://www.theaa.com/motoring_advice/seasonal/winter_motoring.html)

*Party Safety –*

[http://www.strathclyde.police.uk/keep\\_safe/safety\\_advice/out\\_and\\_about/party\\_safe/](http://www.strathclyde.police.uk/keep_safe/safety_advice/out_and_about/party_safe/)  
<http://www.nhs.uk/Livewell/alcohol/Pages/Festivedrinking.aspx>