

## The 25th is just another day on the job for some workers

By Shawn Wirtz  
Of the Emerald

While most people can expect to spend Christmas at home with family and friends, for others it's just another day on the job.

Christmas doesn't stop accidents or crime, and it doesn't make the job of being a police officer any easier. "It's the reality of emergency services work," said Eugene police officer Bob Holland.

Holland will work the swing shift Christmas Day from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. "It makes it difficult to get together with the family," Holland said. His family often celebrates Christmas on his closest day off rather than Christmas itself, he said.

Holland tries not to let working on Christmas bother him, he said. "I don't feel like the Lone Ranger," he said. "You've got the people you work with."

"I try and be in the spirit of things," Holland said. For instance, "I don't give tickets on Christmas if I can at all avoid it," he said.

Holland has worked the last five Christmas Days, and they are a little different from most other days, he said. "Usually the call load on Christmas is relatively light," he said. Of the calls police officers do get, there is "an inordinate amount of family disputes," he said. Either a father comes home after a lengthy absence, or alcohol ignites family tensions, he said.

Alcohol also plays a big part in the workday of convenience store clerks who work on Christmas. In addition to last-minute ingredients for Christmas dinner, alcohol is one of the biggest sellers, said 7-Eleven employee Jack Santerre. Customers usually joke about getting stuck working on Christmas, but "some of them are almost apologetic," he said.

Other than celebrating Christmas Eve rather than Christmas Day, working really doesn't spoil his holiday, he said. "I'm too old now. Christmas just isn't what it used to be."

Carrie Farmer, another 7-Eleven employee, said she doesn't resent working on Christmas. She and her co-workers each work a four-hour shift rather than the usual eight-hour shift, so "the only crimp is, I have to get up early," she said.

King's Table restaurants also will be open on Christmas. "We get a pretty good turnout," according to Larry Haresnape, advertising and promotion manager. "A lot of people who don't want to cook at home come to King's Table," he said.

"What we get at Christmas time are a lot of seniors, a lot of couples who may not have families here and large families who would rather do something

else than cook," he said.

Christmas doesn't stop newspapers either, but it usually makes for a light news day, said Cynthia Anderson, Register-Guard assistant city editor. Only one part-time reporter works Christmas Day, but "if something big happens, we could always call someone in," she said.

The Register-Guard relies heavily on wire reports and features to fill its after-Christmas edition, Anderson said. "We do it all ahead of time."

At Sacred Heart General Hospital, fewer operations are scheduled for Christmas Day, but the same number of staff members are scheduled to work, said Lynn Griffith, a registration clerk in the emergency room. The emergency room schedule reads like the "Twelve Days of Christmas" — three nurses, two clerks, a physician and a technician, per shift.

Each year, employees "basically put in a request for days off," so it usually works out so that those who work don't mind, Griffith said. "If you work in a medical situation, you realize you can't request it off every year," she said. Instead, employees with small children or those who worked the previous year get priority, she said.

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