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## **Safety Concerns During the Holidays**

When it comes to the festive season, there are additional safety concerns to think about.

There are changes in weather and driving habits, shifts in work/life balance and, often, additional strains on the families. Without further ado, here are some of the biggest safety concerns during the holiday season.

### **Drunk and Drowsy Driving:**

On the topic of driving to and from the workplace and within the workplace itself, drunk and drowsy driving is at its peak throughout the holidays. Data from the U.S. Department of Transportation has shown that an average of 300 people die in drunk driving crashes in the week between Christmas and New Year. This is, of course, heightened during the month itself, with Christmas parties and celebrations.

Drowsy driving can be as a result of many things including working overtime in the busy December period; having friends and family visits; or even just the exhaustion of preparing food, presents and everything else required for Christmas.

All of these and many other factors can lead to dangerous driving when employees get behind the wheel of a heavy vehicle at work.

Drowsy drivers are far less aware of hazards and have longer braking distances.

By the way, drivers who have to get up early will be more at risk of drowsy driving.

### **Fatigue:**

Similar to the previous point, drowsiness and fatigue can cause issues both in and outside of the workplace. And, because it is a busy season, you should take extra precautions with staff.

Whether they are on production lines, construction sites or operating heavy machinery, employees should look out for the signs of fatigue to prevent workplace accidents.

It is important to remember in the case of fatigue, that winter illnesses such as cold, flu and sore throat also lead to tiredness. Staff with cough, temperature and other similar symptoms may have slower reactions.

### **Holiday Stress:**

The holiday season is stressful for many families. This can be as a result of working more, having more to do at home, worrying about finances, eating, and drinking too much or simply feelings of loneliness.

To support your employees through this time — and, ideally, around the year — make sure that they have someone to speak to. Give them more opportunities to rest and do not stimulate working long hours or taking on extra work.