

Safety Hazards Faced by Santa & His Elves



Being Santa Claus must be very rewarding. After all, you're adored by children everywhere. But Santa and his worker elves also face some very real safety hazards, as explained by NIOSH.

For example, a chimney is the very definition of a confined space. So Santa should be taking appropriate safety measures, such as having a trained elf act as a confined space attendant in case he gets stuck. (Santa can get more information at the Confined Space Compliance Centre.)

And spending all that time on roof tops obviously exposes Santa to the risk of falls. I hope he has a fall protection plan in place.

As NIOSH notes, Santa may work only one day a year, but it's a long overnight shift. And we know the various risks that shift work and worker fatigue pose. Plus, driving a sleigh while drowsy poses its own risks.

Santa's reindeer seem pretty amazing. But working with or near animals can always be dangerous. Not to mention that Santa runs the risk of encountering polar bears at his workshop at the North Pole! (Here's a bear safety training checklist Santa can use to ensure his training for the elves covers all of the bear safety basics.)

I can only imagine how much Santa's big bag of toys weighs. Lugging that bag around all night exposes Santa to the risk of all sorts of musculoskeletal injuries, particularly back problems.

Cold winter weather and flying at high altitudes expose Santa to cold stress. I wonder how warm that red suit really is'.

Drowsy driving isn't the only hazard related to Santa's sleigh. If texting or talking on a cell phone while driving is hazardous, I can only imagine how distracting reading a very long naughty and nice list is. Do you think Saint Nick has a distracted driving policy'

Hmmmm"maybe being Santa isn't all it's cracked up to be. I guess we should be

even more appreciative of his efforts given all the health and safety hazards he and his elves face just to bring us gifts. Thanks, Santa!

The OHS Insider wishes all of you a happy'and safe'holiday season!

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