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**Common holiday season risks faced by businesses & tips for their prevention**

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 **Gifts – giving and receiving**

Check and remind employees of your policies regarding gift giving and receiving between both employees and clients, and ensure policies are clear.  If you don’t currently have a policy in place, now might be a good time to create one!

**Christmas party**

Before your staff Christmas celebrations, remind employees of your relevant policies, including anti-harassment, inappropriate verbal and physical contact and social media policies. If there is alcohol involved, ensure safe access to transport options for getting home and discourage drink-driving.  Remind employees what is expected of them if the following day is a work day.

**Employee theft**

Employee theft is more common during the holiday season, particularly in the retail industry. Financial pressure, stress and opportunity can encourage people to make bad choices.  Be diligent with inventory control and check tills regularly.

**Employee stress**

Many people suffer from stress during the holiday season, for all different reasons including financial pressures, personal and family related issues and lack of time and over scheduling, which can lead to in an increase in sick days.  Reduce sick time by creating a positive working environment. Encourage staff to voice concerns and offer open lines of communication between staff and management.  Ensure your employees are feeling valued and appreciated, and consider offering flexible work hours or mental health breaks, where possible.