



# **TOOLBOX MEETINGS**

## **Safety Articles**

**BEMISTER'S JANITORIAL SERVICES INC.**

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## ALCOHOL & THE JOB - A SAFETY ISSUE

Working under the influence of alcohol is strictly prohibited. This means more than just not drinking on the job. Tests have shown that alcohol can still have an effect on your body up to 18 hours after you have stopped drinking. Alcohol use is a legitimate on-the-job safety issue - and not just an attempt to control off-the-clock lifestyles.

Alcohol is a sedative. Drinking any quantity of alcohol impairs a person's judgment, thinking ability, and coordination to some degree. Some people can "handle" alcohol better than others, but it is a fact that any alcohol consumed has some effect. Other factors which influence your body's ability to metabolize alcohol include your weight, medications, and previous medical conditions. You may not feel it right away, but remember, alcohol affects judgment.

After drinking, you are no longer in a position to assess your own capabilities. You don't have to be drunk to have some impairment. If you can't make it through the day without a drink, you could have a problem and should seek professional help.

What should you do about a co-worker who is drinking on the job? Should you ignore the situation or report it? Most people would ignore the situation because they do not want to cause problems on the job or do not want to get involved. People would prefer to avoid conflict at almost any cost. But look at it this way -- the drinker, no matter how nice a co-worker, is not doing you any favors. It's a fact that the drinker is less productive. Who has to pick up the slack? You do. It is a fact that the drinker is more likely to be involved in accidents. Who else is he or she placing at risk? You!

Are you allowing the drinking to continue?

- You are - if you cover for the drinker's poor productivity
- You are - if you cover their mistakes.
- You are - if you make excuses to others for them.

Take control of the situation.

- Don't allow the situation to continue. Stop covering for the drinker.
  - Talk to your supervisor. It is your responsibility to talk to your supervisor whenever any performance or safety issues affects your job. A drinking worker could be just as dangerous as a defective saw. You wouldn't hesitate to bring the saw to your supervisor's attention, would you?
  - If you are uncomfortable, suggest to your supervisor that there may be a problem. A good supervisor will take the initiative and pick up the issue from there.

Whatever you do, make sure you do something. Watch out for your co-worker as they may need help. If you don't, you may pay dearly for someone else's mistake.

## AVOIDING ELECTRICAL SHOCKS

Electrical hazards can be found in all industries. Avoiding electrical shocks both at home and at work requires awareness of the hazards and a respect for this "Silent Killer." The human body has a low resistance to electricity, making it a good conductor, like most metals. Unlike metals however, the human body does *not* respond well when electricity passes through it. Physical results include thermal burns, disruption of normal heart activity, severe muscle contractions, and even death.

The most common and serious electrical injuries occur when electrical current flows between the hands and feet. This happens when a person touches an energized line. The electrical energy is looking for the shortest path to the ground, and it will pass through the body to the feet to reach it. When this occurs, a person's heart and lungs are frequently damaged by the electrical energy.

Placing an insulator between the energy and the point of physical contact is one method of protection. Porcelain, rubber, pottery and dry wood offer substantial resistance to the flow of electricity, and are therefore good insulators. These materials can often protect a person from electrical shock.

Precautions for avoiding electrical shocks include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Always make sure electric tools are properly grounded or double insulated. The double insulated tool must have an undamaged outer case and be clearly labeled as "double insulated" by the manufacturer.
- Always check to be sure the grounding system is complete. Unless they are designated as double insulated, grounded power tools must be attached to a grounded service circuit. If there is *any* doubt about the grounding, test it! (Ground testers are inexpensive.)
- Use heavy duty grounded extension cords. These cords have two layers of insulation, with reinforcement between the layers. They are less susceptible to damage than house-hold type cords. To check if the cord is heavy duty, check its shape. Most *flat* cords are not heavy duty. Heavy duty cords will have a marking on the insulation such as: "S", "SJ", "SJO", etc.
- Avoid mixing water and electricity! Not only keep cords, tools and working/walking surfaces dry, keep your hands and feet dry as well. The electrical resistance of wet skin is at least 100 times less than dry skin. Wet skin greatly increases the likelihood of severe shock if a person comes in contact with a live circuit. If you must work around water, connect to a Ground Fault Circuit Interrupter (GFCI) to automatically shut off the current if there is an abnormal current flow.

- Never work on or around a live electrical circuit. *Lock Out* the power so that *only you* have control over energizing the machine or equipment. Don't take chances.

Remember, electricity strikes without warning-always play it safe!

## **BACK CARE: YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!**

"OUCH! Why did I try to lift that much weight on my own?" Did you ever ponder those words after you hoisted something heavy, or lifted from an awkward position? These incidents are well known causes of back strain, but you might not have considered other "underlying" factors that lead to back injury. Several conditions influence your "back health."

The cause of most back problems is poor posture, loss of flexibility, stressful living/working habits and above all, a general decline in physical fitness. Surprised? You shouldn't be. When you "let yourself go," (and most of us do with age) the *first* thing to go can be back strength. Along with correct lifting techniques, we should also work on our overall physical condition.

Nutrition--is an important key to staying physically fit! As we grow older, our metabolism slows down. To counteract this natural event, we have to eat the right types of food-and not too much of it-or the pounds come on quickly! Now, what does nutrition have to do with a healthy back? For one thing, a healthy back is correctly balanced on your spine. With a "sway" back, that balance is lost-and those darned potbellies cause sway backs. Carrying around excess weight puts tremendous strain on back tissues, so lifting even a small extra load may cause an injury.

Exercise--plays an important role as well. A form of exercise as simple as walking 30 minutes a day can raise your heart rate and burn enough calories to help keep you lean. Flexibility is another condition that changes as we grow older, if we don't work to retain it. It's true, as they say-"Use it or Lose it!" Without flexibility, we lose our body's full range of motion. Then, when a sudden, physical demand takes a muscle or joint further than it's used to, the risk of injury is high. You can do stretching exercises every morning to keep yourself flexible and ready for the physical demands of work. After all, don't athletes warm up before a game to prevent injury?

Fixed positions--not moving *enough*--can also cause back problems. Staying in a fixed position for too long can lead to muscle spasms. We feel it as stiffness, but by the time discomfort from "static" muscle contractions is experienced, low level tissue damage has begun. Take stretch breaks between long standing or sitting periods to improve circulation and prevent back strain.

