



## **Autumn – a Season of Hazards**

As we say goodbye to the warm days of summer and hello to cool days of fall, be aware of new or increased hazards that can catch you by surprise. This includes hazards related to weather, temperature changes, and health concerns.

### **Slips, Trips & Falls**

When working outdoors in the autumn, workers may encounter slip, trip, and fall hazards due to falling debris or materials, vegetation, hazardous conditions due to weather such as wet or icy surfaces, or low visibility due to fog. Keep your workspace and walkways clear of falling leaves. Wet leaves can create a hazard for pedestrians in the fall by making sidewalks slippery. Later in the season, snow may mix with leaves to increase the risk of falling.

### **Space Heaters**

A space heater can be an effective way to warm up a chilly workspace, but it's essential that you read the instructions on the unit before you use it. Care needs to be taken to provide sufficient ventilation to ensure proper combustion, maintain the health and safety of workers, and limit temperature rise in the area.

### **Low Visibility**

Falling leaves, while beautiful, can obscure your vision, as can rain and fog. Shorter days are part of the fall season, making it more difficult to see children playing or people walking and riding bicycles. Be aware of limitations in your visibility, and slow down if you can't see well.

### **Weather Changes**

Since fall weather can change quickly, you should always be prepared for possible cold, windy, and wet weather even if the sun is shining. Wear light layers.

### **Health Matters**

Autumn weather means that the flu season is upon us. Flu viruses infect the nose, throat, and lungs and can cause a wide range of complications. Sinus and ear infections are examples of moderate complications from flu. Pneumonia is a serious flu complication that can result from either flu virus infection alone or from co-infection of flu virus and bacteria. Protecting yourself from flu also helps protect the people around you who are more vulnerable to serious flu illness.

### **End of Daylight Savings**

The end of daylight-saving time can leave many feeling fatigued, which can pose safety risks both at home and in the workplace. Studies suggest that it takes people who work



traditional hours several days to fully readjust their sleep schedule after the time change. While it may seem a welcome gift to get an extra hour of sleep as opposed to losing an hour in the spring, there is a physiological consequence to changing our clocks. Don't be surprised if you feel a bit sluggish during the first week or so after "falling back" to standard time.

### **SAFETY REMINDER**

October through early to mid-December is considered the secondary tornado season. Be mindful of severe weather warnings...