

TULANE UNIVERSITY OFFICE OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY NEWSLETTER

SAFETY WAVE

Holiday Safety Tips

The holiday season usually means travel plans, shopping, cooking, decorating, and other activities that can make for a busy schedule. One thing people don't need is an accident or to be a victim of crime. Safety experts say there are many things that can be done to minimize the chance for troubles.

Rather than carrying plenty of cash that can attract thieves when shopping, it is better to use credit or debit cards. If the need arises to use an ATM, remember that the safer ATMs to visit are those in well lit areas where there are plenty of people in sight. If possible, it is better to use a drive-through ATM rather than a walk-up. Always be alert and try to scan the area around an ATM before using it. Look for suspicious individuals in the area and use the mirrors attached to the ATM location to assure that you are not in danger.



It is safer to travel and conduct business during daylight hours when possible. Always stay alert to unsafe situations, unsafe conditions, and suspicious people. Carry a cell phone with you so that you may summon help or to report unsafe conditions. Cash and jewelry are particularly attractive to thieves. If possible, try to shop with other people and carry purchases and valuables close to the body. The favorite places for thieves and pickpockets are crowded aisles, public transportation vehicles, revolving doors, and elevators. Be particularly vigilant in these areas. It is far better to return to your vehicle and place purchased items in your car trunk or on the floorboard out of sight than to carry a large load of items that are difficult to handle.

When returning to your car, be ready to enter your vehicle without delay. Scan the surrounding area and have your keys ready to unlock the door. It is a good idea to lock the car door after entering and to leave it locked when traveling. Avoid parking in distant areas or in areas where lighting is poor.

When shopping, try to leave the children at home with a relative, friend, or babysitter. If children do come along for shopping, always keep them with you and in sight. Instruct a child to report to a store clerk or police officer if they get lost. Small children should be placed in a stroller and never allowed to stand up if placed in a shopping cart. Seat belts must always be attached to keep a child in place in a shopping cart.

The holiday season is also a prime time for home fires. Be especially careful when using space heaters at home. Keep them at least 3 feet from curtains, packages, and other combustibles. Costumes and home decorations should be made only from fire-retardant or non-combustible material. Decorative lights should bear the mark of an independent testing laboratory (FM or UL) certifying their safety. Avoid overloaded outlets and the use of extension cords under rugs, across walkways or pinched underneath furniture. A little extra thought can assure us all of a happy and safe holiday season!

A Little G.I. Upset

During this holiday season with all of its great joy, music, family activities, gifts, and food, don't let food poisoning put a damper on your celebration. The factors that contribute to foodborne illness include:

- * **Improper holding temperatures:** Food should be held at or below 41°F or at or above 140°F. Don't thaw meat or other frozen foods at room temperature. Thaw by microwaving, refrigerating at 41°F, or by letting cold water run over the frozen food with sufficient pressure to dislodge small particles. Don't thaw frozen food in standing water.
- * **Inadequate cooking, such as undercooking food:** See below for "*minimum*" internal cooking temperatures for various types of foods:

Wild game, poultry, fish - 165°F (for 15 sec)	Comminuted fish, meats, injected meats, raw eggs - 155°F (for 15 sec)
Pork, seafood, & other foods - 145°F (for 15 sec)	Beef roasts - 130°F (for 122 min) or 145°F (for 4 min)
Turkey - 180°F	Turkey stuffing (if turkey is stuffed) - 165°F
Raw vegetables & fruits - 140°F (for 15 sec)	Re-heated foods - 165°F

Cooked foods should not be left standing on the table or kitchen counter for more than 2 hours. Protect food from cross-contamination with uncooked foods/food contact surfaces after cooking, and eat it promptly. Leftovers should be used within 3 days if stored at or below 41°F.

* **Contaminated equipment:** Wash and sanitize food equipment and surfaces.

* **Food from unsafe sources:** Buy from reputable, public health inspected, and licensed/permitted sources.

* **Poor personal hygiene:** Only clean and healthy persons utilizing good personal hygiene practices should handle food.

Play it safe with food. Avoid G.I. blues and enjoy the holiday season!

A Lab Inspector's Dream

Lab Supervisor:

Santa, Santa, hear my call -
The safety team is down the hall.
I really do not want to hinder,
But I forgot to chain my cylinder.
My waste container has no label.
There's a chemical spill upon my table.
The cord is frayed on my hot plate
And my fire extinguisher inspection's late.
My housekeeping has been a mess.
I've been too lax, I must confess.
I must hurry to change this scene
Or they'll report me to my dean.



Santa:

The safety team's not here to blame.
They're here to help you win this game.
Safety just can't sit and wait
For tomorrow or some other date.
It must be done as you go along -
Do what is right, correct what is wrong.
When you see a problem you shouldn't ignore,
Don't shut your eyes and close the door.
Fix it! Support your safety team!
They are not as bad as they may seem.
And in the end you'll be quite glad
Knowing you've got the safest lab you've ever had!

Lab Supervisor:

Thank you, Santa. You are right.
Safety's important day and night.
I'll clean my lab, I'll change my tune.
The mess in here will be gone real soon.
My attitude will be one of thanks.
I'll never again try silly old pranks.
I'll lead my lab again with pride
And safety will be by my side.
We'll work in hand to make corrections.
And we'll strive for personal protections.
I welcome the team. Am I next on their list?
I'll be the first to point out any items they missed!

Tulane Holiday Decorations Policy

In compliance with applicable fire codes as enforced by the State Fire Marshal, the following policy has been established regarding the use of decorations during the holiday season.

Holiday Trees - Holiday trees must not obstruct or reduce the width of corridors, stairways, or exits. Use only artificial, flame retardant, non-conductive trees with the following two exceptions: 1) A "cut" tree that has been treated with effective flame-retardant materials can be used in building lobbies only. Proof of flame-retardancy must be provided. Cut trees should be placed in water to retain maximum freshness and to discourage drying. Tree and water level should be checked on an on-going basis.

Decorative Lighting - No more than three Underwriter's Laboratories (U.L.) listed miniature light sets may be used in decorating trees. Candles are prohibited unless the specific application is approved in writing by OEHS. Turn tree and other decorative lights off when the area is not occupied (nights, weekends, holidays).

Decorations - Flame-retardant, non-breakable decorations are recommended. Furnishings or decorations of a highly combustible, flammable, or explosive character may not be used for any type of display. Decorations may not be hung from smoke detectors, automatic sprinkler heads, pipes, or in any way that would obstruct the visibility of exits or exit signs. In buildings equipped with automatic sprinkler systems, no combustible decorations are allowed within 18 inches of the bottom of sprinkler heads.

Extension Cords - Use of extension cords is discouraged. However, if used for the temporary purpose of holiday decorations, only one cord shall be used. The cord must be appropriately sized and U.L. approved. It must not create a trip hazard and must not be placed through concealed spaces, doorways, or windows subject to closure.

Stopping the Spread of Germs

Illnesses like the flu (influenza) and colds are caused by viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. So, it's not surprising that these illnesses are spread from person to person when an infected person coughs or sneezes. Here are some simple and basic health habits from CDC to help stop the spread of germs:

- * Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you are sick. Place the used tissue in a waste basket. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- * Clean your hands often especially after coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- * Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches their eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs can survive for hours on surfaces like doorknobs, desks, and tables.
- * Stay home when you are sick and check with a health care provider when needed.
- * Avoid close contact with people who are sick. When you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick too.

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The Office of Environmental Health & Safety would like to wish everyone a safe and happy holiday season!

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