

ECAT

Employee & Client
Assistance Team
780-461-7236

Phones do not accept
text messages. Staff need
to call ECAT.



What's inside this issue:

- Training -Page 4-5
- Health & Safety
Meeting Minutes
Page 6 - 7



Time Sheet Hand-In

December 15, 2025
For all shifts
worked between
December 1-15

December 30, 2025
For all shifts
worked between
December 16-31



HEALTH AND SAFETY MEETING

December 10, 2025

@ 1:30 PM

January 14, 2026

@ 1:30 PM

RPAC MEETING

December 17, 2025

@ 2 PM

January 21, 2026

@ 2 PM



ICE WILL BE CLOSED
ON DECEMBER 25 & 26,
2025 FOR
CHRISTMAS AND
BOXING DAY
&
JANUARY 1ST, 2026 FOR
NEW YEAR'S DAY



Please direct all calls to
the Employee Client
Assistance Team for that
day.

780-461-7236



DECEMBER 2025 | EDMONTON

ICE PAGE

Making it Happen! - Supporting Social Inclusion

ON SPOTLIGHT



Afreen is a young woman who lives with her family in Southern Alberta. Afreen has been receiving supports from ICE since 2016, and completed studies at the Lethbridge College in 2021.

Afreen has a deep love for animals. This passion led her to volunteer at the Lethbridge Corn Maze, where she helps care for animals like chickens, pigs, llamas, donkeys, goats, and birds. With support from her staff, Leslie, Afreen completes her tasks, including feeding, watering, and cleaning the animals' spaces. She has also volunteered at a local pet store. Afreen finds great joy and satisfaction in helping animals every day.



Afreen participates in weekly therapeutic horse riding. She grooms the horses, helps maintain their care, and enjoys riding in indoor or outdoor stables depending on the weather. Spending time with horses brings her happiness and helps her grow in confidence.

Afreen's family is very supportive and encourages her to explore new activities and meet new people. Recently, Afreen decided she wants to focus on being more physically active. She has started trying walks, swimming, rollerblading, and participating in community events like New Connections dances. These activities help her build confidence, try new experiences, and develop a healthy routine for her physical and mental well-being.

That's where Afreen's staff comes in! Leslie has worked with Afreen for a couple of years now, and together they have been able to create a balanced system of completing her volunteer tasks, while discussing what new opportunities Afreen may be interested in trying.

Afreen showcases her love of animals, being involved in her community and ensuring she balances routine with exploration of new things!

Afreen and Leslie's story highlights ICE's mission: to provide community-based services and support that help individuals pursue their goals, while fostering meaningful connections with skilled and caring staff. Afreen continues to thrive in her community, sharing her love of animals and exploring new opportunities with confidence.



Leslie has been a dedicated member of ICE South for 10 years. She has supported many individuals over the years and currently loves working with Afreen. Leslie is also a long-time member of the South Health and Safety Committee.

Leslie helps Afreen complete her volunteer tasks successfully, while also encouraging her to explore new interests. Together, they have built a balanced system that allows Afreen to follow her passions, try new activities, and develop independence. Their partnership shows the power of Integrity, Caring, and Empowerment—the values at the heart of ICE.



3.5.9 ELIMINATING/MITIGATING/CONTROLLING WORK SITE HAZARDS

MANUAL HANDLING & CLIENT ASSISTANCE

- Complete a **hazard assessment** before lifting, carrying, pushing, or pulling any load. Consider: **weight, size/shape, frequency of movement, and how it will be moved.**
- Assess physical and mental readiness before performing manual client/resident handling.
- If a potential MSI (musculoskeletal injury) is identified, a Supervisor/Manager will create a hazard control plan.

FIRE PREVENTION & HOME SAFETY

- No lit candles, fireplaces, or outdoor fire pits.
- No exterior potted plants or planters.
- Only use approved phone/device chargers.
- Sharps & ignition sources must be locked (residential) or secured (support homes).
- Cleaning supplies must be locked and stored separate from food/meds.



KITCHEN, APPLIANCES & TEMPERATURE SAFETY

- All homes must have a working fridge thermometer.
- Employees must wear clean, safe indoor shoes on shift.
- Provide supervision and proper protective equipment (gloves, goggles) when clients use appliances or yard tools.
- Document all orientation/training in the logbook.

