

Getting Ready for the Holidays

The temperature has dropped, snow is piling up in some places, and everyone is getting ready for the Holidays. We have lots of preparations ahead of us – planning our vacation, buying presents, planning meals, getting together with our families, and sending New Year's greetings.

Some of us, though, have to be at work. Plants, as we well know, operate 24/7. It's not possible to shut them down, not even for Christmas. Well, plants are not alone. Over the past decade, the number of workers who had to work on Christmas increased by 78%. Research shows that an equal number of men and women go to work on Christmas Day here. According to recent research in the US, security and public safety workers, service and maintenance staff, and technicians are most likely to draw holiday shifts here.

Studies show that many shift workers suffer from stress caused by missing out on important parts of their social life. It's harder for shift workers to spend time with their children and to attend school functions with them. Spouses may work the opposite shift, thus resulting in less time together. Unmarried shift workers miss out on the social life that most daytime workers have (here).

While we all understand that hospitals, plants, as well as vacation resorts must operate on holidays, let's see what kind of measures can be taken by human resource departments to "sweeten the kitty". First of all, it is recommended to give employees the chance to volunteer for these shifts. For some of them the extra money might make a real difference, and they would seize any opportunity to benefit. Then, offer some kind of compensation, in addition to the guaranteed extra money for the shift. It could be a significant supplement (always

appreciated), and if that is not an option, some kind of a gift card (dinner, movie, etc.) to show appreciation for their being at work when everybody else is celebrating or relaxing. Another idea it to create some holiday atmosphere around the work premises – some festive decorations or a special toast for the ones at work could turn these shifts into something a little different.

However, preparations for the holiday season also exceed our private lives. At the workplace, things are different during the Holidays. There are fewer personnel on-site, presumably the minimum required, and some workers are on call, ready to leave their friends and family should an emergency occur. As far as maintenance goes, only an emergency team is on-site to handle the most urgent, unexpected failures. Obviously, there is no scheduled maintenance for this period.

Having fewer people on-site, and the understandable reluctance to call in more employees on their days off, should encourage us to prepare beforehand. Maintenance is part of our routine all year round, but preventing shutdowns and machine failures during the holidays is even more important. Today, we have cutting-edge predictive maintenance solutions that can assist us. Take Precognize, for example, which can achieve zero machine failure. There's no need to call someone in the middle of dinner on Christmas Eve because a valve has frozen, or because an operator at the control room has made a mistake. Having a reliable software that detects everything, produces only a few true alerts (instead of hundreds of false alarms), and notifies 48 hours in advance is advantageous throughout the year. During the Holidays, it sounds like the right way to celebrate: with very little noise, and peace of mind.

Learn more about Precognize: www.precog.co, and in the meantime have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!