

news & notes

HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Hazard identification is an important part of everyone's job. Unless you've detected the hazards you face on the job, you won't be able to protect yourself.

Depending on your job, you may need to watch out for:

- Fire hazards
- Chemical exposure
- Eye and face hazards
- Falling objects
- Electrical hazards such as shocks and burns
- Slip, trip, and fall hazards
- Noise hazards
- Ergonomic risks
- Lifting, carrying, and other materials-handling hazards
- Machine hazards
- Office hazards
- Unsafe conditions
- Unsafe acts of others
- Driving hazards on company vehicles, including forklifts
- Drug and alcohol abuse-related hazards
- Crime and violence

Take the time to look for these hazards every day. Before starting a job, think about possible hazards. As you work, keep alert to anything that could go wrong.

Be especially careful with new or unfamiliar tasks, substances, and equipment. And if you're ever not sure about a possible hazard, don't guess, ask your supervisor.

SafetyWorks

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Identify the Hazards

Can you spot the safety problem in each case?

Here are three common workplace situations. Each one contains a basic safety problem. Can you spot it? If you can, write it down in the space provided.

1. The job Jean was doing called for the use of a chemical substance she had never used before. She took the usual precautions and wore goggles and gloves. She also decided to be extra careful and wear protective clothing to prevent skin contact with the chemical. But after working with the substance for a while she began to feel dizzy and sick to her stomach.

The safety problem in this case is: _____

2. Before starting up his power saw, Bill checked to make sure that the blade was sharp and the guard was in place and working OK. As he worked he was careful to pay attention to where he placed his hands. Then all of sudden as Bill was cutting a board to size a chip of wood flew up and hit him in the eye.

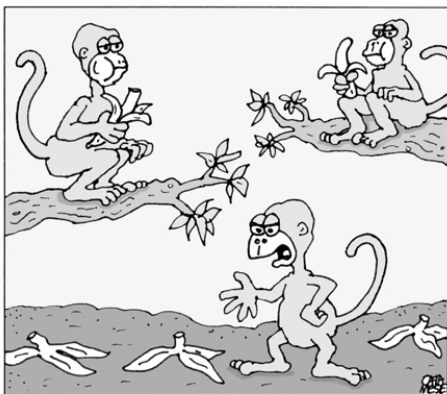
The safety problem in this case is: _____

3. Jerry couldn't quite reach the box of printer paper on the top shelf in the supply room. He didn't want to take a chance that the heavy box would fall down on his head, so he used a nearby chair to reach the box more safely. Or so he thought. As he was sliding the box off the shelf, the chair tipped and he fell.

The safety problem in this case is: _____

Did you identify all the safety hazards? (1) Jean forgot to read the container label and check the material safety data sheet for the particular hazards of this substance. If she had, she would have found out that she needed to provide adequate ventilation or wear a respirator. (2) Bill failed to wear eye protection. (3) Jerry should have used a ladder or a step stool to reach the box, not a chair.

If you were unable to identify any of these safety problems, maybe it's time to pay a little more attention to the important task of hazard identification. One of these undetected hazards—or some other lurking danger—could be the one that injures you someday.



"For crying out loud... is anyone else worried about the tripping hazards here?"

Happy Thanksgiving!

Don't be a turkey behind the wheel

A national poll indicates that drivers themselves—more than traffic conditions or vehicles—are the greatest safety threat on the road. Drivers responding to the poll admitted that they knowingly and routinely engage in careless driving behavior and dangerous driving practices.

The research was commissioned by *Drive for Life: The National Safe Driving Initiative*, a coalition of highway safety experts and advocates. It found that Americans believe that cars are safer but drivers more dangerous than in the past. The poll also found that most drivers engage in one or more other activities while driving. For instance, 59 percent of the people polled said that they eat while driving and 37 percent said that they talk on a cell phone. Furthermore, 71 percent admitted to speeding and considered it OK to routinely exceed the speed limit by five miles per hour.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Commission says driver inattention is a primary or contributing factor in as many as 50 percent of all crashes.

If you're going to be doing any driving over the Thanksgiving weekend, please remember to drive defensively, allow plenty of time, and take extra care. There are going to be a lot of people on the road.



Work Safer—Today

10 steps you can take now to protect your safety

Safety is too important an issue to put off until tomorrow. Act today to protect your safety on the job. Don't wait for a near miss or an accident to happen before you work safer. Here are 10 simple steps you can take to improve safety in your work area and protect yourself and your co-workers from injuries:

1. Pay attention to your work at all times.
2. Avoid unsafe acts or behavior.
3. Follow all safety rules and procedures.
4. Be especially careful with new tasks, tools, substances, and equipment.
5. Always wear assigned personal protective equipment.
6. Never come to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol.
7. Read and follow safety directions on chemical container labels and in material safety data sheets.
8. Report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor right away.
9. Ask questions when you're not sure about how to do a job safely.
10. Take safety training seriously and use what you learn on the job.

