

Safety Minutes

Fire Safety

1. Thanksgiving is the peak day for home cooking fires with more than three times the daily average for such incidents. Christmas Day and Christmas Eve ranked second and third, with both having nearly twice the daily average. Unattended cooking was by far the leading contributing factor in cooking fires and fire deaths. Cooking caused half (49 percent) of all reported home fires and more than two of every five (42 percent) home fire injuries, and it is the second leading cause of home fire deaths (20 percent) in 2015-2019. *Source: <https://www.nfpa.org/Public-Education/Fire-causes-and-risks/Seasonal-fire-causes/Thanksgiving>*
2. When using a fire extinguisher, remember PASS:
 - a. **P**ull the pin
 - b. **A**im at the base of the fire
 - c. **S**queeze handle
 - d. **S**weep side to side

Health / Mental Health

3. Be proactive about your health – go to the doctor for an annual checkup and an important part of being proactive. It is important to go every year because you can catch problems before they start or develop into some major. There is also a need to get screened yearly for certain diseases. Health is everything, don't delay, schedule you annual.
4. Avoid the spread of germs by covering your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick. Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose, or mouth. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at home, work or school, especially when someone is ill.
5. Remembering to stay hydrated. It is recommended to drink at least 50 – 64oz of water a day. You should not wait until you are thirsty to drink water, at that point dehydration is already beginning. Water makes up more than 60% of your body weight, naturally cleanses the body of toxins, regulates the body's cooling system and acts as a lubricant and cushion for our joints.
6. Always strive to have a positive attitude. A negative attitude can lead to carelessness, complacency, taking shortcuts or even serve as a distraction from a work task. A positive attitude has many benefits such as, but not limited to: increased life span, lower rates of depression, lower levels of distress, greater resistance to the common cold and better psychological and physical well-being.
7. Just in time for Valentine's Day – February is also Heart Health month! Activity level, diet, smoking, obesity, stress and family health history all contribute to heart health. By making lifestyle changes you can improve your heart health and reduce your chances of diseases.

Heat Focused

8. When outdoors in the heat, remember to prepare for the weather. One should drink plenty of water and take frequent breaks in the shade or AC. Stress from heat can cause serious injuries or death. Many people suffer from:
 - a. heat cramps: painful, brief muscle cramps
 - b. heat exhaustion: there are 2 types – water depletion (excessive thirst, weakness, headache) and salt depletion (nausea and vomiting, muscle cramps, dizziness)
 - c. heat stroke: most serious heat related illness, it can kill or cause damage to the brain and other internal organs. Symptoms include fainting, headache, dizziness, lack of sweating, vomiting or behavioral changes, such as confusion.
9. If someone is experiencing symptoms of heat exhaustion, they need to get into shade and consume water or electrolyte drinks. If someone is suffering from heat stroke, immediate medical attention is needed. The person should be moved into the shade and provided cool water to lower the body temperature.
10. Sun safety is always important. It is not just for summer or warmer weather. Sun exposure can cause sunburn, skin aging, eye damage and skin cancer; so it is important to protect your skin throughout the year.
 - a. Sunscreen with SPF of 15 or higher should be use routinely, even on cloudy days.
 - b. Best to use broadband sunscreen with protection of both UVA and UVB
 - c. Reapply every 2 hours
 - d. Wear sunglasses

Summer Safety

11. Protect yourself from diseases spread by mosquitoes and ticks such as dengue fever, malaria, Lyme disease and West Nile Virus by wearing bug repellent. In addition to bug repellent, you can minimize bug bites by removing standing water, wearing long-sleeve shirts and using mosquito netting.
12. Practice Firework Safety. When using or watching fireworks, keep a safe distance once lit. Do not point fireworks at others, towards face or body. Keep water nearby to extinguish fireworks.
13. When mowing your lawn, remember to wear pants, closed toe shoes and safety goggles. This will prevent injuries from rocks or other sharp objects.
14. Don't ignore thunder! Although the odds of getting struck by lightening are low, it is not a good idea to hang outside during a thunderstorm. Use the 30-30 rule – Once you see lightening, count to 30. If thunder claps before you reach 30, go inside. One should always avoid a showers or baths during thunderstorms, as lightening can travel through plumbing.

Winter

15. Shoveling snow seems like a straightforward process, but it can often lead to injuries. Remember to stretch prior to shoveling, lift with your legs and not your back and use an ergonomically friendly shovel. When possible, push the snow, as opposed to lifting.

16. With the winter season coming up and usually an increase of travel for holidays, it is important to be sure your vehicle is in good running condition. Prepare your car for winter and keep an emergency kit in there. Test the battery, switch to winter tires (depending on where you live), check the tread on your tires, tire pressure, wiper blades and replace if needed. Make sure your gas tank is at least half full to avoid moisture in your tank and/or gas line freezing.
17. Make sure you prepare for winter activities by wearing layers of light and warm clothing, waterproof shoes, a hat, gloves and a scarf.
18. Prevent Falls During the winter by selecting the correct shoe, one with good traction, walk like a penguin, keep your hands free to help balance. Always remove snow and ice from walkways and apply ice melt if needed.

Work Focus

19. Having the correct posture can help prevent back and neck pain and carpal tunnel. When sitting at a desk, do not slouch, sit with both feet flat on the ground, adjust your desk or monitor, so your neck is not craning and remember to move often.
20. The mindset of 'It won't happen to me' is one of the worse excuses. That person is relying on luck to keep safe while on the job. This mindset is found with both experienced and inexperienced employees; so it is important to be mindful of your attitude towards safety. Do not let experience affect your mindset, necessary steps should be taken, hazards need to be controlled and proper safeguards and work practices should be implemented.
21. It is important to have "WHAT and "WHY" conversations regarding tasks or jobs. Employees who do not understand the why something is done or why it is done a certain way, can result in dire consequences. Often times, explaining the why along with the what, will allow employees to make more informed decisions that can result in safer and an efficient work environment.
22. There are different types of ladders for different jobs and they must be used correctly. A ladder should be placed on a firm level surface and kept from slipping hazards. An 'A-frame' open and in a locked position, extension ladders leaned against a structure and a non-conductive ladder near electrical equipment. There should only be 1 person on a ladder at a time. When ascending, descending or working, make sure to maintain 3 points of contact.

Additional Resources

<https://www.safetytalkideas.com/safety-talks/>

<https://ehs.lbl.gov/resource/documents/1-minute-4-safety/>

<https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/seasonal-safety/winter-safety/holiday>