HEATING, LIGHTING & SEASONAL SAFETY

- Portable heaters **cannot** be used as primary heat sources or inside bedrooms. A protocol must be created if a temporary heater is needed.
- Halogen lamps require employee supervision; all lamps must have covered bulbs.
- Christmas trees must be **artificial** in both client homes and office settings.
- Only use **approved** chargers and cords for electronics.
- Gas/propane BBQs are not permitted in apartments/condos; in houses, must be used **1.5 m away** from the building.

SNOW, ICE & WATER SAFETY

- Clear snow/ice immediately and log in hazard section.
- No transferring heated water for bathing —contact Supervisor/ECAT.

PERSONAL BELONGINGS & HEAT SOURCES

- Employee personal belongings must be locked away.
- No heating blankets, heating pads, microwaved towels or microwave-heated warmers.

EMERGENCY ACCESS & HAZARD REPORTING

- ✓ **A confidential spare key** must be kept in a secure lock box or outdoor safe location.

Employees must:

- ✓ Identify hazards, report them, and follow through on corrective actions with the hazard lead.
- ✓ Document hazard-related communication and actions taken in the **hazard section of the staff logbook.**



THANK YOU CARD WINNERS



PATRICIA E.



JACQUELINE Y.



JEFFREY O.



AGNES U.



GANYU A.



FRANCIS A.

Looking for Answers? Below are some online links you may find of assistance:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada.html>

Health Canada is responsible for helping Canadians maintain and improve their health. It ensures that high-quality health services are accessible, and works to reduce health risks.

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/service.aspx?id=1001957>

Linking Albertans to a wide range of health information and service options.

<https://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.html>
<https://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety/ohts-publications.html#laws>
<https://work.alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety/resources.html>

Alberta Occupational Health and Safety works in consultation with industry to help prevent work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities. The OHS site provides access to a wide range of information bulletins and on-line training options.

<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/findhealth/service.aspx?id=1001957>

Stay up to date on the most frequent information on COVID-19 in the province of Alberta.

<http://www.icenterprises.com/>

The ICE website has some important links on the main page for your reference as well as posted job opportunities and access to the ICE Page.

DECEMBER TRAINING

Pre- Employment Training

December 2, 3, 9, 10, 16, 17

Client Lifts & Transfers Training

December 1, 2025 (1 PM – 4 PM)

Incident Investigations Training

December 2, 2025 (1 PM – 4:30 PM)

Workplace Inspections Training

December 5, 2025 (9:30 AM - 1 PM)

Abuse Prevention Training

December 8, 2025 (10 AM – 12 PM)

Autism & Hypertension Training

December 8, 2025 (2 PM - 4:30 PM)

ADHD/Anxiety/OCD Training

December 9, 2025 (1 PM – 4 PM)

Depression/Schizophrenia Training

December 11, 2025 (1 PM – 4 PM)

Cultural Appreciation- NWT/Nunavut Training

December 12, 2025 (9:30 AM - 12:30 PM)

Psychosis/ Bipolar/ Alzheimer's & Dementia Training

December 12, 2025 (9:30 AM - 12:30 PM)

Substance Abuse/ Trauma Informed Care Training

December 12, 2025 (1:30 PM - 4:30 PM)

HACD Training

December 16, 2025 (1 PM - 4:30 PM)

BDP/ODD/Down Syndrome Training

December 17, 2025 (1 PM - 4 PM)

Online Client Training-Healthy Relationships, Client Rights & Responsibilities, Abuse Prevention & Scam Prevention Training

December 22, 2025 (2 PM - 4 PM)

Epilepsy/Cerebral Palsy/Brain Injury Training

December 23, 2025 (1 PM - 4 PM)

Trauma Informed Care Training

December 29, 2025 (1 PM - 5 PM)



Give us a



and a follow on Facebook!



REFERRAL INCENTIVE RECIPIENT

Employees or Support Home Operators who refer a person to ICE who successfully meets our hiring requirements and completes their three-month probation with a minimum of 120 hours worked, receive \$100.00!

ICE HAS CANADA LIFE RSP PLAN!

REFER TO POLICY 3.14.18 CANADALIFE RSP IF YOU ARE ELIGIBLE, ICE WILL MATCH YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS!

