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A Look at Eye Safety October is Eye Injury Prevention Month

Studies show that the two main reasons American workers suffer eye injuries are:

1. They weren't wearing *any* eye protection.
2. They were wearing the *wrong kind* of protection.

These findings give you a clue about what to focus on to prevent eye injuries. You also need to identify all the eye hazards in your job, which could include:

- **Impact**—from flying chips, particles, sand, and dirt, etc.
- **Burns**—from sparks, molten metal, or chemical splashes
- **Irritation**—from chemical vapors or dust
- **Effects of light radiation**—from welding and similar operations

Next, you need to select the right eye protection for the job. The wrong kind may be worse than no protection in some cases. So make sure you know which safety eyewear protects against which hazards. For example:

- ☞ **Safety glasses with side shields** or goggles provide good protection against impact hazards.
- ☞ **Ventilated safety goggles** prevent chemical vapors or dust from getting at delicate eye tissue.
- ☞ **A face shield worn over safety eyewear** provides extra protection from flying particles and chemical splashes.
- ☞ **Goggles worn with a face shield** protect against burn hazards.
- ☞ **Welding goggles with special lenses** protect eye tissue by filtering out harmful light radiation.

Finally, follow these safe work practices when eye hazards may be present:

- **Obey all warning signs** requiring eye protection.
- **Always put on eye protection before entering an area** where hazards may be present.
- **Assume eye hazards are present** whenever you're not sure.
- **Make sure eye protection fits properly** and comfortably.
- **Inspect protective eyewear for damage before each use**, and replace it immediately if there is any defect.
- **Ask your supervisor** if you're not sure which type of eye protection is required.

EYE SAFETY STATISTICS

Here are some facts about workplace eye injuries from workplaceeyesafety.org:

- **More than 800,000 work-related eye injuries occur every year.** And if you add to that all the injuries that occur off the job, you've got a really enormous figure!
- **Most eye injuries occur in production jobs**, followed by transportation, material handling, and service industry jobs. Construction workers are also at risk.
- **Men are the most likely to have eye injuries on the job.** Some estimates range as high as 80 percent of all eye injuries.
- **Workers age 25 to 34** are more likely to have eye injuries than any other age group, followed by workers age 35 to 44.
- **The most common eye injuries are chemical burns**, followed by cuts, lacerations, or punctures caused by parts, materials, and hand tools.



How the pirate got his eye patch.

Chemical Safety

Follow these do's and don'ts

DO's:

- ✓ Read labels and MSDS before starting a job; follow safety instructions.
- ✓ Wear required PPE and protective clothing.
- ✓ Use approved and labeled containers for storing chemicals.
- ✓ Make sure there is enough ventilation.
- ✓ Store them safely, e.g., separate materials that could react with each other.
- ✓ Check containers to make sure they're sealed and not leaking.
- ✓ Wash carefully after using any chemical, and dispose of contaminated clothing and equipment properly.
- ✓ Know who to contact and what to do in a chemical exposure emergency.

DON'Ts:

- * Don't leave chemical containers open when not in use.
- * Don't siphon chemicals by mouth.
- * Don't depend on a "funny smell" to warn you of hazardous vapors in the air—some are odorless.
- * Don't mix a chemical with another substance—even water—unless you have been instructed to do so and have checked the MSDS.
- * Don't breathe vapors produced by chemical reactions—wear a respirator.
- * Don't smoke, eat, drink, or apply cosmetics around chemicals.
- * Don't pour chemicals down the drain—dispose of them properly.
- * Don't hesitate to ask your supervisor if you're unsure of hazards or how to protect yourself in a particular situation.

Got a Death Wish?

Don't use alcohol or drugs on the job

Kenny Wilson drove a forklift at ABC Plumbing Supply's warehouse. This particular day, Kenny had had a tough morning. Constant work. An argument with a co-worker. And his boss on his back for driving too fast. So Kenny felt he deserved the couple of beers he had for lunch. And he felt he needed a few puffs of marijuana in his truck before returning to work to calm his nerves.

