



DIOCESE OF
SAN JOSE

Safety Bulletin
Office of Facilities, Risk and Insurance
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Winter Safety Tips

As we fall back to shorter days and longer nights take that extra hour and make sure your property is safe for your parishioners and employees.

- Replace all smoke alarm batteries annually and replace smoke alarms that are 10 years or older.
- Check the safety and security lighting in your parking lot and pathways and adjust lights on timers accordingly.
- During the Christmas season remind employees and parishioners not to leave valuable items in their vehicles while at work or at mass.
- Have your fire extinguisher maintained.

Winter Fall-Related Accidents

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 a potential disaster.



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.

Tips to Reduce Risk

- 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 walkways and parking lots well lit and cleared of tree leaves that could become slippery when wet.
- Cordon off areas where there is current construction, potential trip hazards, flooded parking areas and wet/slippery floors.
- Place mud mats/rugs in entry ways and use "Wet Floor" signs on rainy days.



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 attach cords to a surface 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.

Resources available at esfi.org

Holiday—Food Safety Regulations and Tips

Your parish or school may be hosting a Thanksgiving or Christmas Dinner this year. Keep your holiday meals happy by handling food safely. If you have a commercial kitchen or are serving food at your location please read:

California law requires all individuals involved in the preparation, storage or service of **food** in a **food** facility or in a commercial kitchen to obtain a **food handler** card after taking a **food safety** training course and passing an exam.

- Wash your hands frequently when handling food.
- Keep raw meat away from fresh produce.
- Use separate cutting boards, plate and utensils for uncooked and cooked meats to avoid cross-contamination.
- Use a food thermometer to make sure meat is cooked to a safe temperature.
- Refrigerate hot or cold leftover food within two hours of being served.
- When storing turkey, cut the leftovers in small pieces so they will chill quickly.
- Thanksgiving leftovers are safe for three to four days when properly refrigerated.

Please share this information with your various organizations hosting dinners this season and post regulations in your kitchen.

The foodsafety.gov website from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services provides some valuable [holiday food safety tips](#): Watch this [holiday food safety video](#) for more information.

Resources [National Safety Council](#)

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 repairs being completed. If later, a claim or a lawsuit is filed, there should be enough information in the file to begin the investigation of the case.

1. Document all details of the incident; who, what, when, where, why and how it happened.
2. Collect the names and numbers of the victims and witnesses.
3. Record the victim and the witness accounts.
4. Take photographs of the incident site – slips, trips and falls do not always "just happen."
5. Incident reports are for internal use only do not share with the public.



Follow-up

All incident reports should be sent to Theresa.lavoun@dsj.org Loss Control & Prevention Coordinator and a copy maintained at that location. Whether or not it results in a claim, it must be reported to the insurance company. The insurance adjustor will determine whether an additional investigation is necessary. The Safety Coordinator, Pastor or Principal should follow-up with anyone injured on your property to express concern for the individual and inquire about their recovery. However, you should never make promises of payment or take responsibility for the incident.

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 pictures and submit to the Theresa.lavoun@dsj.org 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.



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.

Diocesan Volunteer Requirements

You must consult with Office of Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults at 408-983-0113 regarding volunteer clearances, prior to moving forward with your volunteer program.

To satisfy the Diocesan Loss Control & Prevention Office's insurance requirements, the volunteer should be at least 18 years of age and have a volunteer waiver signed and on file at your location. If they are under 18, they must have a student/child waiver signed by a parent and supervised by an adult. A volunteer is not someone who is compensated for their service or under contract for their service. An employee functioning under their job description is not considered a volunteer.

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. Every volunteer should go through an insurance and safety screening process. Are they able to perform the volunteer duties i.e. stand for long periods, climb stairs, etc.

Protect your Volunteers

- Conduct routine evaluations and post activity reviews of your volunteers.
- Review designated entry/exit routes away from playground and play areas while school is in session.
- Make certain volunteers wear proper footwear.
- When necessary, provide Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required by OSHA Standards.
- Volunteers are not to be on roofs, ladders, scaffolding or operate power tools.
- Review Emergency Response Procedures with your volunteers.
- Volunteer drivers must satisfy Diocesan insurance, registration and licensing requirements.

Volunteer Injuries

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

You can access these Guidelines [Volunteer Management Insurance Guidelines](#) and all [forms](#).

