

CAMPUS SAFETY NEWSLETTER

December, 2018



Food Safety

If your office is hosting a potluck to celebrate the holidays, keep these safety tips from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in mind:

- Bringing a dish to share? Follow safe food-handling guidelines. Always wash your hands before and after handling food, and serve prepared dishes on clean plates – never on dishes that previously held raw meat.
- If you're preparing a dish ahead of time that contains meat, ensure the meat's internal temperature reaches the proper temperature. USDA recommends cooking raw beef, pork, lamb and veal to a minimum internal temperature of 145° F; raw ground beef, pork, lamb and veal to an internal temperature of 160° F; and cooking all poultry items to a minimum internal temperature of 165° F.
- Concerned about your co-worker's casserole? If it has been sitting out at room temperature for more than two hours, just say no. Which leads us to the next tip ...
- Keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. USDA notes that hot foods should be 140° F or warmer. Use chafing dishes or slow cookers to help keep hot foods at safe temperatures. Cold foods should be 40° F or colder. Keep foods cold by placing dishes in bowls of ice or by serving in small batches and replenishing from the refrigerator as needed.
- Have a co-worker with a food allergy? Don't be a Grinch! Be mindful of their needs as you plan your office potluck

And finally, remember that your employer's alcohol policy doesn't take a holiday break.

Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Three Tips for an Organized Workspace

Desk space is a highly-coveted commodity for many office workers, but too much space tends to promote excess reaching and clutter. With an ergonomics approach, you can organize your desk and regain control of your office space.

Here are three tips for managing it:

- **Use a monitor arm to create space.** Instead of using a monitor with a large base, consider this option to free up precious desk space for your more frequently used items. A monitor arm makes it easy to adjust your monitor; place it within an arm's length away from you, and position the top of the monitor at or just below eye-level.
- **Reduce work surface clutter.** There is evidence that working in a cluttered environment can significantly reduce one's ability

Safe Decorating

Don't stand on a chair to hang decorations. Use a stepladder, and make sure to read and follow the instructions and warnings on the label. And never hang decorations from fire sprinklers – they can prevent the sprinklers from operating properly. OSHA regulations state that stacked materials should never be closer than 18 inches below fire sprinklers

Planning to string decorative lights or other electrical items in your workspace? The Electrical Safety Foundation International, a nonprofit organization, states that workers should:

- Be sure that all electrical items are certified by a nationally recognized independent testing lab.
- Inspect all lights, decoration and extension cords for damage before using.
- Avoid overloading electrical outlets with too many decorations or electrical devices – they can overheat and cause a fire.
- Never try to make a three-prong plug fit into a two-prong outlet.
- Turn off all indoor and outdoor electrical decorations before leaving.

If you'll be using an extension cord:

- Refrain from placing extension cords in high-traffic areas of your workplace, or under rugs, carpets or furniture.
- Never attempt to extend the length of an extension cord by connecting it to another extension cord.
- Never nail or staple extension cords to walls – doing so may damage existing wire insulation.
- Don't place extension cords in walls or ceilings, as this can cause the cords to overheat.



to concentrate on persistent work. You can reduce clutter on your desk by managing cables and wires, using a document holder, and limiting items to only those you use regularly. Store items you don't use often in drawers or cabinets nearby.

- **Place frequently used items close to you.** Keep the items you use most often, such as your phone or notepad, within a 15" reach from the front edge of the workstation, and those you use less often within 21". This will help you avoid the need for extended reaching and twisting throughout the day, which can lead to fatigue over time.

