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Steps to a Safer Job

Job hazard analysis protects you

Some job hazards are obvious. Anyone can see them—even an inexperienced employee. Take, for example, a piece of pipe sticking out of a shelf into an aisle at eye level or a grease spot on the floor. But not all hazards jump out at you. Some lurk in unexpected places such as a storeroom or stairwell. Some work slowly over time such as a repetitive motion that eventually causes a musculoskeletal disorder. And some, such as an odorless, colorless poisonous gas like carbon monoxide, are even invisible.

The best way to find hard-to-detect hazards is to make a step-by-step examination of every task involved in performing your job. Here's how:

Step 1—Break your job down into a series of tasks. Unrecognized hazards might be hidden in any one of those tasks, so take a close look at each one in the order in which you perform it.

Step 2—Identify the hazards. Look for anything that could go wrong while you're performing each of the tasks from Step 1. For example, while performing a particular task, could you:

- Make a movement that could cause an injury, such as strain your back from heavy lifting?
- Trip over objects in the work area or fall from a height?
- Be struck by an object?
- Get a hand or an arm caught in moving machine parts?
- Be exposed to equipment hazards such as electrical shock or burns from hot parts?
- Be exposed to chemical vapors, excessive noise, extreme heat, or harmful dust?

Step 3—Look for ways to eliminate hazards. Ask yourself how you could perform each task more safely. Is there something you could do that you're not doing now? For example, are there any special techniques, such as safe lifting, that you could learn and use to make the task safer? Would inspecting equipment or materials thoroughly before every use help eliminate hazards?

BE A HAZARD HUNTER

You don't need special equipment to detect hazards in the workplace. In fact, you already possess the most useful and sensitive hazard identification equipment available—**your senses.**

Take Bill, for example, who used his **sense of smell** to detect hazardous chemical vapors that were leaking from a damaged container. He reported the problem right away, and the damaged container was removed before anyone got hurt.

Then there was Carol, who used her **sense of sight** to spot a carton jutting out into an aisle just waiting to trip the next person who came along. She moved the box out of the way where it would no longer be a hazard.

Terry used her **sense of touch** to warn her that the boards she was handling were rough and had some splinters. She played it safe and took the time to put on a pair of work gloves to complete the job.

What about Al? He used his **sense of smell** to catch a whiff of smoke coming out of a storeroom. When he investigated, he found the area full of smoke and flames. He quickly activated the fire alarm, and the fire was put out before it could do a lot of damage or injure any workers.

And let's not forget Marsha, who used the most important sense of all—her **common sense**—to warn her that she ought to wear a seat belt, even though she was only driving a few miles for her work errand.

There's usually a lot you can do to make a task safer. Of course, before you make any changes, check with your supervisor!

Solving Solvents

Can you handle solvents safely?

Although solvents are commonly used, they can be hazardous to your health and safety if improperly handled. Follow these safety tips for working with solvents:

- **Dispense solvents carefully.** Bond and ground containers to prevent buildup of static electricity, which could start a fire.
- **Take only the minimum amount of solvent needed** for the job and put it in an approved safety container.
- **Keep the container closed** except when adding or removing solvents.
- **Wear required PPE** such as eye protection and gloves. Ask your supervisor and check the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for the required PPE.
- **Dispose of solvent-soaked rags in designated closed containers.**
- **Don't eat, drink, or smoke in any area that contains solvents.** Also, don't keep food, beverages, eating utensils, etc., in these areas.
- **Don't wash your hands with solvents**—use soap and water instead.
- **Remove contaminated PPE and work clothes as soon as possible** after working with solvents to avoid getting solvents on your skin.
- **Store solvents safely** in designated areas.
- **Inspect stored containers regularly** for leaks, corrosion, dents, and other damage. Report problems immediately.
- **Dispose of solvent wastes properly.**



Say 'Goodbye' to Cigarettes!

The Great American Smoke-out is 11/15

According to the American Cancer Society, about 1 in 4 adults and 1 in 5 teens in the United States smoke. If you're one of them—or know someone who is—these five quitting tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention can help:



1. Stop smoking *completely*. Smoking even a few cigarettes a day can damage your health. And while you may try to smoke fewer cigarettes, you'll soon be smoking the same amount again.

2. Write down why you want to quit. For example, do you want to have better health? Set a good example for your children? Protect your family from breathing secondhand smoke?

3. Face the fact that quitting won't be easy. Nearly all smokers have some feelings of nicotine withdrawal when they quit. Give yourself a month to get over these feelings. Take quitting one day at a time, even 1 minute at a time—whatever you need to succeed.

4. Half of all adult smokers have quit—so you can, too. There are millions of people alive today who have learned to face life without a cigarette. For staying healthy, quitting smoking is the best step you can take.

5. Get help if you need it. Many groups offer written materials, programs, and advice. Or ask your doctor or dentist for help and support.

Now See Here!

