

SAFETY GAZETTE



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WORKING IN COLD WEATHER: MOVING AND STORAGE INDUSTRY

Written by: Cesar Rubio, Senior Loss Control Representative

It's that time of year again when the cold weather is here and winter storms are brewing. For those of you who have lived in cold climates, you may feel a little more confident as we approach the dropping temps, but keep in mind, not everyone is as knowledgeable as you and could pose a hazard, severely interrupting your day. Read on for tips about how to protect yourself this season.

Preparing your vehicle for cold weather is critical. Make sure the anti-freeze is at an adequate level—a frozen engine can be troublesome at the very least and very expensive at worst. Also, have tire chains ready if you are in an area where snow is common or mandated by law. Drivers should know how to install the chains before they are needed, so a quick reminder/training session in your next safety meeting may be in order. And as always, check the vehicle tires to make sure they have plenty of tread. Worn tires are a cause of many vehicle accidents and this threat is magnified in wet, snowy or icy conditions.

On the road, drivers who are not familiar with snow and ice are more likely to be overly cautious and drive unusually slow, or be careless and drive too fast. This is important to be aware of, especially in areas with heavy traffic. Be patient and move around them carefully, giving plenty of room to navigate.

It is also a good idea to throw a blanket or sleeping bag in the cab of the truck in case the vehicle breaks down or is stuck in traffic for an extended period of time. This will help keep employees warm in the cab without having to run the engine and risk running out of fuel. This does not happen often, but if you



have ever been stuck on a freeway for four hours or more, you understand how dangerous this situation can be.

Now is the time to make sure your roof is in good condition. Snow and/or ice on a roof is very heavy and can cause collapse with excessive build up. But even light ice as it melts can seep through holes in the roof and cause water damage inside. You should have sidewalk salt or some other deicer available to keep sidewalks clear of ice. This will help prevent slip and fall injuries for employees and customers. This may be necessary at a client's home as well. Be sure to get prior approval from the homeowner before you use anything on their property.

Speaking of the client's property, during cold seasons having someone available to open and close doors for moving personnel is a great customer service practice. Clients probably won't want doors left open when your employees go in and out. Having extra floor covering is a great idea as the dolly wheels may bring in a lot of moisture from ice, snow and rain. And be sure to keep truck ramps clean and dry to reduce slip and falls on the ramp that can result in employee injury and property damage.

At the corporate level, it is a good idea to have a communication plan in place to notify employees or clients that due to weather conditions, operations may be affected. In some cases, it may be necessary to restrict employees from coming to work due to the weather. Having the ability to communicate an office closing quickly to employees is critical. Be sure to develop a plan to deal with those issues.

By preparing for the cold weather, you can reduce the business interruption that may impact your operation while keeping employees safe and customers informed.



METAL HALIDE LIGHTING

Written by: Tim Unger, Loss Control Specialist

There can be several fire hazards that may be obvious in your typical facility, such as storage of flammables or combustible materials. However, some not so obvious potential fire hazards also exist. One of those is metal halide lighting.

Metal halide lights are a type of High Intensity Discharge (HID) Lamp that are often found in manufacturing facilities, gymnasiums and warehouses. These lights typically work well without any issues. However, metal halide lights have also been a cause of several warehouse fires over the years. One such incident occurred in 2017. A fire occurred in an industrial building in New York that was said to have been caused by the ignition of highly-combustible cardboard being stored in the warehouse. The fire caused the roof and some of the walls of the six block long building to collapse. It was found that the ignition of the cardboard was caused by the failure of a single light bulb – a metal halide light bulb.



Metal halide lights use quartz arc tubes which operate at high pressures and extremely high temperatures (as high as 1832°F, 1000°C). These arc tubes can rupture unexpectedly due to internal causes or external factors. Over time and usage, the light bulb ages and as a result, can weaken the arc tube potentially leading to failure. Because the bulb contains pressurized gases, the failure results in a violent rupture. The rupture leads to extremely hot glass and other lamp parts being discharged, which may then fall onto combustible materials below, igniting them and causing a fire. This is known as a non-passive failure.

The first step in managing this potential risk is to identify if metal halide lights are currently in use in your facility. A qualified lighting or electrical contractor would be able to identify metal halide lights as well as inspect them for any defects requiring replacement. Once you have identified that you have metal halide lights in place, the following precautions are recommended:

- Ensure that no combustibles are stored directly below the lights or less than three feet to the side of the lights.
- The lights should be changed out before the end of their rated lives. This can help to mitigate safety concerns. A record

should be kept as to when the metal halide lights were installed and when they should be replaced.

- If the lights remain on 24 hours per day, then they should be turned off once a week for a minimum of 15 minutes.
- Enclose the light fixtures. Depending on the fixture, it may be possible to enclose it with a glass or acrylic lens that may protect against the failing hot glass in the event of a failure.
- Change sockets to open-rated sockets. Open-rated sockets only accept protected metal halide lights that contain a shroud around the arc tube to keep hot particles inside the lamp.
- Consider replacement of metal halide lights with LED lights. LED lights are not susceptible to the same type of failure and may also reduce energy costs.
- Ensure all forklift operators are trained in the hazards of these lights and the risks involved if they are struck during operations. If needed, consider arranging storage so this is not a concern.
- Lastly, all manufacturers' warnings and instructions should be carefully followed to avoid potential failures. A regular monitoring and inspection process of the lighting system in your warehouse and taking proper precautions can help reduce the likelihood of fires originating from metal halide lighting.





IS YOUR COMPANY PREPARED FOR A FUEL SPILL?

Written by: Nancy Ross-Anderson, Loss Control Specialist

Thousands of dollars may be at stake based on the answer to the above question. Often the amount of dollars paid in fuel spill claims directly relates to the actions of our customers once a spill has occurred. Do you have a fuel spill kit in each of your vehicles? If not, they are inexpensive and readily available as portable kits. Two very important elements in fuel spill cost containment include: 1) the driver's actions at the time a fuel spill occurred, and 2) the actions taken by your claims/safety staff after a fuel spill has been reported by your driver. First, proper training for handling fuel spills is a must and should be done in your orientation process. If handled improperly, fuel spill cleanup may cause added expense and/or could endanger your driver and others.

- If the saddlebag is leaking, shut off the crossover lines and attempt to plug the hole to slow or stop leakage.
- If the crossover lines are leaking, cut and crimp by any means possible. Prevent spilled liquid from entering storm drain or sewers.
- Build up soil to slow run-off of spilled liquid.
- Confine the liquid to a hard surface such as asphalt or concrete and discourage washing the liquid from the road surface.
- Keep all persons except for emergency responders away from the spill.
- Do not sign any contract or clean-up agreement without instructions from your company contact person.
- Notify the appropriate person at your company and follow their instructions. Notify local authorities of the nature and extent of the spill.
- Do not discuss the spill with anyone other than government authorities or your selected clean-up contractor.
- Remain at the scene as instructed by your company contact.