Poor body mechanics and bad lifting habits usually "trigger" a back injury-and are more likely to do so if overall physical condition is poor. Remember these techniques to help escape injury:

- Avoid using fast, jerking motions when lifting.
- Avoid bending and twisting at the same time.
- Avoid handling a load too far away! Keep the load close to your body.
- Teamwork! If the load is too heavy, two persons should carry the load.

Emotional Stress leads to mental distraction, so that things other than proper body mechanics are on your mind. Stress and back pain seem to go together. Low back pain has been called "a tension headache that slipped." Solving our personal problems isn't always easy to do, but it often takes away back pain and helps prevent repeated injuries.

In Conclusion: Improper lifting isn't the *only* thing that causes back injuries. People who do not also stay in good physical and mental condition are at high risk for back problems.

It's Up To You--Take Good Care Of Your Body and Save Your Back!

## **BACK INJURY PREVENTION TIPS**

Most of you have probably heard that in order to lift safely, you must lift properly. You're told to "bend your knees not your back," and "don't twist as you lift." This is good advice but sometimes seems to go against human nature. Yet, there *are* actions you can take to help you lift properly.

**1. Get as close to the load as possible.** The further the load is from the center line of your body, the greater the strain imposed on your back. If need be, squat down to lift the load and pull it between your legs. This gets it closer to the center of your body and helps prevent the need to bend at the waist. However, since your leg muscles are the largest muscles in your body, they are the biggest energy consumers. Repeated squatting can be very fatiguing, and reduces a person's ability to lift in this manner for any length of time. In addition to lifting the load, you are also hoisting the majority of your body weight. For *repeated* lifting, other strategies must be used.

**2. Avoid picking up heavy objects placed below your knees.** Try to see that heavy objects are placed and stored above knee level and below shoulder level. If you suspect the load is too heavy to be lifted comfortably, do not chance it. Use a mechanical aid, break the load down into its component parts, or get help. The most common cause of back injury is overloading.

**3. Keep your back straight.** This means don't bend at the waist when reaching to lift an object. Keep the natural arch in your lower back, which distributes the load evenly over the surface of spinal disks, and is less stressful than if the disk is pinched between vertebrae. Bending principally from the hips is acceptable if you maintain the arch in your back, rather than bending at the waist.

**4. Glue your hand to your thigh.** If you carry a load in one hand, such as when carrying a tool box, place your free hand on the outside of your thigh and mentally "glue" it into position. This will help you maintain correct back alignment rather than lifting and tilting to one side. When carrying a heavy load, side bending can be just as stressful to the spine as bending forward.

**5. Tighten your stomach muscles.** This technique helps prevent your spine from twisting. If you lift a load and need to place it off to one side, turn by moving your feet. After repeated lifts you might find yourself getting a bit sloppy and forgetting to move your feet. You can overcome this tendency if the place you set the load down is at least one step away from where it is lifted. If you wear a back support belt, wear it low on your trunk and loosen it when you are not lifting.

**6. Stay in good physical condition.** A protruding stomach is an extra load carried away from the center line of the body, and prevents you from keeping a lifted object close-the number one rule for back care. When you bend at the waist to lift, due to the leverage principal, the load is up to 10 times heavier than its actual weight. A "pot belly" puts extra, stressful weight on the spine.

**7. Stretch and loosen up before work.** Research has shown that trunk flexibility and mobility is significantly lower in the morning than later in the day, increasing the number and severity of back strains at this time. A few minutes of stretching can warm up cold stiff muscles and tendons and help you avoid an injury. All professional athletes know this-"industrial athletes" should too!

## **GENERAL SAFETY - THE BASICS OF SAFETY**

Through several years of investigating accidents and research in the field of accident reconstruction, leaders in the field of occupational accident prevention have concluded that there are specific reasons why accidents occur. They found that worker safety is dependent on worker behavior and human factors. They developed ten safety rules and, while some of you may have heard them before, they are worth repeating:

1. **STAY ALERT - and stay alive.** The more awake a worker is, the less likely he or she is to get hurt. If you are unsure how to operate equipment or perform a task, ask your supervisor. Don't guess and muddle through. Make sure you know in advance the correct, safe way to do it.

2. WEAR THE RIGHT CLOTHES - work clothes should fit properly. Anything that can catch in machinery or trip you up is hazardous. Wear protective clothing and equipment as required.

3. USE THE RIGHT TOOLS - if you need a hammer, get a hammer. It may be handier to use a pair of pliers, wrench, screw driver or even your fist. But you will have only yourself to blame if you break your fingers.

4. LEARN HOW TO LIFT - Lifting takes more than muscle; it is an art. Don't try to show how strong you are; you may end up in a hospital. Get help to handle anything that is too heavy or cumbersome for you.

5. DON'T BE A PRANKSTER - practical jokes and horseplay can be dangerous around machinery. If you feel the urge to play, resist it until after work.

6. BE TIDY - Good housekeeping reduces hazards in the workplace or your home. Always put away tools when they are not in use. Keep the floors clean, pick up scraps, wipe up spills. A slip or trip can be fatal.

7. REPORTING IS IMPORTANT - Never fail to report accidents, defective equipment, and unsafe conditions.

8. GET FIRST AID IMMEDIATELY - if you're hurt -- even if it is just a scratch. Neglect of the injury may lead to serious infection, weeks of lost time, even permanent injury.

9. BACK YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM - If you have an idea you believe will reduce accidents, tell your supervisor about it. Set an example by obeying safety rules. Cooperate with your safety committee.

10. NEVER TAKE A CHANCE - Next to sheer carelessness, the short cut is probably the biggest killer of all. To save a minute or two, you may lose a lifetime. Whatever you are doing, if you are not doing it safely, you are not doing it right!!

## **GENERAL SAFETY - CARELESSNESS**

Have you ever done anything stupid, something that you know puts you at increased risk of injury? When you realize how stupid you were, whether you got hurt or not, do you ask yourself, "Why did I ever do that?" For your own future preservation, this should be a very important question for you to answer yourself. Consider the fact that approximately 20% of injuries are due to unsafe conditions and 80% are caused by unsafe acts. If you realize that most unsafe conditions are brought about by human failure, then virtually all accidents are brought about by unsafe acts. Why did you do something in an unsafe manner? To answer this question, you will need to put personal



defenses aside and know that blame may lie within yourself. Also realize that there may be more than one reason for your actions and others may be involved.

If you knew the proper, safe way to do the job, then you cannot claim ignorance. What is left, whether you like it or not, is carelessness. So what can cause you to temporarily disregard your own safety?

