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Risk Management Surveyors and Consultants.

TOP WORKPLACE DANGERS OF CHRISTMAS

and how to avoid them

Looking to give your employees a Christmas gift that is not going to cost you a fortune and will certainly be appreciated? Care for their wellbeing and safety and avoiding serious accidents is the best gift you can come up with... But first, you need to know the particular hazards over the holiday period in order to eliminate or reduce them.

No worries, we've got that covered for you:

FREEZING WORKPLACE



The minimum temperature at the workplace which HSE recommends is 16 degrees Celsius. Where work duties require more intensive physical efforts, this number goes down to 13 degrees. You might want to re-think what costs more- your business utility bills or the inability of your workers to be as productive as they can be under normal circumstances.

Having a weaker immune system is a potential factor of catching one if not all of the three notorious winter bugs. Keep your staff warm by heating the business premises up to the recommended minimum.

If that's not possible because they work outdoors allow short coffee/tea breaks to keep the cold away.

WINTER BUGS



Overload outlets or dangling feet by the Christmas decorations- classic holiday images that, in fact, are not so far-fetched. Always ask your employees to turn off Christmas lights before they leave. Christmas decorations bring various consequences and the aftermath hits the scale of severity dissimilarly. Make sure you ask staff to tuck away any visible and out of sight cables and wires. Simple as ABC isn't it?

CHRISTMAS DECORATIONS



What is a jolly, festive season for one is a trigger for grief and sadness for another. Holiday depression, family stress, feelings of aloneness and heartache, etc. Apart from an employer, you should also be a human being and offer a pillar of strength, even if it is just in the form of emotional support. 'Tis the season to spread love and help others smile more!

MENTAL HEALTH



Christmas is usually a pretty boozy time of the year and because the mulled wine is sweet this doesn't mean it's not alcohol. It is your responsibility to regularly check and make sure that your staff is not under the influence of alcohol or drugs. Have a written drugs and alcohol policy. You might also like to consider issuing a statement regarding the Christmas period and work-related events.

DRUGS & ALCOHOL



If throwing a festive party you, as an employer, cannot simply close your eyes for inappropriate behaviour even if it is just for the "good cheer". Failure to follow this rule might lead to you being vicariously liable for discrimination, sexual harassment, derogatory humour, etc. A good way to reduce the risk of this happening is having a written discrimination, harassment and victimisation policy.

SEXUAL HARASSMENT



Ignorance and lack of information are serious hazards themselves and the solution usually doesn't include any financial costs... So if it is you the one who have to educate your employees about the health and safety risks at the workplace then be it. It costs you nothing but it saves you a great deal of a trouble.