Statistics tell us that someone, somewhere, is injured on the job every 18 seconds. Safety experts tell us that virtually all accidents can be prevented. So why are there still so many workplace accidents? Because too many people are not following these 10 simple steps to working more safely. Are you?



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TREATING SPRAINS AND STRAINS

When should you treat a sprain yourself and when should you let a doctor treat you? According to health professionals at the Mayo Clinic, get immediate medical attention for a sprain if:

- You hear a pop when the joint is injured.
- The injured part of your body is very swollen and you can't use it.
- You run a fever and the injured area is red and hot to the touch.

What about a muscle strain? The Mayo Clinic experts advise seeing a doctor if:

- The area swells up quickly and is very painful.
- You think you might have torn a muscle or even broken a bone.
- There's no improvement within two or three days.

SPEED KILLS

The annual Drug Testing Index conducted by Quest Diagnostics Incorporated has found that positive drug test results attributed to amphetamine use have increased by 70 percent in the past five years among the workforce population.

This is bad news because amphetamines (also known as *speed*, *uppers*, *meth*, *ice*, and *crystal*) are dangerous drugs that can cause addiction, brain damage, and even death if a person overdoses.

Amphetamine use at work causes hyperactivity and carelessness and can push users beyond their physical ability, all of which can lead to accidents.



Oops! Bang! Ouch!

Watch out for fall hazards in the office

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), falls are the most common office accident, accounting for the greatest number of disabling injuries. In fact, if you work in an office, you're more than twice as likely to be injured in a fall than if you work in other parts of the facility. Use this checklist to avoid falling:

- ✧ Be sure the pathway is clear before you walk.
- ✧ Close drawers completely after every use.
- ✧ Avoid excessive bending, twisting, and leaning backward while seated.
- ✧ Secure electrical cords and wires away from walkways.
- ✧ Always use a stepladder for overhead reaching. Never use chairs as ladders.
- ✧ Clean up spills immediately.
- ✧ Pick up objects co-workers may have left on the floor.
- ✧ Report loose carpeting or damaged flooring.
- ✧ Never carry anything that obscures your vision.
- ✧ Wear stable shoes with nonslip soles.

If you find yourself falling, roll, don't reach. By letting your body crumple and roll, you are more likely to absorb the impact of a fall without injury. Reaching an arm or leg out to break your fall may result in a broken limb instead.

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STILL SMOKING?

This year the Great American Smokeout is on November 20. If you or someone you know smoke, this is an ideal opportunity to join with others in your community and across America to kick the habit for good.

The American Cancer Society recommends these tips to help you overcome the urge to light up:

- Keep oral substitutes handy: carrots, pickles, apples, celery, raisins, gum.
- Take 10 deep breaths and hold the last one while lighting a match. Exhale slowly and blow out the match. Pretend it's a cigarette and put it out in an ashtray.
- Take a shower or bath, if possible.
- Learn to relax quickly and deeply. Make yourself limp, visualize a soothing, pleasing situation, and get away from it all for a moment. Concentrate on that peaceful image and nothing else.
- Light incense or a candle, instead of a cigarette.
- Never allow yourself to think that *one won't hurt*, because it will.

ONE-SECOND EYE TEST

Which answer—a, b, or c—correctly completes the following statement about eye and face safety on the job?

Your eyes and face need protection from:

- a. Splashes of hazardous chemicals or hot liquids.
- b. Flying objects like wood, metal, and stone chips.
- c. Fumes and gases.

It's really a trick question because all three answers are correct.

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Common but Dangerous

Can solvents really be hazardous to your health?

Solvents are common workplace chemicals used to dissolve other substances. For example, solvents can be used to remove grease and soften coatings such as paints and inks. They are also used in cleaning products and floor wax. But as common as they are, most industrial solvents are potentially dangerous. What happens when you are overexposed to a dangerous solvent?