External Pressure -- "Let's get this job done!" Usually this pressure comes from your direct supervisor. Disregarding safe practices is not going to save enough time to make a significant difference. However, any accident or injury is guaranteed to have an effect. As a matter of fact, when the pressure is applied, it is worthwhile to pay more attention to safety because we know, from experience, such situations frequently lead to more accidents.

Bad Habits -- You fail to follow the established procedure and you don't get hurt (or you were not caught) this time. Psychologically, this is a reward and so you do it again and again and again. But it is also Russian roulette. How many times can you pull the trigger before a round is in the chamber? You know, sooner or later, something is going to happen. There is only one way to stop it - stop pulling the trigger. Do yourself a favor and follow the established procedures.

Internal Pressure -- There is just so much to do and not enough time!" Are you self-motivated and self-directed? Most employers love this type of individual, but your single-minded determination to get the job done may cause you to lose sight of the dangers around you. Think of it this way, you will not finish the job if you get hurt. You may finish the job if you don't get hurt. Therefore, first, prevent injury. Second, work to complete the job. Make sense?

Attitude -- "This safety stuff doesn't apply to me!" So what makes you so special? A study of mine accidents involving foremen showed that the foremen were injured when they personally failed to apply the safety standards they were to enforce. Did the fact that they were foremen protect them from injury? No. Humans are humans. Rich or poor. Black or white. Men or women. Strong or weak. There is nothing in your status that will protect you from injury except following the safe procedure.

Remember, safety is no more than doing the job the right way, every day.

## CLIMBING STAIRS

There's kind of climbing that is deadlier than mountain climbing. And what's more, it's a kind of climbing you do often. I'm referring to the commonest kind of climbing in the world—the climbing of stairs.

We do all we can to build stairs safely. Our stairs have hand rails. The stairs aren't too steep, and they are well lighted. They have treads that aren't slick and slippery. Yet even stairs like these can kill and cripple if we don't use them right.

For instance, the best hand rail in the world won't prevent a fall if you don't use it. I know it is easy to forget. We look at a flight of stairs, and it looks safe. We can walk up and down it time after time without any trouble, even without holding on. So we are likely to get careless and ignore the rail.

Yet we all know that sooner or later there comes a time when we slip or stumble or someone bumps into us. Then whether we have a hand grip or not may make the difference between good health and a broken neck. Remember, the hand rail is just like the seat belt. Mostly you don't need it, but sooner or later it becomes a life saver.

Good lighting helps us in our stair climbing, but it won't help us if we refuse to use our eyes. I have walked down stairs in complete darkness — but I did it very slowly, cautiously, hanging on for dear life. Yet many a worker forgets to use his eyes when he is on the stairs, and so he might just as well be in darkness — might better, as a matter of fact, for then he'd know he had danger to deal with.

If we don't watch ourselves, we may fall on the top step and crash. Or we may bang into someone else who isn't looking, and send ourselves and our friend spinning. Or we may slip or stumble on some object left carelessly on the stairs.

Finally, stairs are made for walking, not running. Trying to be a speeder on stairs may save a few seconds, but, like speeding on the highway, it can be deadly. So, for real time and health saving, take time going up and going down.

On every trip on every stairway — at home, in the plant, and everywhere else, keep safe, by following these three rules:

First, always keep one hand on the hand rail.

Second, always keep your eyes open and your mind alert.

Third, walk; don't run, on every stair.

If you'll follow these rules, our stairs will be what stairs should be — a safe road from one floor to another, not a highway to hazards and the hospital.

If you want to take a chance and do some adventurous climbing, take a vacation in the Rockies next summer, or get a job as a steeple jack.

But even then — on the riskiest of mountain climbs or high flagpole work, you won't escape the truth that all good climbers know — the truth that good climbing means hanging on, looking out, and taking your time.

## **COMMON SENSE AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION**

Generally speaking, we are not *born* with common sense, we *acquire* it throughout life. Actually, common sense is really common experience--we learn about life from others' experiences as well as our own. Awareness of your environment, self-preservation and concern for your fellow workers are all factors in good common sense. Contrary to popular opinion, all workers can prevent themselves from getting hurt. The easy way to avoid pain is to observe how others have taken risks and been injured, rather than learning the hard way--from your own injury. That's common sense!

The experts say at least 80% of industrial accidents are caused by unsafe acts on the part of employees--and not by unsafe conditions. Although employers are required by law to provide a safe and healthful workplace, it is up to *you* to be aware of your work environment and follow safe work practices. By avoiding unsafe acts and practicing common sense, your work will go smoother, with less chance for accidents.

Statistically, most accidents are caused by unsafe acts, including:

**Being In A Hurry** - Sometimes there is more concern for completing a job quickly instead of safely. Take time to do a good job *and* a safe job.

**Taking Chances** - Daring behavior or blatant disregard for safe work practices can put the whole work team at risk. Follow all company safety rules and watch out for your fellow employees. Horseplay is never appropriate on the job and can lead to disciplinary action.

**Being Preoccupied** - Daydreaming, drifting off at work, thinking about the weekend and not paying attention to your work can get you seriously hurt or even killed. Focus on the work you are paid to do. If your mind is troubled or distracted, you're at risk for an accident.

**Having A Negative Attitude** - Being angry or in a bad mood can lead to severe accidents because anger nearly always rules over caution. Flying off the handle at work is potentially dangerous. Keep your bad moods in check, or more than one person may be hurt. Remember to stay cool and in charge of your emotions.

**Failing To Look For Hidden Hazards** - At many jobsites, work conditions are constantly changing. Sometimes new, unexpected hazards develop. Always be alert for changes in the environment. Hidden hazards include spilled liquids that could cause slips and falls; out-of-place objects that can be tripped over; unmarked floor openings one could step

into; low overhead pipes that could mean a head injury; and other workers who don't see you enter their hazardous work area.

Remember to stay alert for hazards, so you won't become one more accident statistic: You *can* do a quality job without rushing. Maintain a positive attitude and keep your mind on your work. This is just common sense--something smart workers use!

## **GENERAL SAFETY- CONTROLLING STRESS**

Stress. Many of us are faced with it everyday, but we might not know how to deal with it. It is important to learn how to handle stress because it can affect our performance and relationships in our work and home. At work, stress can lead to distraction and cause an unfortunate accident. At home, stress can put a strain on family relationships.

