



YCPARMIA Safety Journal

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Repeat Resolutions

They're better than repeat accidents!

Are you going to make another resolution to work more safely this year? That's a great idea! And a good place to start is to cut down on repeat accidents. **What** causes repeat accidents?

- **High-risk jobs** involving hazardous chemicals, dangerous equipment, and confined spaces.
- **High-stress jobs** without adequate built-in relief, such as enough staff or sufficient break times.
- **Seasonal jobs** that involve periodic high-volume work, which can create accident clusters.
- **Repetitive jobs** that can cause ergonomic injuries.
- **Repeat injuries** from previous injuries that did not heal properly, possibly because of returning to work too early.
- **Referred injuries** from overcompensation of other body parts to make up for the injured body part, such as hip problems from adjusting the gait to accommodate a knee injury.

Who causes repeat accidents?

- **Stoic "tough guys"** who work through any injury and consider it a sign of weakness to do otherwise.
- **Angry people** who let passion distract them from working safely because they're "just so angry they can't see straight".
- **Easily distracted people** who don't pay enough attention to what they're doing.
- **Disengaged workers** who don't care enough to be careful.
- **Tired people**, including shift workers, whose lifestyle doesn't give them enough energy or alertness to work safely.
- **Workaholics** who won't stop to report for fear of losing work time.
- **Shy workers** who won't draw attention to themselves by reporting an incident and risking an investigation of their work.

Do you recognize yourself in any of these characters? If so, resolve to stay safe this year. Check **news & notes** for what you can do to stop repeat accidents.

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REMOVING REPEAT ACCIDENTS

Here's what you can do to help break a cycle of repeat accidents in your workplace:

DO:

- Make no more repeat accidents a Number One safety objective.
- Talk about your priority every day.
- Be a safety advocate. Remind co-workers not to take shortcuts, use substitute tools, or otherwise increase their risks for accidents.
- Be a cheerleader, not a critic for safety responsibility in your work area.
- Always be on the lookout for potential safety problems.

DON'T:

- Don't criticize co-workers without also offering suggestions and support.
- Don't lecture. Lectures only annoy and they turn co-workers into passive receptors rather than actors in improving their own safety performance.
- Don't blame. Even if a co-worker makes a mistake, remember the goal is to fix the error, not to point fingers.
- Don't assume the worst of people. This assumption can backfire by becoming a selffulfilling prophecy for the singled-out person.
- Don't give pep talks with simplistic answers. Actions speak louder than words so back up encouraging words by making real changes and offers of assistance.

You play an important role in preventing repeat accidents—both your own and your co-workers'.

The Eyes Have It

Protect what you have

January is **National Eye Care Month**, which is a great time to be reminded of the preciousness of our eyesight and the need to use eye protection. Consider these basics of eye safety.

- ☺ **Identify each eye hazard** you face on the job and know specifically how a particular type of safety eyewear protects you from each hazard.
- ☺ **Realize why OSHA requires eye protection.** OSHA knows how dangerous many jobs are and imposes strict fines to urge all workers to take steps that will save their eyesight from workplace injuries.
- ☺ **Know the consequences** of failing to use required eye protection. Have you heard horror stories—or miracle stories—about how workers' eyes have been injured because they weren't wearing eye protection or their eyesight was saved because they were?
- ☺ **Recognize that eye protection gives you more control** over your own safety. The simple practice of donning appropriate PPE in the face of particular hazards gives you that extra measure of control.
- ☺ **Be a vision leader.** Always use required eye protection in the work area. Make sure visitors use it, too—even if they're just passing through an "Eye Protection Required" work area. The example you set for co-workers is always a powerful message.

Always protect your eyes with a clear vision for eye safety on the job.

New Year, New Skill

Long-time employees can learn new techniques

If you've been at your job for a while, you may feel that you've learned all there is to know about how to perform it safely. But why not take a new look at your work in the new year? Will 2010 bring change to your industry from new technology, new procedures, or new equipment?