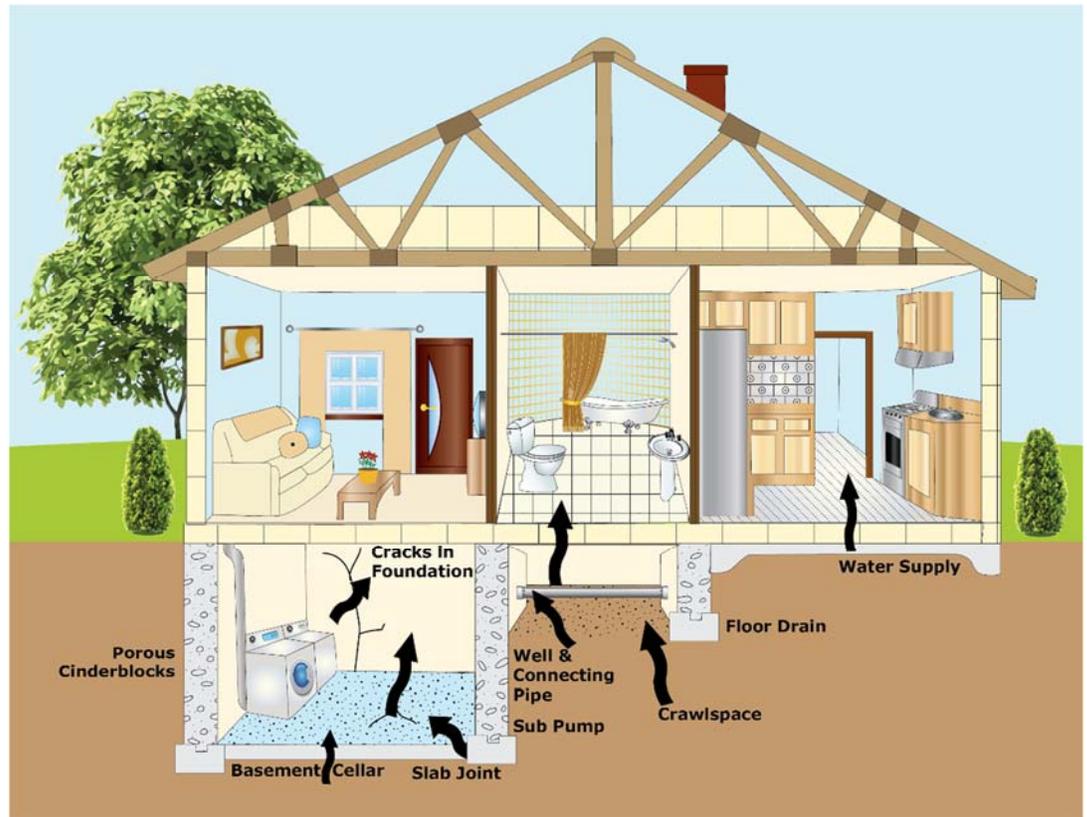
The ergonomics goals for many organizations are two-fold: reduce musculoskeletal disorders, and concurrently improve efficiencies. A 2008 survey of 400 consumers, commissioned by the National Association of Professional Organizers, showed that 27% of workers across the nation said they feel disorganized at work, and among them, 91% said they would improve their efficiency if they were better organized. Organization and ergonomics often go hand in hand, and these tips can help fight the battle on both fronts.



Radon In Your Home

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), radon is responsible for up to 15% of lung cancers throughout the world. In order to reduce this rate the WHO began a worldwide radon project to assist in increasing awareness, collect data and encourage action to reduce the risk of radon exposure.

The U.S. EPA is a participant in this program and encouraged by the WHO's attention to this important health issue.



According to Dr. Michael Repacholi (Coordinator of WHO's Radiation and Environmental Health Unit as of 2009), "Radon poses an easily reducible health risk to populations all over the world, but has not up to now receive widespread attention." He added, "radon in our homes is the main source of exposure to ionizing radiation, and accounts for 50% of the public's exposure to naturally-occurring sources of radiation in many countries."

Those interested in finding service providers to test for radon in your home may contact the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) at 1-800-383-5992 to purchase a do-it-yourself kit or you may contact your local county health department. You may also purchase the kit at any local hardware store. If you wish for an Iowa certified measurement professional to test your home, a list of Certified Radon Measurement Specialists may be viewed at <http://idph.iowa.gov/radon/test>. This website also contains the following informational pamphlets: The 10 Step Radon Action Plan, Home Buyer's and Seller's Guide to Radon and Managing Radon in Schools.

If the tests reveal that you have an excessive amount of radon in your home (The EPA has determined that 4 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) or above are considered elevated and mitigation is recommended. Mitigation decisions should be based on multiple tests, however) IDPH maintains a list of Iowa Credentialed Radon Mitigation Specialists at http://idph.iowa.gov/Portals/1/userfiles/120/MITIGAT_2018-11-27.pdf.

Additional information may be found on the EPA's website at <https://www.epa.gov/radon>

Put a **FREEZE** on Winter Holiday Fires

It's fun to decorate for the winter holidays, but holiday decorations can increase your risk for a home fire. As you deck the halls this season, be fire smart.



More than half of the home decoration fires in December are started by candles



More than 1/3 of home decoration fires are started by candles.



The top 3 days for home candle fires are **Christmas Day, New Year's Day and New Year's Eve.**



Keep candles at least **12 inches** away from anything that burns.



Although Christmas tree fires are not common, when they do occur, they are dangerous.

On average, **1 of every 45** reported home Christmas tree fires resulted in death.



A heat source too close to the Christmas tree causes **1 in every 4** winter fires.



Read manufacturer's instructions for the number of light strands to connect.



Make sure your tree is **at least 3 feet away** from heat sources like fireplaces, radiators, space heaters, candles or heat vents. Also, make sure your tree does not block exits.



Get rid of your tree after Christmas or when it is dry.



For more information on how to prevent winter fires, visit www.usfa.fema.gov/winter and www.nfpa.org/winter.

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