

Shift Work and Holidays



Don't celebrate on **a** day; celebrate **an** event!

My father was a pipeliner, who either worked shift work or worked irregular hours because of being on call.

I am a pipeliner, and have always either worked shift work or irregular hours because of being on call or doing work at all hours of the day and week.

Our family learned to celebrate holidays when we were all able to be together, even if it wasn't on the official holiday date.

Can we be thankful on other days than Thanksgiving Day? Sure, being thankful is not limited to one day!

Holidays present challenges for shift workers and for companies. In November and December, many people want to participate in events with family and friends. Some shift workers may sacrifice sleep and rest to make a quick trip to a family dinner or a holiday party. At the time, that event is all-important. Later, on the job, a person may regret the lack of rest. Hopefully, the person doesn't make a costly error or cause an accident.

It's a good idea this time of year to discuss the risks of inadequate rest and the responsibilities for being alert on the job, both on the day shift and on the night shift.

Think about these suggestions for handling the increased demands for your time and presence during months with important holidays:

- **Be a planner** – Sit down with your family and a calendar. Write down all the events and the dates when they occur. Write down your work schedule and time to get at least eight hours of sleep. Mark those times on the calendar. Then select the other events that are high priority for your family.
- **Be realistic** – Do not attempt to spend time on one day with the different members of the family and all your friends. Recognize someone will be disappointed that you cannot attend their special party.
- **Be flexible** – Recognize that things beyond your control will occur, and you will have to change your plans. Someone may get sick, and you have to fill a shift on your off day. Try not to get overly stressed with your disappointment.