Stress usually occurs when there are changes in our lives and we feel that we don't have enough resources to deal with those changes and demands. Which of the following do you think causes stress: getting married, winning the lottery, or having an argument? It is all of them. Stress can occur not only from negative life experiences, but also from positive ones. People react and deal with stress differently, but common stress symptoms include upset stomach, fatigue, tight neck muscles, irritability and headaches. Some people react to stress by eating or drinking too much, losing sleep or smoking cigarettes. Stress may also make you more susceptible to illnesses, including the common cold, ulcers, and some cancers.

The first step to managing stress is to identify your "stressors"; those things that are making you react. Stressors may not only be events that cause you to feel sad, frightened, anxious or happy. You can cause stress through your thoughts, feelings and expectations. Look at the list below. Which cause you stress? Can you think of other stressors?

- Not enough time
- Unexpected change
- Family problems
- Extra responsibility
- Personality clashes
- Money difficulties

Everyone has to deal with life's problems. A key to dealing with the big and little everyday stressors is coping with stress in a positive way.

1. Acceptance- Many of us worry about things we have no control over. For example, a family illness, great deal of change at work, or finding out that your basketball team lost. One way to manage stress is to accept when things are beyond your control. It may be

helpful to think positive thoughts such as, "Someday I'll laugh about this," or "It's a learning experience."

2. Attitude- Try to focus on the positive side of situations. Ask yourself, "What good can come out of this?" "What can I learn from this situation?" and "How can I handle this better when it comes up again?" Solutions come easier when you focus on the positive and your stress level will be reduced.

3. Perspective- We often worry about things that never happen. Keep things in perspective by asking yourself, "How important is this situation? Can I do anything about it?, In five years, will I even remember it happened?"

Think about the situations in your life that cause you stress. Are they important or unimportant? Are they controllable or uncontrollable? If they are controllable events, you can take action to change the situation; if they are uncontrollable, you can use your skills in acceptance, attitude and perspective to reduce the stress.

## **GENERAL SAFETY - CUTS AND BURNS**

Nicks, cuts, scratches and burns. Minor injuries that can occur to any one of us no matter how careful we are. Minor injuries to the skin that are often ignored. But it must be remembered that skin is a vital organ; one that should not be ignored. Not only is skin the largest bodily organ, it also keeps the good stuff in and the bad stuff out. So what do you do when you get a minor injury? If you are like many, you realize a doctor's visit is not necessary and try to treat the injury yourself. How do you know when to seek professional treatment? How do you treat injuries that do not require a doctor's visit?

Cuts: Cuts require immediate professional attention if:

- There is severe bleeding, especially arterial wounds, which literally pump blood from the body.
- Puncture wounds, such as those caused by a rusty nail or animal bite. These will require a tetanus booster shot.
- Cuts more than one half inch long and one quarter inch deep, which will require stitches.

To treat any cuts, first stop the bleeding and then treat to prevent infection. Place a sterile gauze (or if you do not have any gauze, a clean cloth) over the wound and hold it until the bleeding stops. Apply pressure continuously. If the gauze or cloth soaks through, simply place another cloth over the first and resume the pressure. When the bleeding has stopped, wash the cut with soap and water, followed by a disinfectant. If the bleeding does not stop, get professional treatment. After the cut is clean, look for any foreign object(s) in the cut and remove them. If you do not, a threatening infection may set in. To aid in keeping the wound clean while it heals, you can cover it with a

bandage. However, if you use a bandage, remember it will need attention too. Change it twice daily and use an antibiotic cream to prevent further infection. Keep in mind that wounds exposed to air heal faster. But it is also very important to keep a wound clean and dry to prevent infection.

Treatment for a scrape is the same, except you do not have to worry about stopping blood flow as there is very little.

### Burns:

Burns are classified as first, second, or third degree. A first degree burn causes redness. Blistering is caused by a second degree burn. Charred, blackened or blanched skin are signs of a third degree burn. Furthermore, burns can be caused by heat (thermal burns) or by contact with chemicals. Seek professional, medical treatment for:

- All third degree burns.
- Second degree burns involving more than one fifth of the body or if the burn has affected the face, hands, feet, or genitalia.

First aid treatment for a burn involves relief of pain, infection prevention and treatment or prevention of shock. If a burn begins to blister, cool it by placing your hand or foot in cold, still (not running) water. You will need to use an ice pack on any other part of the body. Gently clean the burn and cover the area with a sterile, *non-stick* gauze. Change the dressing twice a day. Never puncture a blister. This just opens the door for infection. Never use butter, oils, or petroleum jelly on burns.

If the burn is due to a chemical exposure, flush the burned area with running water for at least 15 minutes. While you flush, remove any contaminated clothing, especially clothing in the area of the burn. Check the first aid instructions for the chemical. These are found on the container and/or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). Treat as specified. Cover the burn with a clean dressing and call a doctor.

- If a third degree burn is involved, get professional medical treatment quickly. Call an ambulance first. While awaiting professional help, make sure any fire is out and/or remove the victim from the burn source. **DO NOT REMOVE ANY CLOTHING OR APPLY ANY DRESSINGS.** Treat for shock and make sure the victim is still breathing.

Use common sense in all situations. Maintain a well stocked first aid kit and be familiar with first aid procedures. Being knowledgeable and prepared may be the smartest first step of all.

## GENERAL SAFETY - EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

An effective Accident Prevention Program should include the defined responsibilities for management, supervisors, and employees. Management, by law, has responsibility for the safety and health of all employees as well as providing a safe workplace. Supervisors have responsibility for providing a safe work place as well as managing the production issues. Now we need to address employee responsibilities and what those entail.

Employers and supervisors should expect the employees to be responsible. This starts with getting to work on time, working safely through the day, and addressing concerns to their supervisor.

### Suggested Areas of Responsibility

Employees are responsible to:

- Listen and learn from any training. Be an active participant in learning a job skill or safety issue.
- Ask for assistance if the training or instruction is not clear or you don't feel comfortable in performing the task correctly and safely.
- Report unsafe acts and near misses immediately. Especially if the unsafe act is on going. This will help keep the workplace safe for everyone.
- Address problems with the supervisor ASAP. BUT always try to give solutions to every problem. (You may understand more than the supervisor about the problem and how to fix it.)
- Re-address issues with the supervisor on un-resolved topics discussed in the past. (The supervisor may have forgotten about those topics.)
- Be an active member in the safety of the workplace. Participate in Safety Committee Meetings, Safety Meetings, and when trained on a safety issue.

These are just a few areas employees should be responsible for. The list is endless. Try to develop other areas to assist in safety and production. Bring these areas to the supervisor's attention and expect an answer. This input should be appreciated.

