



DSPN

Disaster
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Continuity IQ

Fast Facts for our Valued Friends and Clients December 2007

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at Disaster Survival Planning Network (DSPN). In this issue, we provide information about holiday hazards. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Holiday Hazards

Did you know...

- The holidays bring joy and laughter, but also the risk of serious injuries from falls, fires and poisons. It's important to recognize the potential dangers for employees associated with holiday decorating, such as the use of candles, ladders and holiday lights, and take extra care.
- Every November and December about 10,000 people are treated in emergency rooms for injuries related to holiday decorating, according to the Consumer Product Safety Commission. This includes burns, falls, shocks and cuts.
- Each year holiday decorations and Christmas trees account for almost 2,000 fires and cause more than \$41 million dollars in property damage. The simple truth: many of these fires could be prevented. Almost a quarter of all Christmas tree fires are started because the tree was placed too close to a heat source.
- You can reduce the risk of electrical shock from outdoor decorations by plugging them into circuits protected by ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs).
- Be careful not to mount or hang light strands in any way that might damage the cord's insulation.
- According to California Builder and Engineer magazine, the indirect cost of a workplace accident can be 10 times that of the direct costs. Indirect costs include training and compensating replacement workers; repairing damaged property; accident investigation and implementation of corrective action; scheduling delays and lost productivity; administrative expenses; low employee morale and increased absenteeism; and poor customer and community relations.
- Falls on ice plague all industries where ice occurs. These incidents often involve high-cost, lost-time claims. Minimizing slipping-on-ice hazards is complicated by the fact that many

plants have too large an area to keep sanded or salted.

- Because of last month's wildfires in California, mudslides in the canyon could measure "19 times greater" than mudslides occurring before the fires, soil and storm experts said in the surveys published by the Los Angeles Times. Officials said that even a single day of pounding rains could trigger a disaster because there are no plants to hold soil, rocks and debris in place.
- A recent survey sponsored by the American Public Health Association, suggests that many Americans are not prepared for a public health crisis, and many who were previously prepared have let their readiness lapse. These lagging preparedness levels are alarming considering that more than 30 local disasters are federally declared each year. The survey reveals that several vulnerable subgroups are particularly at risk in the event of an emergency:
 - 58 percent of mothers of children age five and younger do not have a three-day supply of water on hand for their families
 - Only 61 percent of people with chronic health conditions have at least a two-week supply of medications
 - Only 18 percent of employers say they could continue to pay all their employees if there were an interruption in operations
 - Only 15 percent of hourly workers have saved enough money to provide for their family in such an event

Brain Teasers

True or False

1. More candle fires occur in December than any other month.
2. An effective workplace safety program will pay for itself.
3. Fall-related accidents account for about 2% of all workplace fatalities.
4. Worker's compensation insurance premiums are on the decline.
5. Walking on ice with feet pointing outward reduces the chances of a fall.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. *True.* December has almost twice as many candle fires as any other month.
2. *True.* For every \$1 invested in an effective workplace safety program, \$4 to \$6 may be saved as illnesses, injuries and fatalities decline.
3. *False.* Each year, about 12,000 people die from fall-related accidents in the United States. That is 10% of all workplace fatalities.
4. *False.* According to the Insurance Information Institute (III), the average cost for workers' compensation insurance has risen 50 percent in the last three years.
5. *True.* According to Oklahoma's Emergency Medical Services Authority, if you're unsure about whether or not the sidewalk or street is slippery, walk slowly and cautiously with your feet pointing outward. This position actually helps you brace yourself better, and it helps protect you to some degree if you slip and fall. You can find other tips for avoiding falls on ice [here](#).

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Does your BC plan include policies concerning employee pay during an event?
2. Have you posted local and national poison control hotline telephone numbers in appropriate places? The National Poison Control Hotline is 1- 800-222-1222.
3. Have you recently reviewed your response plans for medical emergencies?
4. Does your employee handbook include a policy about drug and alcohol abuse? The benefits of having such a policy are many: Every employee receives the same information about the rules of the workplace; your employees will know what you expect from them (and what they can expect from you); and you'll buy yourself valuable legal protection if an employee later challenges you in court.
5. Looking for the perfect gift? Visiting a store that sells emergency supplies will help you check many a difficult friend off your holiday list. Among other things, these stores feature emergency preparedness kits for car and office and quick reference guides that detail basic first steps for emergency situations.

New from DSPN

Check these out on our website:

- DSPN consultants are available to help you [audit your current plans](#) against emerging industry standards, such as NFPA 1600.
- DSPN can provide a [customized tabletop exercise](#) at your site that will be very engaging for your executive team.
- [Pandemic Experience for Executives](#) is a new tabletop exercise from DSPN that is customized for your situation at your site.

Comments and Contributions

Tell us what you think...



Thanks to all of you have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share with our readers? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

[Paul Klier](#)

Popular Services from DSPN

- [Benchmark Your Program Using NFPA 1600](#) is a one-day workshop we are staging in New Orleans in conjunction with the Continuity Insights Conference. Sign up now!
- In addition to our public workshops, DSPN offers [on-site workshops](#) that are customized for your priorities.

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