Unfortunately for Kenny—and for Jeff Aron—the beer and the drug made Kenny too relaxed. He was driving too fast down an aisle when Jeff stepped out from behind a shelf. By the time Kenny jammed on the brakes, he'd already hit Jeff and killed him. Jeff was married with two kids and another on the way.

Drug or alcohol use on the job, during breaks, or before coming to work can have a devastating effect on safety. Both alcohol and drugs deprive you of most of the tools you rely on to perform your job safely. Substance use can affect your:

- Vision
- Reflexes
- Coordination
- Emotions
- Aggressiveness
- Judgment

Don't take chances with your safety or the safety of co-workers. Don't drink or take drugs and work. It's just too dangerous. It's also a violation of policy and could lead to discipline or even discharge.

IT'S TIME TO INSPECT YOUR HOME FOR FIRE HAZARDS

October is **National Home Inspection Month**, and **Fire Prevention Week** is also in October, which makes this the perfect time to inspect your home for fire hazards. Here's what to look for:

- ☑ **Old wiring** and overloaded electrical circuits
- ☑ **Worn or damaged outlets** and cords and plugs on lamps and appliances
- ☑ **Extension cords run under rugs**
- ☑ **Faulty heating systems**, e.g., has your heating system been professionally serviced and checked this year? Is your chimney clean if you intend to use a fireplace or woodstove this winter?
- ☑ **Kitchen appliances and power tools left plugged in when not in use**
- ☑ **Appliances that spark**, smoke, or smell when turned on
- ☑ **Containers of flammable substances, such as gas for the mower, not tightly sealed** in appropriate containers or stored near heat or ignition sources
- ☑ **Too many appliances or tools plugged into the same outlet**
- ☑ **Oily rags left lying around** in the work-shop or broom closet
- ☑ **Smoke detectors with old or no batteries**
- ☑ **No family emergency plan for evacuation** in case of a fire, or no recent fire drill to practice evacuation procedures

Every home is vulnerable to fire. Yours could go up in flames, along with the items you've worked so hard to own, unless you and your family take fire safety precautions and inspect regularly for fire hazards.

Watch Out for Mr. Clean

Cleaning products can do you dirty!

When performing routine housekeeping chores at work or at home, you could be exposed to potentially hazardous cleaning products. Exposure to some strong cleaners could lead to dermatitis, asthma, and other ailments. Use this checklist to help you avoid problems when using powerful cleaning products.

Do you:

- | | YES | NO |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • Read and follow warnings on the label? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Read the material safety data sheet (MSDS) if one is available? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Wear goggles to protect your eyes when using caustic cleaners? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Wear gloves when chemicals in products can cause skin irritation? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Avoid breathing vapors, and remember that dust masks don't prevent exposure to fumes from cleaners? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Avoid mixing cleaning products? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Make sure there is proper ventilation to prevent buildup of potentially harmful vapors? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Safely handle leftover cleaners in buckets, on mops, and on sponges? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Did you check all the "YES" boxes? If you didn't, you could have a problem next time you use a cleaner that contains hazardous chemicals. Keep this checklist handy as a reminder of the precautions you need to take when performing housekeeping tasks that involve cleaning products.



Open Wide!

Take good care of your teeth and gums

Did you know that the health of your teeth and gums can have a significant impact on your general health? According to a report by the U.S. Surgeon General, poor oral health is a factor in life-threatening diseases that kill millions of Americans each year. For example, gum (periodontal) disease has been linked to heart and lung disease, diabetes, and several other serious health conditions.

October is **National Dental Hygiene Month**, which makes this a good time to think about your oral health. If you're like many Americans, you don't take as good care of your teeth and gums as you should. Consider these jaw-dropping statistics from the American Dental Hygienists Association:

- 50% of Americans do not receive regular oral health care.
- 75% of the U.S. population has some form of periodontal gum disease.
- 50% of all American youth ages 17 and under have had cavities in their permanent teeth.
- Only about 55% of all people who floss do it every day. Women tend to floss more than men, and people over age 50 floss more than younger adults and children.
- 3 out of 4 patients don't change their toothbrush as often as they should. Replace your toothbrush every 2 to 3 months and after illnesses, like a cold or flu.