TO SIGN UP, PLEASE CONTACT INDEPENDENT COUNSELLING ENTERPRISES AT:

(780) 453-9659

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT CANADA LIFE:

[HTTPS://MY.CANADALIFE.COM/SIGN-IN](https://my.canadalife.com/sign-in)

CANADA LIFE HELPDESK:

1-800-724-3402

JANUARY TRAINING

Pre- Employment Training

January 6, 7, 13, 14, 20, 21, 27, 28

Depression/Schizophrenia Training

January 8, 2026 (1 PM - 4 PM)

Manual Material Handling Training

January 9, 2026 (9:30 AM - 1 PM)

Parkinson's, FASD, Healthy Eating Training

January 12, 2026 (1:30 PM - 4:30 PM)

WVHB Prevention for Supervisors Training

January 12, 2026 (2 PM - 4 PM)

Epilepsy/Cerebral Palsy/Brain Injury Training

January 15, 2026 (1 PM - 4PM)

LGBTQIA2 Training

January 16, 2026 (9:30 AM - 12:30 PM)

Burn Out Compassion Fatigue, Diversity in the Workplace Training

January 19, 2026 (1:30 PM - 4:30 PM)

Diligence for Supervisors and Managers Training

January 23, 2026 (9:30 AM - 1:30 PM)

Promoting Safety Training

January 23, 2026 (1:30 PM - 4:30 PM)

Abuse Prevention Training

January 29, 2026 (10 AM - 12 PM)



Have you Seen the New Website?!

**Easier to use. More accessible.
Designed for everyone.**



**WE'RE EXCITED TO SHARE OUR
UPDATED WEBSITE — CREATED TO
HELP INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES,
STAFF, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS
EASILY FIND THE INFORMATION
AND SUPPORT THEY NEED.**

SCAN HERE



WHAT YOU'LL FIND:

- ✓ Accessible, user-friendly design for all abilities and devices
- ✓ Clear information about our services and how to access them.
- ✓ News and events to keep you informed.
- ✓ Helpful resources like forms, policies, and links.

HEALTH AND SAFETY MEETING MINUTES

October 8, 2025

(MINUTES EDITED FOR PUBLICATION)

Review of Calgary Health and Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: The Calgary HSC reviewed one incident investigation. The incident involved a staff member feeling pain in their back following a two-person lift of a client.

HSC Recommendations: None.

Near Miss Investigations: The Calgary HSC reviewed one near miss investigation. The incident involved a glass bowl shattering after being dropped as the dishwasher was being emptied.

HSC Recommendations: None.

Review of Edmonton Health & Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Edmonton HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Near Miss Investigations: The Edmonton HSC reviewed one near miss investigation. The incident involved a client hitting staff after being told to wait for DATS.

HSC Recommendations: None

Review of Northwest Health & Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Northwest HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Near Miss Investigations: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Northwest HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Review of South Health & Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the South HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Near Miss Investigations: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the South HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

COR Audit/Action Plan

What was reviewed: Review Element 4 Joint Health and Safety Committee of COR Audit Pg 52-53.

Discussion: Discussed the scoring process for element questions in the COR Audit and explored strategies to improve employee engagement, particularly in gathering and implementing staff suggestions.

Formal (Master) Hazard Assessment and Control Document (HACD)

What was reviewed: Pg 2-4 Working with Clients – Potential for Verbal Aggression / Potential for Property Destruction

Any changes requested or required: No additional recommendations at this time.

Suggestions for upcoming yearly HACD review: No additional recommendations at this time.

Policy

Policy number and name reviewed: 2.3.7 Lifts and Transfers

Discussion: Discussed the current WCB injury trends for 2025, highlighting that sprains and strains are the highest reported injury so far this year. The conversation focused on potential contributing factors including lifts and transfers.

Emergency Response Plans

(Regional committees to review a sample of ERP drills and identify recommendations for improvement)

Number of drills reviewed: 0 reviewed this month.

Any recommendations for improvement: No additional recommendations at this time.

Emergency response plan reviewed: #3 – Workplace Violence Related to a Domestic Situation for an Employee, #4 – Workplace Violence – Bomb Threat, Robbery and Home Invasion.

Any recommendations for improvement: No additional recommendations at this time.

