

# December 2018

McMaster's Workplace Wellbeing Newsletter focuses on the promotion of health, safety and wellness. Inquiries and feedback about any of the information in this newsletter may be sent to [ehss@mcmaster.ca](mailto:ehss@mcmaster.ca). This newsletter can also be provided in an accessible format upon request.

Workplace  
Wellbeing  
e-Newsletter



## **Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)**

A team of health, safety & risk management specialists committed to supporting the University's commitment to creativity, innovation and excellence, and strives to achieve these standards in the areas of environmental and occupational health, safety, loss prevention and mitigation.

## **Employee Health Support Services (EHS)**

A team that provides programs & services to help employees lead healthier lives, in and out of the workplace. We are committed to supporting employees in a healthy & safe return to work following an injury or illness, facilitating workplace accommodations & fostering healthy work environments.

## **Organizational Development**

A team that offers a supportive working environment through strong employee engagement, employee recognition & wellness. We also encourage individuals to enhance their personal and professional growth by recognizing that our employees and partners are our most valuable assets.



## McMaster Storm Closure Policy

The University will formally announce a closure when severe weather poses a danger to students, staff and faculty while on campus or if the weather would prevent large numbers of people from coming to campus or returning safely to their homes. Every effort will be made to confirm

a closing by 5:30 a.m. When a closing has been confirmed, it will be communicated via the Daily News, the University's social media sites, and Hamilton media (radio and television).

When the University is closed, classes are not held, meetings and other scheduled events are cancelled and all areas and operations not defined as essential are closed. Examinations are cancelled and rescheduled. Deadlines for student assignments and other submissions due on a closed day are postponed until the same hour on the next academic day that the University is not closed. Faculty, staff and students are responsible for checking local media and the Daily News on stormy days. The complete storm emergency policy and procedure is available here:

[https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Employee/storm\\_emergency\\_policy.pdf](https://www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Employee/storm_emergency_policy.pdf)

## Holiday Shutdown

McMaster University will be closed for the holidays at the end of the work day on Friday, December 21 and reopen Wednesday, January 2, 2019. Classes start Monday, January 7.

Prior to leaving for the holidays, please ensure unnecessary equipment is unplugged. Turn off lights, close all fume hood sashes and water taps.

Campus services will be suspended during this time. All custodial, maintenance and cleaning services will be suspended.

Please refer to the [Daily News](#) for further update.

**Out of Sorts?**

**Problem?**  
Lights aren't working?  
Door won't lock?

**Hazard?**  
Water on the floor?  
Broken railing?  
Tripping hazard?  
Electrical panel blocked?

**You Must Report!**

- ✓ Report to Your Supervisor  
And/Or
- ✓ Call Facility Services Customer Service at x24740  
And/Or
- ✓ Put in a Service Request through Mosaic  
And/Or
- ✓ Resolve it on the spot!  
eg: Wipe it up!

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McMaster University



## Prevent Slip and Fall Accidents this Winter

During the winter months we can expect to see plenty of snow and ice as we travel by foot outdoors. Slip and fall accidents can result in serious injury.

This winter follow these tips to reduce your risk of injury from a slip and fall:

- Wear appropriate footwear that is in good condition and provides traction on snow and ice. If you prefer dress shoes, change your footwear once you arrive in your office.
- Be aware of the potential for black ice (thin coating of ice that is visually transparent). Black ice most often develops around dawn and in the evening when temperatures are lowest.
- Don't be distracted by cell phones or music as it's important to be aware of your environment and listen for oncoming traffic or snow removal equipment.
- Avoid carrying items or walking with your hands in your pockets, this makes it difficult to catch yourself if you lose your balance. Try using a backpack.
- Use caution when entering buildings as floors are often wet due to melted snow and slush. Always remove snow and ice build-up from your shoe soles.
- Regular exercise can improve balance, increase flexibility and make you stronger, in turn preventing a fall.



## Campus Snow/Ice Removal Plan

Facility Services works diligently to reduce snow and ice hazards on sidewalks, steps, accessible ramps and parking lots for the safety of our campus community. It is policy to begin the on-call snow removal operations process upon accumulation of 1.27cm of snowfall or at the direction of Security Services. Pre-treatment and ice control may be addressed in advance of a storm.

Snow and ice removal on campus requires the support of many areas within Facility Services. The Grounds team removes snow and ice from roads and sidewalks, and the Custodial team removes snow and ice from building entrances and accessible ramps leading to buildings. Contracts are also retained to assist with snow and ice removal in parking lots and as requested.