Stay ahead of the safety curve and keep yourself mentally sharp by seeking out learning opportunities. AARP recommends these learning avenues:

- **Classes**—Check into company or community classes on skills that you'd like to develop. You may be able to do this online through distance learning. Check the "Education + Training" section at www.careeronestop.org.
- **Mentoring**—Is there someone at work whose skills and competence you admire? Consider asking if he or she will mentor you in the business. This could include cross-training and supervisory skills training.
- **Volunteer**—Find community agencies that need assistance in the skills you would like to develop and that will let you learn while you volunteer. Check www.volunteermatch.org.



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WEIGHT LOSS RESOLUTIONS

Choose the healthy way with tips from the Weight-control Information Network (WIN):

UNHEALTHY: Fad diets don't work because:

1. They're so strict you don't stay on them.
2. They may not provide proper nutrients.
3. Losing more than 3 pounds a week can increase the risk of gallstones.
4. Eating less than 800 calories a day can disrupt heart rhythms.

HEALTHY: WIN recommends:

- ✓ Losing ½ to 2 pounds a week.
- ✓ Eating moderate portions of a variety of foods.
- ✓ Building activity into your life.

UNHEALTHY: High protein/low carbohydrate diets can be dangerous because:

1. Eating mostly meat, eggs, and cheese may give you too much fat and cholesterol, which can raise heart disease risk.
2. Eating too few fruits, vegetables, and whole grains may lead to constipation.
3. Eating fewer than 130 grams of carbohydrates a day can lead to the buildup of ketones (partially broken-down fats) in your blood, which can lead to gout and kidney stones.

HEALTHY: WIN says follow a reduced-calorie eating plan with recommended amounts of carbohydrate, protein, and fat in a wide variety of foods.

UNHEALTHY: Limiting starches, such as bread, rice, pasta, and potatoes, is not necessary.

HEALTHY: WIN says that these foods are low in fat and calories and only become unhealthy when eaten in large portions or when slathered with high-fat toppings, such as butter and sour cream.

Hands-On Safety

The key to safety is in the glove box

Are you exposed to any of these hand hazards on the job?

- Cuts and scrapes
- Puncture wounds
- Heat and chemical burns
- Hazardous substances that can irritate or be absorbed by the skin
- Extreme heat or cold
- Biological agents like bacteria and viruses

The best way to protect yourself is to use the right gloves for the job.

👉 **Cotton gloves** to keep hands clean, improve grip, insulate from mild heat or cold, and provide some protection from cuts and scrapes.

👉 **Leather gloves** to protect against rough surfaces, sharp edges, and objects that can cut or puncture skin, and sparks and heat that can cause burns.

👉 **Rubber gloves** to protect hands from strong cleaning products and moisture, as well as to provide insulation when working with electricity.

👉 **Disposable gloves** to protect against mild skin irritants, bacteria, and viruses.

👉 **Chemical-resistant gloves**, e.g., nitrile, neoprene, rubber, polyvinyl, to protect hands against hazardous chemicals; read the MSDS for proper glove selection.

👉 **Temperature-resistant gloves** to protect against extreme heat or cold.

👉 **Metal mesh gloves** to protect against cuts and amputations when sharp instruments or objects are being handled.



Respirator Fit Testing

Failure is not an option

Getting a good fit with a respirator is essential to protect you from respiratory hazards. If the facepiece doesn't fit tightly on your face, you could be exposed to the very hazards the respirator is designed to protect against.

Because a good fit is so crucial, OSHA regulations specify two kinds of fit tests:

1. **Qualitative fit tests** rely on your sense of smell and taste to determine if the respirator fits tightly. If you don't smell or taste the test agent during the test, then the fit is good.
2. **Quantitative fit tests** use instruments to measure face seal leakage.

Which test to use depends on exposure levels to hazardous air contaminants. For negative pressure air purifying respirators, you can use either a qualitative or a quantitative fit test for exposure levels of less than 10 times the occupational exposure limit. When exposure levels are greater than 10 times the occupational exposure limit, you have to use a quantitative fit test.

Fit testing of atmosphere-supplying respirators and powered air-purifying respirators can be performed with either a quantitative or qualitative fit test.