The name of this game is clear and open communication between management, supervisors and employees. The lack of communication is also one of the largest problems faced today in any workplace. Don't let this happen to you and your company. Be responsible to see that it doesn't.

## **EMPLOYEE RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **Right to know:**

As an Employee, you have the right to know about any health or safety hazards present at your workplace. You also have the responsibility under the Occupational Health and Safety Act to do everything possible to protect yourself and fellow workers. Knowing requires active participation in the company's safety program.

### **Right to Refuse:**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act give Employees the right to refuse work they believe to be unsafe. Employees not only have the right to refuse to perform unsafe work, they have the responsibility to do so. Every Employee is responsible to identify and report hazards in the workplace. If a hazard is of a serious nature and could cause an accident, then work must stop until the hazard has been eliminated, controlled, or some sort of personal protection is in place. If an Employee ignores or fails to report a known hazard, then a safety violation has occurred and disciplinary action shall be taken.

### **Right to Make Complaint:**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act gives Employees the right to make complaint to the Department of Labour against an employer or union who has taken, or threatened to take, discriminatory action against an employee who has acted in compliance with the Act.

The proper procedure to refuse unsafe work is as follows:

1. Report the hazard to management and work with him/her to correct the problem.
2. If management disagrees with you regarding the safety of the situation, he/she will explain why and advise you to return to work.
3. If you do not agree with management's opinion, the matter will be referred to the Worker Health & Safety Designate for investigation.



4. When the employee disagrees with management's or the Worker Health & Safety Designates' decision, the employee has the right to contact the Department of Labour.

When an employee has refused to do a job he/she believes to be unsafe, that job may be assigned to another worker if the employee is told:

1. That another worker has refused to do the job.
2. Why that worker has refused to do the job.
3. That he/she also has the right to refuse.

**All company employees are responsible for the following:**

1. Carry out all aspects of the company's safety program, including understanding and committing to the philosophy of a safe work environment.
2. Follow security measures, which apply to your work. Never start any work that you do not understand or know. Advise management accordingly, in order to obtain the appropriate information and/or training.
3. Ensure personal protective equipment is utilized and maintained according to your training and Occupational Health & Safety Act and Regulations.
4. Immediately report all accidents/incidents to management, no matter the severity, so an accident report can be completed.
5. Report all near misses (close calls) to management.
6. All employees must act with reasonable precautions in carrying out any duty, to protect themselves, fellow employees, company property and the environment from loss or injury.

**EVERYONE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR SAFETY**

Safety is everyone's responsibility! As an employee, you should:

- a. Learn to work safely and take all rules seriously.
- b. Recognize hazards and avoid them.
- c. Report all accidents, injuries and illness to your supervisor immediately.

- d. Inspect tools before use to avoid injury.
- e. Wear all assigned personal protective equipment.

On the other hand, it is management's responsibility to:

- a. Provide a safe and healthy workplace.
- b. Provide personal protective equipment.
- c. Train employees in safe procedures and in how to identify hazards.

Everyone must be aware of potential hazards on the job:

- a. Poor housekeeping results in slips, trips and falls.
- b. Electricity can cause shocks, burns or fire if not handled properly.
- c. Poor material handling may cause back problems or other injuries.
- d. Tools and equipment can cause injuries if guards or protective devices are disengaged.

Always use the protections that are provided on the job:

- a. Guards on machines and tools keep body parts from contacting moving equipment.
- b. Insulation on electrical equipment prevents burns, shock and fire.
- c. Lockout/tagout assure equipment is de-energized before it is repaired.
- d. Personal protective equipment shields your body from hazards you may face on the job.

In case of emergency:

- a. Understand alarms and evacuation routes.
- b. Know how to notify emergency response personnel.
- c. Implement a procedure for leaving the scene safely so emergency personnel can do their job.
- d. Wipe up spills promptly and correctly.

Safety benefits everyone! By incorporating safety rules, employees avoid injury as well as illness from exposure to hazardous substances. With less injuries, a business can be more productive and profitable. The welfare of the community is also enhanced by providing cleaner air and water and less chance of dangerous accidents that can put lives and property at risk.

## **EXTENSION CORD SAFETY-TAKE NO CHANCES!**

We use extension cords almost every day both at work and at home. These are very useful devices, but they can present a fire or shock hazard when either worn out or used improperly.

### Types of extension cords

Extension cords come in either two or three-wire types. Two-wire extension cords should only be used to operate one or two small appliances. Three-wire cords are used for outdoor appliances and electric power tools. The third wire on this cord is a ground and this type of cord should never be plugged into any ungrounded electrical outlet. Only grounded extension cords are to be used with power tools unless the tool is double insulated.

Construction sites require extension cords which are specified by the National Electric Code for hard usage or extra hard usage. Approved cords may be identified by the word "outdoor" or the letters "WA" on the jacket.

### Care and inspection of extension cords

Extension cords must be treated with care and checked regularly for damage or deterioration. The cord itself should *never* be *pulled* to disconnect it from an electrical source; remove it by the plug. They should not be placed under rugs or furniture and should never be strung through doorways, windows, walls, ceilings, or floors. Damaged cords present a potential fire or shock hazard and should be destroyed and replaced immediately.

An extension cord should never be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. They should not be fastened to a building or structure, even though staples are sold for this purpose at many hardware stores. Avoid plugging two cords together to make a longer one. It's best to use one cord in a continuous length from the receptacle to the appliance or tool. Extension cords which are either connected together or are too long will reduce operating voltage and operating efficiency of tools or appliances and may cause motor damage.

Extension cords are convenient devices which we often take for granted in our everyday activities, but which need proper care and attention. Use good housekeeping practices

at home and at work, to keep extension cords from being a tripping hazards or becoming damaged. Inspect them regularly for wear and replace defective units.

Prevent potential electrical hazards that may lead to someone's injury!