The priority areas for snow and ice removal include: hospital and helipad, main campus roadways for emergency access, accessible parking spaces, bus routes, pedestrian walkways for residence and access routes. Once priority areas are managed, heavily traveled pedestrian routes are cleared for areas on campus open during normal business hours.

**If a path, sidewalk or parking lot has not been appropriately cleared or salted this winter, please report hazardous conditions immediately to Facility Services Customer Service at extension 24740. After hours, please contact Security Services at extension 24281 or 905-522-4135.**



# The Holidays and Fire Safety

As the holiday season approaches many of us start to think about family, friends and food. This year, we hope that you also think about safety in the home. A number of holiday traditions bring the risk of fire. The good news is if we are smart about these traditions, the risk will be quite low. You should consider the following to ensure that being festive doesn't result in fire.



First and foremost, check the condition of your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors. Replace batteries if needed and check the expiry dates on these devices.

Stay in the kitchen while cooking. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), cooking equipment is the leading cause of home fires.

If you are using extension cords, holiday lights or decorations that require electricity always check for damage and wear prior to use. Any damaged electrical equipment should be immediately replaced. All electrical equipment sold in Ontario must be approved by an accredited certification or evaluation agency. The item must carry the official mark or label of the agency which indicate that the product has been independently assessed for safety. Ensure your electrical equipment is equipped with these certification labels.

Always ensure that you have a clear path to exits. Never block egress routes or exits with holiday decorations.

Give space heaters space. Keep anything that can burn such as curtains or holiday decorations a safe distance away.

Blow out your candles. If leaving the room or going to bed, ensure that your candles are blown out.

Using a tree to decorate? If you have a real tree, make sure to keep it watered or it could dry out and become a fire hazard.

By following the simple tips listed above, you can relax and enjoy the holiday season while avoiding fire and focusing on festivities.

# Changed lab locations? Working in new lab? Have You Updated Your Emergency Contact Information?

Please ensure you have up-to-date information on-file with Security Services in case of an after-hours emergency in your area. Complete this form and be sure to include an alternate person(s) to contact who is aware of the hazards and practices within your areas should you not be available.

In the ***Anything Else We Should Know About Your Area*** section, include specific hazards (solvents, toxic chemicals, gases, radioactive materials etc.) that are present and detailed locations if possible, eg. NW corner of lab – hydrogen cylinder. This information could be extremely important in the event of an accident or incident in your area.

Please update any information if details change in the future.

[http://security.mcmaster.ca/emergency\\_contact\\_form.html](http://security.mcmaster.ca/emergency_contact_form.html)

## McMaster Emergency Guidebook

The **McMaster Emergency Guidebook** is a great resource available from Security Security to provide clear, concise and up to date safety resources to help prepare for and deal with emergencies. For more information on the **McMaster Emergency Guidebook** click [here](#).

## It's Beginning to Look Alot Like....a Good Time to Refresh Health and Safety Training

Many may find that work days leading into the holidays are a little quieter compared to other times of the year. This is a great opportunity to review your safety training compliance. Did you know you can check your completed health and safety training summary in Mosaic? If you do not see any training in Mosaic you will need to refresh your training. Training completed prior to Mosaic will not be listed.

Retaking all your required health and safety training will not only review and remind you of important safety information and requirements but will also ensure that your training is now documented in McMaster's current system.

For details on how to register for health and safety training click [here](#).

## Thinking about a Sit/Stand Workstation?

Sit/Stand workstations continue to grow in popularity. These workstations allow employees to alternate between sitting and standing to reduce long periods of sedentary postures and reduce the likelihood of muscle pain and strain. It is important to note that little scientific evidence is currently available to determine the benefits of a sit/stand workstation versus other known strategies to increase mobility (Workplace Interventions for Reducing Sitting at Work, McMaster Optimal Aging Portal).

Effective alternatives to sit/stand workstations include:

- Stand and take a scheduled break (every 30 minutes).
- Add a standing agenda item to meeting.
- Schedule a walking meeting.
- Walk during lunch break.
- Stand while talking on the phone.
- Walk to a colleague's office instead of emailing or calling.
- Stand to greet visitors.
- Active commuting.
- Stand at back of room during long presentations.
- Rotate job tasks.
- Set a reminder in calendar each hour to stretch/stand/walk.
- Perform stretches in the office.