Next Meeting Date: November 12, 2025

**HURT AT WORK?**

EMPLOYEES AND SUPPORT HOME OPERATORS
ARE REMINDED OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITY
(AS PER LEGISLATION) TO REPORT ALL WORKPLACE INJURIES IMMEDIATELY TO AN
ICE SUPERVISOR OR MANAGER. IN THE EVENT OF AN INJURY, THE EMPLOYEE WILL
FOLLOW ALL AGENCY POLICIES AND PROCEDURE.

WHILE NOT ALL INJURIES ARE REPORTABLE TO WCB, ALL INJURIES AND WORK-
RELATED HEALTH CONCERNS ARE REQUIRED TO BE REPORTED WITHIN THE
COMPANY. THIS IS DONE SO THAT HEALTH AND SAFETY INVESTIGATION AND
FOLLOW-UP MAY BE COMPLETED FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL PARTIES.



HEALTH AND SAFETY MEETING MINUTES

November 17, 2025

(MINUTES EDITED FOR PUBLICATION)

Review of Calgary Health and Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: The Calgary HSC reviewed one incident investigation. The incident involved a staff member losing balance while descending stairs which caused them to fall.

HSC Recommendations: None.

Near Miss Investigations: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Calgary HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Review of Edmonton Health & Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: The Edmonton HSC reviewed one incident investigation. The incident involved a staff member's vehicle being hit by a community member while making a left turn.

HSC Recommendations: None.

Near Miss Investigations: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Edmonton HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Review of Northwest Health & Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Northwest HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Near Miss Investigations: None reviewed as there were not any in the past reporting period by the Northwest HSC.

HSC Recommendations: None

Review of South Health & Safety Investigations**Incident Investigations for Injury, Health, and Property**

Damage: The South HSC reviewed one incident investigation. This incident involved a client being escalated throughout the day which caused them to throw a toy at a staff member.

HSC Recommendations: None.

Near Miss Investigations: The South HSC reviewed one near miss investigation. The incident involved a fire extinguisher going off in a staff members' car after they came to an abrupt stop.

HSC Recommendations: None

COR Audit/Action Plan

What was reviewed: Reviewed Element One – Management Leadership & Organizational Commitment – reviewed key strength (1.13) and all suggestions for improvement (1.4, 1.8). Element Two – Hazard Identification and Assessment – reviewed key strength (2.4) and all suggestions for improvement (2.7, 2.12, 2.14) of the 2025 COR Executive Report.

Discussion: Work on the 2025 COR Action Plan is underway, alongside this health and safety is working on creating educational pieces via the ICE page, memos and email blasts for staff to review.

Formal (Master) Hazard Assessment and Control Document (HACD)

What was reviewed: Pg 5-7 Potential for Harassment and Bullying, Pg 8-9 Potential for Physical Aggression
Any changes requested or required: Pg 5-7 and Pg 8-9 Clarify the company cell phone mentioned for high-risk situations. ICE provides emergency cell phones only for situations where the program phone is not working.

Suggestions for upcoming yearly HACD review: No additional recommendations at this time.

Policy

Policy number and name reviewed: 3.5.7 Mandatory First Aid Kits

Discussion: Discussed the importance of vehicle first aid kits and emphasized that all employees who perform driving duties for ICE are required to have a Type 1 Personal First Aid Kit.

Emergency Response Plans

(Regional committees to review a sample of ERP drills and identify recommendations for improvement)

Number of drills reviewed: 1 office fire drill reviewed this month – no concerns noted.

Any recommendations for improvement: No additional recommendations at this time.

Emergency response plan reviewed: #5 – Personnel Risk (Pandemic Shortage/Loss of Staff), #6 Security Risk – Loss of Theft of Private Information.

Any recommendations for improvement: No additional recommendations at this time.

Next Meeting Date: December 10, 2025





STATUTORY HOLIDAYS 2026

New Year's Day	Thursday	January 1, 2026
Alberta Family Day	Monday	February 16, 2026
Good Friday	Friday	April 3, 2026
Easter Monday	Monday	April 6, 2026
Victoria Day	Monday	May 18, 2026
Canada Day	Wednesday	July 1, 2026
Heritage Day Holiday	Monday	August 3, 2026
Labour Day	Monday	September 7, 2026
Thanksgiving	Monday	October 12, 2026
Remembrance Day	Wednesday	November 11, 2026
Christmas	Friday	December 25, 2026
Boxing Day	Saturday	December 26, 2026

REMINDER!