Protect the only pair of eyes you get

The most important thing you can do to keep your eyes healthy is to get regular checkups on this schedule from the American Academy of Ophthalmology:

- ☺ **At birth and 6 months**, checked by a medical professional
- ☺ **At 3 and 5 years old**, screened for crossed eyes, lazy eye, dropped eye lid, and vision check
- ☺ **Childhood and teenage years**, examined every 1 to 2 years
- ☺ **Ages 20 to 29**, at least one complete exam
- ☺ **Ages 30 to 39**, at least two complete exams
- ☺ **Ages 40 to 64**, complete exam every 2 to 4 years
- ☺ **Age 65 and over**, complete exam every 1 to 2 years to check for glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration

If you have any of these risk factors, get professional checkups even more often:

- ✓ **Diabetes**
- ✓ **Personal history** of eye injury requiring medical care
- ✓ **Family history** of eye problems
- ✓ **African American over the age of 40**

Of course, any time you experience problems with your vision, get it checked right away. Frequent headaches related to reading or detail work could also be a sign you need your vision checked. Don't wait for your next exam. And if you currently wear corrective lenses or contacts, have a vision check every year.

THERE'S MORE TO BACK SAFETY THAN SAFE LIFTING

Using safe lifting techniques is an important way to protect your back from injury. But it's not the only way. Here are other things you can do to protect your back—and your co-workers' backs, too:

- ➔ Keep walkways clear of tripping hazards, which can lead to falls and back injuries.
- ➔ Use ladders properly to prevent falls and back injuries. Don't climb higher than the fourth rung from the top of a straight ladder, for example, or the second on a stepladder. And always hold on to both side rails as you climb and descend.
- ➔ Use handrails on stairs to prevent falls.
- ➔ Clean up or report spills, which can cause slips and falls.
- ➔ Don't jump from platforms or other heights.
- ➔ Use good posture and change your working position as often as you can to relieve muscle stress.
- ➔ Limit bending and twisting. Place objects on tables rather than floors, for example, so you don't have to bend and lift.

Can You ID the Hazards?

Which situations could cause an accident?

See how good you are at identifying workplace hazards by placing a check in the box before each situation that is hazardous and could lead to an injury.

- (1) An office worker climbs on his desk chair and then onto his desk to reach files on a shelf over his desk.
- (2) An employee doesn't go back to his locker to get his safety glasses to saw a couple of boards.
- (3) A worker on break brings a bag of chips into a dip tank area where solvents are used to degrease metal parts.
- (4) An employee sneaks a smoke in the restroom. When he's finished he steps on the butt and tosses it into the trash-can, which is full of paper towels.
- (5) When a worker sets up an extension ladder, she estimates the height from the base to the support point at the top is 12 feet, so she places the base 3 feet from the wall.
- (6) A worker is preparing to clear a jam from a machine. He turns off the machine, locks out the power at the source, and places a warning tag.
- (7) A machine operator has a few beers at lunch and returns to work with a pleasant little buzz.

How did you do?

Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, and 7 can all cause accidents.

Safe and Sound

Are you prepared for emergencies?

To make sure you can evacuate your workplace safely in an emergency:

- 🔔 Know your workplace's Emergency Action Plan, including how and to whom to report workplace emergencies.
- 🔔 Know where emergency alarms are located and how to use them.
- 🔔 Know how to perform any emergency duties you've been assigned.
- 🔔 Have at least *two* emergency exit routes from your work area—a primary route and an alternate route in case your primary route is blocked by fire or smoke.
- 🔔 Follow the illuminated EXIT signs to evacuate safely.
- 🔔 Move swiftly, but don't run.
- 🔔 Move away from the building so you don't hamper emergency operations.
- 🔔 Know the location of your safe haven or refuge—the place you should escape to in the event of an emergency.
- 🔔 Report to the evacuation warden when you reach the safe haven.
- 🔔 Stay in the refuge until notified by the warden that it is safe to leave.



Also remember these important evacuation safety tips...

- Recognize your limits; don't be a hero.
- Let people do the jobs for which they're trained, and you do yours.
- Remain calm; help others only if you can do so without endangering yourself.

Accident Q & A

What you need to know about accidents

Check out the answers to these important safety questions:

Q. What should you do if you have an accident on the job?

A. Get proper medical attention if you're hurt or help co-workers who are hurt if you can. Report the incident to your supervisor.

Q. What should you do if you witness a workplace accident?

A. Write down what you saw so you don't forget. Your evidence can help in the accident investigation.

Q. What should you do if you're on the scene following an accident?

A. Don't disturb the scene of the accident. You could destroy valuable evidence. Rope off the area until investigators have a chance to examine it.

Q. How can you contribute to an accident investigation?

A. Provide any information you have about an accident to investigators. Come forward right away and tell what you know. Don't be afraid of getting anybody in trouble. The purpose of the investigation is to figure out what happened and make changes to prevent future accidents. Nobody's looking to assign blame.

Q. What should you do about near misses or accidents where nobody gets hurt?

A. Report these incidents as well. We need to know about these events so that we can correct any safety problems and make sure that the same thing doesn't happen again and actually cause an injury.

