



DIOCESE OF SAN JOSE

Safety Bulletin **Office of Facilities, Risk and Insurance** **November 2019 - Qtr. 2**



Daylight Saving Safety Tips

As we fall back into shorter days and longer nights take that extra hour and make sure your workplace is a safe one.

- Make sure all lights on timers are set accordingly.
- Replace all smoke alarm batteries annually and replace smoke alarms older than 10 years.
- Prepare a winter emergency kit for your home, car and workplace.
- Check your storage areas for hazardous material and dispose of them properly.
- Check the safety and security lighting in your parking lot and pathways.

If you would like to have someone from the Diocesan Risk Management office visit your parish or school and conduct a safety evaluation please contact us to schedule an appointment. Theresa.lavoun@dsj.org

Resources are available at [Levitt Safety](#)

Holiday Decorating Safety Tips

- Inspect all electrical decorations for damage before use. Damaged or loose wires and sockets could cause shock or start a fire.
- Do not overload electrical outlets. Only one high-wattage appliance should be plugged into an outlet at a time.
- Never connect more than three strings of incandescent lights this can blow a fuse as well as start a fire.
- Keep your live trees watered daily. Dry trees are a fire hazard.
- If possible, use battery-operated candles when decorating.
- Keep combustibles at least three feet from heat sources.
- Protect cords from damage and never attached cords by nails or staples. Never run cords through doorways, windows or under rugs.
- Check decorations for certification labels. Decorations not bearing a label from a testing laboratory have not been tested for safety and could be hazardous.
- Water your live Christmas trees daily.

Resources available at [esfi.org](#)

Winter Fall-Related Injuries

The risks of slip and fall accidents increase as the winter comes. Streets, parking lots and sidewalks become covered with debris, water, mud and ice and make even the shortest trip could be a potential disaster. Read these tips to help keep yourself safe during the upcoming winter weather.



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Winter fall-related injuries include not just fractures and broken bones, but also more serious injuries, like spinal cord injuries and brain injuries. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, approximately 1.7 million people suffer a brain injury every year. An overwhelming majority of these injuries are mild injuries or concussions, but the remaining are serious injuries that can lead to permanent disability. If you are on certain types of medications like blood thinners, you may be at a much higher risk for poor outcomes from a fall.

Slip and fall accidents are a major cause of brain injury and spinal cord injury during any time of the year, and the risks of such injuries are increased during winter, when walking conditions are so poor.

Here are some tips to reduce the risk of fall accidents this winter

- Wear appropriate footwear. Your winter footwear should be designed for comfort and high traction, and not for style or glamour.
- Experts recommend that you walk with small, careful and precise steps when you're walking outside during winter.
- Avoid running, and avoid walking briskly. Avoid sudden changes in your direction while walking.
- It's your responsibility to keep your sidewalk clear of tree leaves and limbs, rocks, dirt, water and ice.
- Keep walkways and parking lots well lit.
- Cordon off dangerous areas where there is current construction or wet/slippery floors.
- Place mud mats/rugs in entry ways and use "Wet Floor" signs on rainy days.



Incident Reporting Form

An important aspect of accident response is reporting the incident for future reference. If an accident occurs, the Safety Coordinator must be sure that there is a report. It should be completed for every accident or incident and filed with any pertinent information. A list of the names and phone numbers of witnesses should always be included, as well as photos of the site where the incident took place prior to any needed repairs being done. If there is a claim presented later, or a lawsuit filed, there should be enough information in the file to begin the investigation of the case.

This information can help prevent future incidents and may be essential if a claim against the Diocese of San Jose is filed. The incident report is helpful in ensuring that all details are recorded.

- Document all details of the incident; who, what, when, where, why
- Collect the names of the victims and witnesses.
- Record victims and witnesses accounts.
- Take photographs of the incident site – slips, trips and falls do not always "just happen."



Follow-up

All incident reports, whether or not an injury occurred, should be maintained at the location's files. Whether or not it is likely that the injury will result in a claim against the Diocese of San Jose, the parish and the school, it should be reported to the [Loss Control & Prevention Coordinator](#) so they can report it to the proper insurance company or risk pool. The insurer will determine whether additional investigation is necessary. The Safety Coordinator may also want to follow-up with anyone injured on your property to express concern for the individual and inquire about the injury. While the Safety Coordinator should not make promises of payment for the injury or take responsibility for the incident, many small claims may be averted simply by demonstrating concern for the individual. A little compassion will

Reporting Close Calls and Near Misses Can Aide In Prevention

In the event that you witness a "close call" or a "near miss" take the time to report it; complete an [incident report](#), take a pictures and submit it to the [Loss Control & Prevention Coordinator](#). Today a "close call" or a "near miss" tomorrow a costly accident, one that could have been prevented, if reported earlier and corrective action was taken. Take the incident report quiz now.



Volunteer Management Insurance and Safety Guidelines

The history of the Catholic Church is built on people volunteering their time and talent. Volunteers are vital to the success of parish ministries and to our catholic schools.

What is a Volunteer Coordinator?

A volunteer coordinator could be an employee or volunteer. They are responsible for overseeing the selection of volunteers, assignment of duties, orientation and training, and the designation of select individuals to supervise the volunteers.

This guide has been developed to support your work as the Volunteer Coordinator. We appreciate your willingness to take on this role. Please feel free to contact Loss Control & Prevention Theresa.lavoun@dsj.org if you need further assistance or have additional questions.

Definition of a Volunteer

Merriam-Webster dictionary defines a volunteer as “a person who voluntarily undertakes or expresses a willingness to undertake a service.”

A volunteer is a valued part of the church. The volunteer should be at least 18 years of age. If under 18, the volunteer should be accompanied by a parent or have been given permission by the parent to perform volunteer activities while supervised by another adult. A volunteer is not someone who is compensated for their service or under contract for their service. A volunteer is also not an employee functioning under their job description.

Every volunteer should go through an insurance and safety screening process which will be covered within this [Volunteer Management Insurance Guidelines Handbook](#) and all [forms](#).

Is this volunteer the right fit for the job?

Remember to take the volunteer’s abilities into consideration when assigning them to a job. You would not want to risk an injury.

Volunteer Injuries

If your volunteer does become injured please get them medical attention, secondly, contact their emergency contacts on their volunteer waiver form, next fill out an incident report and lastly provide injured volunteer with the volunteer accident claim form so that they may recoup any out of pocket medical copayments associated with this injury.