WHEN AT THE OFFICE, FIELD STAFF ARE CLASSIFIED AS VISITORS FOR SAFETY AND SECURITY PURPOSES. PER POLICY 3.5.8 VISITORS/CONTRACTORS, ALL VISITORS ARE REQUIRED TO DOCUMENT THEIR ARRIVAL AND DEPARTURE ON A SIGN IN SHEET AVAILABLE AT THE RECEPTION DESK.

THE SIGN IN / OUT SHEET IS USED TO ENSURE EVERYONE WORKING IN THE OFFICE IS SAFE AND ACCOUNTED FOR IN THE EVENT OF AN EMERGENCY. PLEASE DO YOUR PART IN KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE BY REMEMBERING TO SIGN IN AND OUT.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE POLICIES :

- 3.5.8 VISITOR/CONTRACTOR AND POLICY
- 3.9.1 SITE SECURITY

INDEPENDENT COUNSELLING ENTERPRISES**Time Sheet Submission Dates and Pay Dates for 2026**

MONTH	TIME SHEETS	PAY DATE
December 2025	Hours for December 16th-31st Due December 30	Paid on January 9
January	Hours for January 1st-15th Due January 14 Hours for January 16th-31st Due January 30	Paid on January 23 Paid on February 10
February	Hours for February 1st-15th Due February 13 Hours for February 16th-28th Due February 27	Paid on February 25 Paid on March 10
March	Hours for March 1st-15th Due March 13 Hours for March 16th-31st Due March 30	Paid on March 25 Paid on April 10
April	Hours for April 1st-15th Due April 15 Hours for April 16th-30th Due April 29	Paid on April 24 Paid on May 8
May	Hours for May 1st-15th Due May 13 Hours for May 16th-31st Due May 29	Paid on May 25 Paid on June 10
June	Hours for June 1st-15th Due June 15 Hours for June 16th-30th Due June 30	Paid on June 25 Paid on July 10
July	Hours for July 1st-15th Due July 15 Hours for July 16th-31st Due July 29	Paid on July 24 Paid on August 10
August	Hours for August 1st-15th Due August 13 Hours for August 16th-31st Due August 31	Paid on August 25 Paid on September 10
September	Hours for September 1st-15th Due September 15 Hours for September 16th-30th Due September 30	Paid on September 25 Paid on October 9
October	Hours for October 1st-15th Due October 14 Hours for October 16th-31st Due October 30	Paid on October 23 Paid on November 10
November	Hours for November 1st-15th Due November 13 Hours for November 16th-30th Due November 30	Paid on November 25 Paid on December 10
December	Hours for December 1st-15th Due December 15 Hours for December 16th-31st Due December 29	Paid on December 24 Paid on January 8, 2027

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we prepare to welcome the end of 2025, I want to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for everything you have contributed this year. Before the holidays begin, it feels right to pause and acknowledge the people whose hard work, care, and dedication made this year successful—you.

This year reminded us how quickly our field can shift. New expectations, changing needs, and unexpected challenges became part of our daily work. But what truly stood out was how you responded. You adapted, you supported one another, and you continued to provide steady, dependable service to the individuals and families who count on us. Your teamwork and strength were the foundation that kept our agency moving forward.

Your everyday actions also demonstrated the values that define our organization: **Integrity, Caring, and Empowerment**. These values showed up in many ways—through clear and accurate documentation, through respectful and patient support, and through the encouragement you gave to clients as they learned new skills or reached for new goals. These values are part of who we are as an agency, and this year, you lived them in meaningful ways.

I want to sincerely thank you for the commitment you showed to health and safety. A safe environment does not happen by accident; it happens because people choose to pay attention, speak up, and follow procedures. You identified hazards, took precautions, and protected one another. Your efforts ensured that both staff and clients could work and live in safe, supportive spaces.

Because of your work, our agency remains strong, trusted, and prepared for the future. The care you provide, the communication you maintain with families, and the collaboration across teams all show our partners and funders that quality is at the heart of what we do. These strengths will serve us well as we move toward the next year!

On behalf of the entire leadership team, thank you. Your resilience, professionalism, and compassion are the reason we continue to be recognized as a leader in our sector. I hope you feel proud of everything you accomplished this year.

As we enter the holiday season, I encourage you to take time for yourself—rest, reconnect, and recharge. We look forward to stepping into 2026 together with hope and confidence.