All employees should be encouraged to engage in the above noted alternatives. For further information, please refer to Guidance for Consideration of Requests for Sit/Stand Workstations.

<http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/Guidance-for-Requests-for-Sit-Stand-Workstations-1-36.pdf>

[Click here](#) to watch a video for further information on this topic.

## Risk Management Manual Programs

The following RMM Programs have been updated and approved by Senior Management:

**RMM 401 Asbestos Management Control Program**  
**RMM 325 Process and Equipment Purchases and/or Modifications Program**  
**RMM 1201 Fire Safety Plan**

For a full listing of RMMs, please visit: [www.workingatmcmaster.ca/rmm](http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/rmm)

# Welcome to Homeweb

## Helping you live a healthier life



# Homeweb

Homeweb is an innovative online platform that offers members access to personalized health and wellness tools, resources, and support when they want it — anywhere, anytime.

### What do I need to know about Homeweb?

Homeweb is part of your Employee Assistance Program. You can access Homeweb on your phone, tablet, or desktop. Homeweb offers you the ability to create an individual profile, receive personalized content recommendations, and access lots of helpful resources.

### How to register for Homeweb

**Step One:** Visit [www.homeweb.ca](http://www.homeweb.ca) and click 'Sign Up'.

**Step Two:** Enter information into the required fields, choose an email and password, and click 'Next Step'. Then, type in your company name and click 'Find it!' Select the correct company from the list provided. If do not see your company listed...check the spelling and try again.

**Step Three:** Let us know how you are covered by Homewood, (e.g. through your organization or the organization of a family member), and let us know your relationship to the organization (e.g. employee, spouse, dependent, etc.). Submit the additional information required and click 'Sign In' at the bottom of the page.

### Welcome to Homeweb!

Search, browse, and get expert support.

[homeweb.ca](http://homeweb.ca)

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## Homewood Health

Improving Life



# 10 Ways to Combat Holiday Stress

1. Go outside and enjoy a hike in the sunshine. Soak up some vitamin D, and breath in the fresh air.
2. Volunteer for an organization in need, within your community. This is always appreciated and will warm your heart.
3. Forget perfection and focus on the things that give you energy and enjoy the people that are in your life.
4. Don't forget about the things that crack you up. Laughter is a great stress reliever. You may want to watch one of your favourite classic movies like Elf, The Grinch or Home Alone to name a few.
5. Do less and enjoy what you are doing more. You don't have to do everything. The holidays are busy and you need to make sure that what you are doing makes you happy. You should not feel guilty about saying no.
6. Don't be afraid to delegate. You don't have to take everything on yourself. Ask for help, and don't be afraid to give tasks to others. Then you can all be thankful for the group efforts.
7. Have fun in the kitchen. Make your favourite foods, turn up the music, and dance! Share your cooking with your friends, or neighbours.
8. Fit in exercise. At a time when we may have a few too many sweets and rich food, it's good to burn the extra energy with a nice long walk, a yoga session, a run, or whatever makes you feel happy and healthy.
9. You can reach out to experts. If you want to talk to someone who can help with how you are feeling remember that Homewood Health, our Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) is available 24/7, and is completely confidential. 1-800- 663-1142, or [homeweb.ca](http://homeweb.ca)
10. Do something nice just for you. Some people will schedule a massage, or a facial, or go to a museum. Think of something that you have been waiting all year to do. Remember that you too deserve to be on the "Nice list".



For the latest safety tools, resources and updates, follow us on Twitter and find us on Facebook @McMasterSafety.

# 2018-19 Flu Season

**NEW for 2018/2019 season, if you are 65 years or older, two different flu vaccines are available for you:**

1. Standard-dose vaccine, which protects against 4 strains of flu virus; or
2. High-dose vaccine, which protects against 3 strains of flu virus, but in higher doses (not available at pharmacies)

Talk to your doctor or nurse practitioner about which vaccine is better for you.

## [Where to get the flu vaccine?](#)

## **Tips to avoid getting and spreading the flu:**

- Wash your hands often
- Cover your mouth and nose when you sneeze or cough
- Don't touch your face
- Stay at home when you're sick
- Clean (and disinfect) surfaces and shared items.

For more information about the influenza vaccine, please visit the [Ontario flu website](#).



***Wishing you and your family a safe and happy  
holiday season!***