Legal Beagle's Blog Archive for December 2015

Roger Williams University School of Law

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According to the US Department of Transportation, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, “The average Thanksgiving long-distance trip length is 214 miles, compared with 275 miles over the Christmas/New Year’s holiday. For the remainder of the year, average trip distance is 261 miles.”

While there are many stories about air travel travails (missing baggage, delayed flights, unruly passengers, etc.), there is one book a law student can read to soothe any fears about upcoming travel plans. Cancelled, Delayed, Grounded: Law for the Frustrated Air Traveler by Cecil C. Kuhne III is available in the law library for your reading pleasure.

With practical information about your air travel rights as well as chapters about notable air travel-related cases, this relatable book can help you get through an air travel conundrum. At the very least, it is worth considering as a holiday gift for the pilot, flight attendant or baggage handler in your family.
Legal Beagle's Post

The War on Christmas (Lights)

Posted by Library Blog on 12/15/2015 at 11:39 AM

Every year around this time we turn on the TV, the computer, and/or the radio and we hear about the war on Christmas. The Legal Beagle is a non-partisan dog and doesn’t want to have political conversations around the holiday table. Instead of blogging about the so-called War on Christmas, instead we will discuss researching the recent war on Christmas lights.

According to a 2014 press release, “The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) estimates there were 15,000 injuries involving holiday decorating seen in emergency departments nationwide during November and December 2012.” The CPSC is a federal agency charged with protecting the public from unreasonable risks of injury or death associated with the use of consumer products. This summer the CPSC issued a regulation for Christmas lights deeming some holiday decorations a "substantial product hazard."
A fun research exercise is trying to find this regulation and information about this change online. The first place to check would be the CPSC website. Unfortunately, using “christmas lights” as your search term results in many, many hits due to the number of recall notices on this website. However, if you choose the sort by date feature of the search tool, and then find the results from this summer when the new regulation was final (and the above news story was published by Fox News) you can find a link to an informational post titled Seasonal Lighting (Holiday Lights and Decorative Outfits) which provides information about the change.

Searching “christmas lights” for the regulation on Westlaw Next and Lexis Advance isn’t much help but if you slightly change the search to “seasonal lights” it is much easier to find the regulations and information from the Federal Register. Once you find the Federal Register citation (80 F.R. 25216), learning out more about the change is easy!