NOTE: You must be tested with the same make, model, style, and size of respirator that will be used on the job.

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MORE ON FIT TESTING

OSHA requires a fit test when you are initially assigned a job that requires using a respirator. Every year you need to conduct a fit test to ensure that the face-piece seal is still tight and safe.

A new fit test is also required whenever you:

- Use a different kind of respirator.
- Undergo physical changes that could affect respirator fit, such as dental changes, facial scarring, cosmetic surgery, or weight loss that affects the face.
- Report a problem with respirator fit.

During the test you will be asked to help the tester assess whether the respirator is the proper size and whether the fit is comfortable in terms of criteria such as:

- Position of the mask on the nose and across the nose bridge.
- Position of mask on face and cheeks.
- Placement of the chin.
- Tendency of respirator to slip.
- Adequate strap tension (but not too tight).
- Room for eye protection.
- Room to talk.

You will also be asked to perform test exercises that include normal breathing, deep breathing, turning the head from side to side and moving it up and down, talking, and bending over. Each exercise is performed for a minute.

The tester will ask you about the comfort of the respirator following each exercise. If the comfort level is unacceptable, another model of respirator must be tried. If you experience difficulty breathing during the test, you will be referred to a physician to determine whether you can be medically cleared to wear a respirator.

Feeling Confined?

Stay safe in confined spaces

The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health says confined space accidents, which often result in injuries or fatalities, usually occur because entrants encounter the following potential hazards:

- Lack of natural ventilation.
- Oxygen-deficient atmosphere.
- Flammable/explosive atmosphere.
- Unexpected release of hazardous energy.
- Limited entry and exit.
- Dangerous concentrations of air contaminants.
- Physical barriers or limitations to movement.
- Instability of stored product.

In most confined space accidents three safety elements are lacking:

1. Lack of recognition of the hazards by employees and supervisors
2. Lack of testing and evaluation prior to entry and monitoring after entry
3. Lack of effective plans and resources for successful rescue of entrants

If you ever need to work in a confined space, do so safely by participating in all training exercises, reading all training materials, asking questions whenever you don't understand, and following all safety procedures.



Winter Wellness

Keep fit in the cold

Winter weather making you want to stay inside and sip hot cocoa? Go ahead— after you've exercised! Here are two reasons to keep fit in the winter months:

1. Staying active helps beat the cold weather blues.
2. Moving around keeps you warm.

There are many fun ways to stay active in the season of short days.

Indoors ...

- * Walking at the mall or school halls.
- * Indoor roller or ice skating.
- * Bowling.
- * Parks and rec classes in aerobics, yoga, tae kwon do, or other activities.
- * Club memberships for access to exercise equipment, indoor pools, and leagues for basketball, volleyball, and other activities.

... and Out

- * Downhill skiing
- * Cross-country skiing
- * Snowboarding
- * Sledding
- * Ice skating
- * Winter hiking

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INVISIBLE KILLER

Radon is an invisible, tasteless, odorless gas. It's also a cancer-causing, radioactive gas that kills 20,000 Americans every year, usually from lung cancer. In fact, radon exposure is second only to smoking in causing lung cancer.

Radon in the air comes from the natural breakdown of uranium in soil, rock, and water. In the home, radon typically moves up through the ground through cracks and other holes in the foundation and gets trapped inside where it can build up. It's estimated that nearly 1 out of every 15 homes in the United States has elevated radon levels.

The only way to know if a home has a radon problem is to test. There are many kinds of low-cost, do-it-yourself radon test kits or you can hire a qualified tester to do the job. But before you hire anyone, contact your state radon office for a list of qualified testers.

Radon reduction systems can reduce radon levels in a home by up to 99 percent. The most common method is a vent pipe system and fan, which pulls radon from beneath the house and vents it to the outside. This system is known as a "soil suction radon reduction system" and doesn't require major changes to the home. Sealing foundation cracks and other openings makes this kind of system more effective and cost-efficient. Similar systems can also be installed in houses with crawl spaces. Radon contractors can use other methods that may also work in your home. The right system depends on the design of your home and other factors.