**WISHING YOU A PEACEFUL, WARM, AND VERY WELL-DESERVED
HOLIDAY SEASON.**

BRANDY THOMPSON - PRESIDENT
INDEPENDENT COUNSELLING ENTERPRISES

MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER (COO)

2025 HEALTH & SAFETY COR AUDIT UPDATE

What is a Certificate of Recognition (COR)?

A Certificate of Recognition is awarded to employers who have built and maintained a health and safety management system that meets the standards set by the Alberta Government and a recognized certifying partner. For ICE, that partner is the Alberta Association of Safety Partnerships (AASP). To keep our COR in good standing, ICE completes an annual audit of our health and safety program.

Why Does ICE Participate in the COR Program?

Health and safety have always been core values at ICE. Participating in the COR program helps us ensure that our practices protect employees, clients, contractors, and everyone connected to our work. Through COR, we aim to:

- Reduce workplace injuries and incidents
- Maintain or exceed all legislative requirements
- Strengthen our overall safety culture and engagement

Who Contributes to the ICE Health & Safety Program?

Everyone plays a role.

In August 2025, ICE completed an internal COR maintenance audit—one of two internal audits conducted every three years. Our trained internal auditors spent approximately three weeks conducting interviews, reviewing documentation, and completing observation tours in two ICE regions (Edmonton and South).

Following the review of ten key elements of our health and safety system, ICE earned an impressive 98% overall score.

Even with such strong results, continuous improvement remains a priority. Over the coming months, we will evaluate audit findings and develop an action plan to keep strengthening our health and safety program. Keep an eye out for new safety initiatives!

Where Can I Access the COR Audit Results?

You can review the full COR audit results in any ICE Health & Safety Manual. These manuals are available at all ICE offices and residential locations. The audit summary can be found in Part One – Section 6, under COR Executive Summary.

Congratulations to everyone on this outstanding COR performance. Each employee's commitment contributes to a safer workplace for all, and our 98% score reflects that dedication. Let's keep building on this success—great job, ICE team!



Hilary Smith

Chief Operating Officer



CREATING A SAFE AND JOYFUL HOLIDAY SEASON

As the holidays approach, many clients look forward to celebrating in ways that bring them comfort and happiness. This time of year, is a chance to share kindness, connection, and joy. Support staff play a significant role by helping clients take part in seasonal activities that reflect their interests and traditions. Whether clients are celebrating Christmas, another holiday, or simply enjoying the season, your support helps make this time of year safe and meaningful.

When preparing homes or activity spaces for the holidays, please remember that safety always comes first. Before decorating or cooking, take a few minutes to inspect the area for hazards. You can find a full list of common holiday hazards in Policy 3.5.9 – Eliminating, Mitigating, and Controlling Work Site Hazards. A few examples are listed below:

- *Inspect all electrical cords and lights; replace any damaged or burnt-out items.*
- *Keep cords and decorations clear of walkways to prevent trips or falls.*
- *Use only artificial greenery—real trees, wreaths, and garlands can become a fire risk as they dry out.*
- *No real candles or open flames. Battery-powered or LED lights are a safe and festive alternative.*
- *Follow proper food safety guidelines and stay nearby while food is cooking.*
- *Do not use sharp objects, such as pins, to hang decorations.*
- *Review the Holiday Decorations Hazard Checklist in Part 2, Section I of the Health and Safety Manual.*



Regular staff presence during the holidays helps clients feel comfortable and supported. Discuss the holiday schedule ahead of time so clients know what to expect. When planning events or gatherings, focus on the client's preferences, comfort level, and needs.

Not everyone celebrates the holidays in the same way. Some may enjoy hanging lights, decorating a small tree, or baking favorite treats. Others may choose to celebrate diverse cultural or religious holidays—or none at all. Please take time to ask clients what the season means to them and respect their individual choices. This can include exchanging gifts or receiving something special. Ensure to coordinate with your supervisor so proper arrangements are made.

Thank you for helping create a warm and safe holiday season for everyone.



“The best holiday traditions are the ones shaped by the people we support—honoring their choices is the true spirit of the season.”