## **FALL PROTECTION - LADDERS**

Ladders are very useful to us both on and off the job. However, when misused, ladders can also cause severe injuries. Deaths, severe spinal injuries and paralysis are typical of the kinds of injuries that have resulted from falls off ladders, even at heights of less than six feet from the floor. Most ladder falls are the result of both unsafe physical conditions of the ladder, or surrounding area, and unsafe acts by the person using the ladder. And like many accidents, falls from ladders could be avoided if you follow these basic safety tips:

1. If using a ladder outside, never use it in a high wind. There is just no way to make the ladder safe and stable when you are trying to work in a strong wind condition.
2. When placing a straight ladder, always set it at 4:1 ratio. This means for every four feet of elevation on the ladder, set the base about one foot out to ensure that it is stable when leaning against a structure.
3. Always set the base or footings of the ladder on firm and level ground or floors. Setting a ladder on uneven ground or on floors littered with material can invite unnecessary falls. It is also a good idea to secure the top and bottom of the ladder when working from the ladder.
4. When positioned, straight ladders should be long enough so that you can perform your job without climbing above the third rung from the top. You should always plan to extend the ladder side rails at least three feet above any landing.
5. A good, safe ladder should be equipped with safety feet that will prevent the ladder from sliding or moving while you are working on it or using it.
6. Always keep the area around the base and the top clear of unnecessary materials and equipment since these can cause a slip or trip hazard to people working on the ladder.
7. When climbing or descending the ladder, always face the ladder and use both hands. Tools and materials should be raised or lowered by hand lines or other means. They should not be carried on the ladder.

8. When using a step ladder, it should only be used in its full open position with the spreader bars locked to ensure that the ladder will not close.

9. Ladders should not be set up in walkways, driveways or in front of doors where the swing of the door could cause the ladder to fall, without first placing barricades or other protection to ensure safety for people working off the ladder and for people walking in the area.

10. Do not use metal ladders within four feet of exposed live electrical parts; if high voltage, as much as 12 feet clearance is required.

11. If the ladder is damaged or badly worn and loose, take it out of service. Don't allow damaged ladders to remain in service when they could injure a fellow worker.

12. If a task is performed that requires a person's feet to be ten feet or more above floor level, then it is mandatory that a guarded structure be used (i.e. scaffolding, mobile stairs, etc.).

13. The ladder must be CSA approved.

Ladder safety is something too easily taken for granted. Just remember that a slight, unexpected fall could cause you a lot of unnecessary pain and suffering

## **FALLS**

Falls are a serious problem? When you consider that each hour in the United States 19 people are injured by falls, or that a fatal fall accident occurs every 37 minutes, you must agree that the fall problem is significant. Falls in the United States are the number two accident killer, ranking only behind traffic accidents as a cause of accidental death. Falling on the job accounts for about 30 percent of all injuries. Last year close to 1,600 employees died and over 300,000 were injured from falls on the job.

What makes falls such a problem? Most falls involve three important elements: "obstacles," "heights," and "traction." People fall off ladders or down stairways; they trip over stools and electrical cords, and they slip on water, or oil spills. The complicated human mechanism usually allows us to maintain our balance when walking or standing. The fall problem occurs with traction is lost, unexpected obstacles are placed in our path or when we overextend the limits of our balance when working on ladders or raised platforms.

Falls can be prevented, but only if everyone on the job does his part. First, always be alert to potential fall hazards in unfamiliar surroundings. Experienced workers spot-check walkways and work areas to be sure that no trip or slip hazards exist. Even more importantly, when you find a fall hazard, make sure that something is done to correct it.

The majority of falls at work are caused by obvious hazards, most of which could have been easily corrected. Water and oil spills, small objects on the floor, electrical cords, and objects hanging out into walkways will eventually trip someone. Take a moment to eliminate these obvious hazards.

Some tips for avoiding falls are:

- Good housekeeping is essential. Don't leave loose objects on walking or working surfaces.
- Never leave water or oil spills unattended. If they can't be cleaned up immediately, set a barrier down so that people know about the hazard.
- Never allow an object to sit on stairways or ramps. Cartons, boxes, and other obstacles are especially dangerous here.
- Report loose or damaged handrails, stairway treads, mats and walkway runners. Sometimes even a small worn spot can cause someone to trip.
- Wear proper footwear. Synthetic rubber soles are best on oily floors, soft rubber soles are good on wet floors. Leather soles can be extremely slippery on water or oil.
- Lighting is important in walkways. Report conditions created by burned out lights or when walkways are too dark.
- Report any floor openings that are not protected. These openings can cause very serious falls.
- When walking, don't carry loads that block your vision. If you can't see where you are going, a trip and fall is inevitable.
- Use hand or safety rails on stairways. It's the best way to keep your balance.
- Be especially careful when working near the edge of loading docks or raised scaffolds. These tips are sensible and reasonable. Perhaps they can help you to avoid a trip/fall injury.

## **FIRE EXTINGUISHERS**

Try to open a tin can with a hammer and your efforts may lead to an injury, and you might not even get the can open. A similar result could occur if you try to extinguish a fire with the wrong type of fire extinguisher. Fires involving different substances create different conditions which make them extremely difficult to extinguish if the wrong type of fire extinguisher is used.

You owe it to yourself, your job and your family to know about the different classes of fire extinguishers so that you can react accordingly to extinguish a fire in an emergency situation. Take a moment and review these fire extinguisher classes:

1. Class A extinguishers are used on ordinary combustibles such as wood, paper, and textiles, where quenching and cooling effects are required. Of course, water is the most common type of Class A extinguishment. The ID symbol for Class A fire extinguishers is a green triangle.
2. Class B extinguishers are used for flammable liquid and gas fires, such as oil, gasoline, paint, and grease, where oxygen exclusion or flame interruption effect is essential. Class B extinguishers are identified by a red square with a letter "B" inside.
3. Class C extinguishers are used for fires involving electrical wiring and equipment where the non conductivity of the extinguishing agent is of first importance. For example, water solution extinguishers must not be used on electrical fires because the water conducts electricity and the operator may receive a shock from the energized electrical equipment via the water. A Class C extinguisher is identified by a blue circle.
4. Class D extinguishers are used for fires involving combustible metals, such as magnesium, potassium, powdered aluminum, zinc, and sodium. Class D extinguishers are identified with a yellow star.

When a fire breaks out, your first action should be to call the fire department. When the fire is small, take fast action with the right extinguisher to put it out or keep it contained. Fire extinguishers are effective only when fires are in their first stages. It is essential that they be immediately accessible and promptly used.

## **MAKE THE BEST USE OF YOUR FIRST- AID KIT**

Are only Band-Aids® and aspirin taken from the first aid kit most of the time-because you or your coworkers aren't sure how to use the other supplies? First-aid kits can be stocked with a variety of items, but most kits have a common assortment of supplies. As with any tool, you must know how to use these products to get the best results. In this safety meeting, typical supplies and their uses will be described, to help make this helpful "tool kit" most effective for you.