If a solvent gets in your eyes, you could experience:

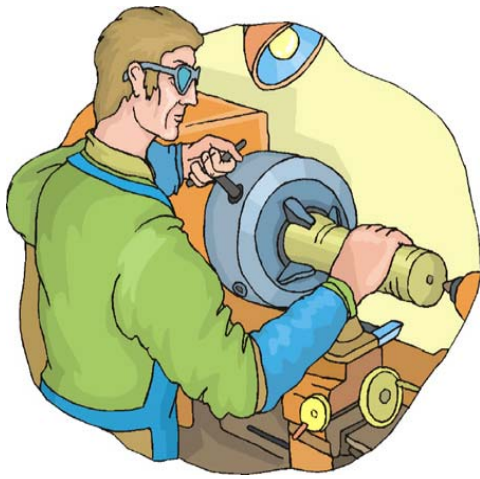
- Eye irritation or burning
- Eye damage
- Conjunctivitis
- Blindness

Skin exposure to solvents can result in:

- Rashes
- Skin burns
- Dry, scaly skin
- Dermatitis

Inhaling or swallowing solvents can be very dangerous. With these routes of entry large amounts of solvents can quickly spread throughout the body. Even small amounts can lead to symptoms like nausea, headache, fatigue, dizziness, blurred vision, lack of coordination, and respiratory irritation. If large amounts get into your body, you're at risk of permanent liver or kidney damage, unconsciousness, and even death.

So always read the labels on solvent containers and check the material safety data sheets (MSDS) before using solvents to find out the precautions you need to take.



Act Against Hazards

Match job hazards to safety strategies

Once you've identified a hazard, take the correct action to eliminate or minimize the risk. For example, if you see spilled coffee on the floor, clean it up.

To see how much you know about taking action against hazards, match the safety strategies in the right-hand column below to the hazards listed in the left-hand column by writing the letter of the correct safety strategy in the space in front of each hazard.

HAZARD	SAFETY STRATEGY
1. ___ Toxic vapors	A. Goggles
2. ___ Noise levels of 85 decibels or more	B. Don't overload circuits/outlets
3. ___ Falling objects	C. Safety glasses w\ side shields
4. ___ Chemical splashes	D. Use guards and safety devices
5. ___ Back strain	E. Wear a respirator
6. ___ Electrical fires	F. Maintain neutral position
7. ___ Fingers caught in machine	G. Watch where you put hands
8. ___ Flying particles	H. Wear hearing protection
9. ___ Musculoskeletal disorders	I. Hard hat and safety shoes
10. ___ Pinch points	J. Safe lifting techniques

Answers: (1) E (2) H (3) I (4) A (5) J (6) B (7) D (8) C (9) F (10) G

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POWER UP SAFELY

Power tools are so common that we forget they can cause serious injuries, such as:

- Cuts and punctures
- Severe finger injuries, including amputation
- Eye and face injuries from flying chips
- Electrical shock from damaged tools or damaged electrical cords
- Trips and falls from power tools left lying around or from extension cords in walkways
- Fire from sparks or from gasoline if using a gasoline-powered tool like a chainsaw

To be safe when working with power tools:

- ◇ **Make sure safety devices and guards are in place and working properly.**
 - Never remove or disable a guard or other safety device.
 - Never use a power tool with a missing or damaged guard or a control switch that is not working properly.
- ◇ **Watch out for electrical hazards:**
 - Never use tools that smoke or spark.
 - Make sure cords, plugs, and casing are in good condition.
 - Be especially careful around water.
 - Don't leave cords in walkways.
- ◇ **Inspect tools before each use:**
 - Make sure nothing is damaged, loose, or broken.
 - Check that cutting edges are sharp.
- ◇ **Wear the right personal protective equipment (PPE):**
 - Safety glasses or goggles
 - Face mask when using tools that create a lot of dust
 - Protective footwear when there is a risk of heavy tools being dropped on your feet

Eliminate the Strain

Maintain a *neutral position* while you work

You've probably heard the expression *neutral position* used in connection with ergonomic safety. Maintaining a neutral position while you work eliminates potentially harmful strain and helps prevent painful and sometimes disabling musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). Here's what maintaining a neutral position means in practical terms:

- **Keep your head straight and facing forward.** Extended periods of tilting, turning, or bowing your head puts strain on your neck.
- **Maintain your back's natural curves.** Extended periods of twisting to the side or bending forward puts strain on your back.
- **Keep your arms hanging comfortably at your sides,** shoulders not hunched, elbows close to your side, and forearms parallel to the ground. Working with your arms over your head, extended forward, or out to the side puts strain on your shoulders and elbows.
- **Keep wrists in a straight line with your forearms.** Hands flexed up or down, bent to the sides, or twisted for extended periods puts strain on your wrists.
- **Stand with your feet shoulder width apart and your weight balanced.** Squatting or kneeling for extended periods puts strain on your knees.
- **Sit with thighs parallel to the floor,** knees bent about 90 degrees, and feet resting flat on the floor.