HOLIDAY MEAL IDEAS FOR THE SEASON

Looking for an easy alternative
to cooking a festive meal this
holiday season? Here are some
options:

SWISS CHALET

Festive Special® - \$18.29

A quarter of our Rotisserie Chicken served with
Signature Chalet Dipping Sauce, a dinner roll, your
choice of side, stuffing, cranberry, and 5 LINDOR
Chocolate Truffles. Plus, a Festive Scratch & Win Card*

Pick up or Delivery
only until December 28th, 2025

17004 107 Ave NW
Edmonton

SAWMILL PRIME RIB & STEAK HOUSE

Holiday Lunch Buffet - \$29.95

4810 Calgary Trail South,
Edmonton
December 3rd - 19th

Roast turkey, House-made rich turkey gravy
Cranberry sage stuffing, Chef's selection of salads
Our famous hand-carved roast beef, Feature
vegetarian pasta and fish dishes

ELA EURO CATERING

Christmas Buffet - \$35.00

11113-113 Street NW
Edmonton

Stuffed Pork Loin with Prunes, Meat Loaf,
Roasted Baby Potatoes, Carrots with Dill,
Pierogies with Onion and Sour Cream, Dinner
Rolls, House Salad

Holiday Activities to Share with Clients

Create meaningful moments this
December with simple, low-cost
activities that bring people
together. Here are some fun
and easy ideas you can try with
your clients:

- SIP HOT CHOCOLATE AND ENJOY A FAVOURITE HOLIDAY PLAYLIST.
- CREATE SIMPLE DIY HOLIDAY DECORATIONS.
- SNAP PHOTOS ON A WINTER SCAVENGER HUNT.
- PLAY A QUICK GAME OF HOLIDAY BINGO.
- SHARE A FAVOURITE WINTER MEMORY OR TRADITION.
- DECORATE SMALL GINGERBREAD OR GRAHAM HOUSES.
- EXPLORE DIFFERENT WINTER HOLIDAYS WITH QUICK FACTS OR PICTURES.
- DO HOLIDAY-THEMED PUZZLES OR GAMES.
- WALK OR DRIVE TO SEE NEIGHBOURHOOD HOLIDAY LIGHTS.
- TAKE A GENTLE WINTER WALK OUTDOORS.



BEHAVIOURAL SUPPORT CORNER

“
Sometimes the most important
thing in a whole day is the rest we
take between two deep breaths.
– Etty Hillesum
”



To provide effective behavioral support for individuals with disabilities in winter, focus on maintaining routine, offering engaging indoor activities, considering sensory sensitivities, and ensuring physical safety and health.

Maintaining Routine & Structure:

- **Visual Schedules:** Use visual aids (pictures/icons) to outline daily activities and any upcoming changes, like holiday events or breaks. This predictability helps reduce anxiety and manage expectations.
- **Consistency:** Stick to a regular schedule for meals, bedtimes, and activities as much as possible. If a change is unavoidable, prepare the individual in advance using social stories or role-playing (whatever works best for the individual).
- **Break Down Tasks:** For those who struggle with overwhelming tasks break them into smaller, manageable steps.



Engaging in Activities and Physical Movement:

- **Indoor Physical Activity:** Lack of outdoor time can increase restlessness. Encourage indoor exercises like yoga, stretching, dance, or creating indoor obstacle courses (i.e. cushions and household items).
- **Sensory-Friendly Play:** Offer winter-themed sensory activities (ex. creating "snow" with cornstarch and lotion, winter sensory bins, or playdough with calming scents).
- **Skill-Building Activities:** Engage in activities that are also learning opportunities (ex. cooking/baking healthy snacks and meals, winter-themed art projects like snowflake crafts, or board games that help social skills and problem-solving).
- **Embrace Chores:** For those who can participate, winter chores like shoveling snow can be a great way to burn energy and provide a sense of contribution.



Addressing Sensory and Emotional Needs:

- **Monitor Sensory Triggers:** Be mindful of sensory triggers like loud holiday music or crowded events. Offer quiet breaks and spaces as needed.
- **Comfortable Clothing:** Soft, loose-fitting layers instead of bulky outerwear is helpful to lower stressful emotions. Consider adaptive clothing designed for sensory sensitivities and ensure proper winter gear (i.e. boots, gloves) is available and comfortable.
- **Natural Light and Vitamin D:** Maximize exposure to natural light by opening blinds and spending time outside during daylight hours, even for short walks. Consult a doctor about potential Vitamin D supplements to combat low mood.
- **Quiet Space:** Designate a quiet corner with items like weighted blankets, fidget toys, and noise-canceling headphones for decompression.