- *Absorbent Gauze:* Use these to clean a wound or to apply first-aid or antiseptic cream.
- *Adhesive Bandages:* Different sizes and shapes are provided to protect minor scrapes and cuts after they have been cleaned and medicated.
- *Adhesive Tape:* For securing wound dressings or giving additional protection over bandages.
- *Antacid Tablets:* For indigestion or heartburn.
- *Antiseptic Soap or Pads:* For cleaning skin or wounds.

- *Bandage Compresses*: Use these for applying pressure to a large wound or scrape that is bleeding. Place the compress over the wound and apply pressure to reduce bleeding.
- *CPR Mouth Barrier*: (e.g.: *Microshield*) For use as a mouth barrier in CPR resuscitation.
- *Disposable Latex Gloves*: The First Responder to an injury should use this protection to prevent contact with an injured person's bodily fluids (blood, saliva, etc.).
- *Elastic Bandages*: For wrapping sprains and to help hold dressings or cold packs in place.
- *Eye Wash*: The wash bottles in a first-aid kit are typically small. Use them to rinse very minor contaminants from the eye. All other eye injuries should seek medical care.
- *First-Aid Manual*: A brief guide to emergency first-aid care.
- *First-Aid Ointment or Antiseptic Cream*: Apply this salve to wounds that have been cleaned prior to applying a dressing.
- *Gauze Roll*: Gauze is used to hold flat, non-adhesive bandages in-place prior to taping. It is not a bandage, because most gauze is not a sterile dressing.
- *Instant Cold Pack*: Place the pack on a sprain, fracture, or severe bruise to reduce swelling.
- *Microbial Hand Wipes*: For First Responders' clean-up after providing emergency care.
- *Pain Relievers*: (e.g., *Aspirin*, *Acetaminophen* or *Tylenol®*) For minor aches or pains, as the package directs.
- *Scissors*: For cutting clothing, tape or bandages and providing a better fit around the wound.
- *Triangular Bandage*: Used to create a sling for supporting an injured hand or arm or as protection over a large dressing.
- *Tweezers*: For removing foreign bodies from minor injuries. Not for use on eye injuries.
- *Wound Cleanser Wipes*: Use these singlet wipes to clean minor scrapes or cuts before applying antiseptic and adhesive bandages.

Use first aid kits for minor injuries and during emergencies before medics arrive to treat serious injuries. So, know what supplies are in your kits--and make the best use of them.

*Be sure to let your supervisor know if your kit needs to be restocked!*

### **Treatment Record**

**Each first aid kit should include a Treatment Record. When an incident has occurred whereby the first aid kit has been utilized, it is important that the Treatment Record is completed so that important details such as the date, time, description, etc. are recorded.**



## FLAMMABLE LIQUIDS

We've all heard of someone using an oxy-acetylene torch to cut the end out of a 55 gallon metal drum which contained a small residual of flammable liquid and the drum to exploded when the torch cut through the metal.

A gas station attendant was using gasoline as a solvent to clean a grease deposit near the lube rack. Vapors accumulated in the immediate area and were ignited by the pilot light of a floor mounted hot water heater. The resulting explosion and fire caused second and third degree skin burns over 90% of the attendant's body.

Simply stated, the term flammable indicates that the material will ignite easily, and burn rapidly. Contrary to popular belief, the flammable liquid itself does not burn, but the vapor it generates does. If the temperature of the liquid was reduced to below the flash point, insufficient vapor would be generated to establish ignition. Given the proper air/vapor mix contained within a closed space, and a source of ignition, an explosion will result.

### PROBLEMS:

- .... Smoking in flammable liquid storage, transfer, and use areas.
- .... Poor flammable vapor exhaust ventilation.
- .... Poor flammable liquid storage practices.
- .... Unprotected electrical wiring and equipment within flammable liquid storage and use areas.
- .... Use of gasoline or other flammable liquids for cleaning without proper safeguards.
- .... The quick identification of the location of fire extinguishers lacking.

### SOLUTIONS:

- .... Does everyone understand what flammables are?
- .... Clearly identify all containers containing flammable materials.
- .... Identify and protect areas where flammables are stored, transferred and used.
- .... Ensure good ventilation where flammables are located.
- .... Smoking controlled?
- .... Proper grounding and bonding of the containers during flammable liquid transfer.
- .... Equipment ignition sources (fire, electrical) controlled?

.... Use of nonflammable solvents used for cleaning.

.... Proper extinguishers readily available and properly serviced.

.... Empty containers used to hold flammable materials steam cleaned.

## **GOOD HYGIENE CAN KEEP YOU HEALTHY**

Most of us learned the basics of good personal hygiene from our mothers when we were children. She started us on good hygiene with the simple rule of washing our hands before we ate. As we have grown older, some of us may have drifted away from our mother's wise advice.

In today's chemical laden workplaces, being even more conscientious about hygiene is the smart thing to do. Even though washing our hands is a simple and logical task, it's still commonly overlooked.

What is on your hands gets ingested. How many times have you seen fellow workers smoke a cigarette while their hands were covered with paint or grease? How about the workers who eat their lunch without washing their hands? Not one of us would intentionally eat paint, or dip our cigarette into the paint bucket. Even so, that is basically what is happening when you eat your sandwich or smoke a cigarette without washing your hands. In addition to tobacco, smokers may be inhaling toxic substances that have been placed on the cigarette from their hands. Remember, when paints, solvents or most any chemical is heated or burned, its chemical makeup is changed.

Cleaning your skin with solvents is never a good practice. Mechanics who use a solvent to clean their hands are setting themselves up for a case of dermatitis or possibly becoming sensitized to the chemical or solvent. Before using the solvent to clean with, think "what is the purpose of a solvent?" A solvent's purpose is to cut grease. When it is used without protection such as gloves or barrier creams, it is degreasing the protective oils from your skin.

Clean clothing is a part of good hygiene. Maintaining good personal hygiene includes the clothes worn to work. A worker wearing oily, greasy clothing, or clothes that have toxic chemicals spilled on them, is likely to experience irritating rashes, boils or other skin problems. Work clothing should be changed daily. A daily shower and clean clothing reduces the chances of skin problems. Remember, dirty clothes and skin carry chemicals to your home and family.

First-aid begins with cleanliness. When we get a sliver, a nick, or a cut we typically go to the first-aid kit. We grab an adhesive bandage, quickly put it on, and go back to work. Several days later we wonder why the small injury is inflamed and infected. Don't ignore small injuries like these. The wounded area should be washed with soap and water

before the bandage goes on. Possibly an antiseptic should be placed on the wound as well. This simple trick you first learned from your mom helps to keep the wound from becoming contaminated. To also help prevent a small injury from getting to be a serious health hazard, keep your tetanus booster current. A small needle stick every 10 years is a small price to pay, in the prevention of infection.