SAFETY AUDITS

Safety and health audits are internal checks of safety and health performance and compliance with safety and health regulations and policies. We conduct them to help identify what we're doing right and what we can do better.

Generally, an audit looks at the facility itself, the equipment we use, and the procedures we follow. This helps us isolate problems and identify exactly what changes we need to make to prevent accidents and illnesses on the job.

When conducting a safety audit, we begin by determining priorities. In other words, we decide what safety and health issues we will investigate. Then, we develop an inspection checklist that includes all the items and areas we plan to inspect.

We proceed to look at each item on the list very carefully to determine if there are any hazards and if the item is in compliance with safety and health regulations and our organization's safety policies.

Safety audits may look at machinery and equipment, processes, hazardous substances, emergency preparedness, safety and health practices, use of personal protective equipment, effectiveness of workplace housekeeping, and so on.

Don't Blame the Cow

Take responsibility for fire prevention

Back in 1871 fire swept through the city of Chicago. By the time the last embers of that great fire had gone out, more than 250 people were dead, 100,000 were left homeless, 17,000 structures had been destroyed, and more than 2,000 acres had been burned.

The story goes that the fire was started when Mrs. O'Leary's cow kicked over a lantern in the O'Leary's barn. Whether that's true or not, nobody really knows. But even if it is, you can't blame the cow for the fire. It's the person who left the lamp lit where the cow could kick it over who is really responsible. Blaming the cow is like blaming a pile of trash for starting a fire. The trash might be the instrument, but it's human error of some kind (not disposing of the trash, allowing it to get too close to an ignition source, dumping oil-soaked rags into the trash, etc.) that is the real cause of the fire.

October 5 to 11 is Fire Prevention Week. Take a little time during this week—and every day all year—to think about workplace fire safety and to keep an eye out for fire hazards. There are lots of potential hazards—ignition sources, electrical problems, flammable chemicals, combustible materials, and more. So keep alert and do your part to prevent workplace fires.



First Aid for Eye Injuries

Do you know the right steps to take?

If you get an eye injury on the job, *always* get medical attention. But while you're waiting for professional help, applying proper first aid to the injury could help prevent permanent damage. Take this quiz to see if you know the proper first-aid measures for different kinds of eye injuries.

1. What should you do if you get a particle in your eye?
 - a. Flush the eye with water.
 - b. Rub the eye.
 - c. Apply a cold compress.
2. What should you do if chemicals splash in your eye?
 - a. Flush with water.
 - b. Let tears wash chemical out
 - c. Apply a cold compress.
3. What should you do if you get a blow to an eye?
 - a. Flush with water.
 - b. Rub the eye.
 - c. Apply a cold compress.
4. What should you do if you get a cut near an eye?
 - a. Flush with water.
 - b. Bandage loosely.
 - c. Apply a cold compress.
5. What should you do if an object penetrates an eyeball?
 - a. Flush with water.
 - b. Immobilize the object.
 - c. Pull it out right away.

Answers:

(1) a (2) a (3) c (4) b (5) b

PROTECT AGAINST INTERNET CRIME

October is **National Crime Prevention Month**, and the FBI warns you that every year Internet crime schemes steal millions of dollars from uninformed or incautious victims. One big Internet crime area involves investment fraud. Follow these tips from the FBI regarding Internet investment services:

- If an offer seems too good to be true, it probably is.
- Be very skeptical of promises to make fast profits.
- Don't invest in *anything* unless you understand the deal.
- Don't assume a company is legitimate based on a slick-looking web-site.
- Don't respond to investment offers received through unsolicited e-mail.
- Be wary of investments that offer high returns at little or no risk.
- Independently verify the terms of any investment that you intend to make.
- Research the parties involved and the nature of the investment.
- Be extra cautious when dealing with individuals outside the country.
- Contact the Better Business Bureau to determine the legitimacy of the company.