Good personal hygiene all boils down to common sense. A daily shower, followed by clean clothing, and frequent washing of hands...particularly before eating or smoking, goes a long way in keeping you healthy and safe.

## **GENERAL SAFETY -- HAZARD AWARENESS**

A hazard is defined as a condition or changing set of circumstances that presents a potential for injury, illness, or property damage. The potential or inherent characteristics of an activity, condition, or circumstance which can produce adverse or harmful consequences.

An accident is defined as an unfortunate event often the result of carelessness or ignorance. An unforeseen and unplanned event or circumstance usually resulting in an unfavorable outcome.

There are some key words in these definitions: Unplanned; Unforeseen; Unfortunate; Unfavorable and most importantly POTENTIAL!

I met a person the other day who had fallen from a height of 25 feet. He was fortunate to have escaped this accident with only a badly broken leg. A few weeks ago a worker fell just a couple of feet off a ladder and he passed away. Both of these situations have been discussed to the limit and on several occasions I heard people refer to luck, good and bad! Well, the last time I looked, luck was not an effective accident prevention or loss control technique.

For an unplanned or unforeseen event to take place, there has to be *potential!*. Complacency and taking things for granted are causes of a tremendous number of injuries each year. Recognizing hazards and doing something about them is everyone's responsibility!

So as you begin work, ask yourself:

- Do I have the right tools/equipment for the job?
- Have I inspected my tools/equipment to make sure they are in good repair or am I trying to get by?
- Is the work laid out to provide safe completion of the job?

- Are the materials I am using safe, and do I need additional personal protective equipment such as: safety glasses, gloves, hard hat, respirator, etc.?
- Is there a safer way to accomplish the task?
- Are all necessary equipment guards in place?
- Are written procedures such as lockout/tagout being followed?

**BE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS ASSOCIATED WITH YOUR WORK AND MAKE YOUR CHOICES CAREFULLY!!**

## **HAZARDS OF SOLVENTS**

We use solvents practically every day in our lives. At work, we may use or be exposed to solvents when we come in contact with paints, coatings, while using dip tanks, thinners, degreasers, cleaners, glues or mastics. As a result of this widespread usage, it is important to know some of the hazards that are associated with the group of chemicals, generally called "solvents."

For practical purposes a solvent is simply a liquid capable of dissolving specific solids or liquids. As you know, there are solvents that we use daily that are hazardous. Petroleum based solvents are the most common type used in industry. Therefore, as part of your job, it's important for you to understand the hazards of working with or around solvents.

Exposure and over-exposure to a solvent can come from various methods. The routes of entry may include:

- Absorption by direct contact on the skin. If there are no "barriers" between the solvent and your skin, the solvent can be absorbed through your skin.
- Inhalation by breathing solvent vapors. Breathing in the solvent vapors can quickly result in the chemical getting into your body and bloodstream via your lungs.
- Ingestion from literally eating the chemical by not practicing good hygiene after handling solvents. Direct contact with your hands and mouth through eating or smoking may result in unexpected ingestion of solvents.
- Puncture of the skin by a tool or other object which has a coating of solvent. Punctures can result in the direct introduction of toxic chemicals into your body.

Overexposure to solvents can cause a variety of ailments. Depending on the type of solvent you are exposed to, the body will react in different ways. Skin contact may result in minor skin rashes or an allergic reaction resulting in "chloracne." This happens when the solvent dissolves the skin's natural oils. Some workers can develop a sensitization

to a particular product or chemical. Sensitization results in the entire body being "overly" sensitive to a particular chemical or product. After sensitization has occurred, even a very slight exposure can result in adverse or serious reactions. Serious overexposures can lead to illnesses resulting in organ or tissue damage.

As with any chemical or product, important information is contained in the product's Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). The MSDS provides information on safe use, handling, disposal and protection methods among other information.

Solvents are very useful in our everyday lives. If we take the time to learn more about them, we can be better prepared to properly use them, protect ourselves and effectively get our job done.

If you are unsure of the solvent or product that you are using, ask questions or check the MSDS.

## **HOUSEKEEPING 1**

Lack of proper housekeeping is a constant problem throughout plants, job sites or work areas. It has a definite effect on accident prevention, worker morale, and the effective use of space, time material and effort. It further reflects the efficiency of work being done. Steps taken to achieve and maintain good housekeeping often improve production.

### **THE PROBLEMS:**

- .... Fire prevention
- .... Inadequate cleaning
- .... Scrap accumulation
- .... Lack of management concern
- .... Congested aisles or passageway
- .... Oily or wet floors
- .... Cluttered work areas
- .... Temporary repair operations
- .... Improper material storage

.... Faulty maintenance

#### SOLUTIONS:

.... Provide better storage

.... Provide adequate waste facilities

.... Planned flow of material

.... Clean-up campaign

.... Reduce materials re-handling

.... Reduce equipment breakage

.... Reduce spillage

.... Better equipment maintenance program

.... Maintenance program for piping

.... Routine Individual clean-up

.... Clean-up review and inspection

.... Better job planning

.... Efficient scheduling arrangement

.... Designed worker convenience

## HOUSEKEEPING 2

What is housekeeping? It's a word that makes us think of keeping house or cleaning up at home. Actually, housekeeping is even more important in running a factory, making a product, or performing services of any kind. Messes and clutter are dangerous, especially in the workplace.

You might say to yourself that we have maintenance and custodial people to clean up after us, but that can't be the whole story. Even though we have people who are paid to do the big cleaning jobs, each of us must do his part in keeping his or her own work

area in good order. Here is an example of what can happen when someone forgets the importance of "housekeeping".

A maintenance man was using a ladder to do some overhead work. The area where he was working was pretty cluttered, but he didn't think too much about it. After all, it wasn't his job to clean up. When he finished the job, he came down the ladder and stepped on a piece of paper lying on the floor. What he didn't see was a broken drill bit hidden under the paper. His foot slipped and he fell, twisting his back. He was off work for several days due to the back strain.

#### DISCUSSION:

This incident brings up a lot of questions. Was he justified in feeling that it wasn't his job to clean up? Would you ever suspect that something might be under a scrap of paper? Wouldn't most people expect to have a safe area to walk in, without having to think about hidden hazards? What other things could cause a similar accident?

I think we can all agree that everyone has a part in good housekeeping. The workplace doesn't have to look beautiful but it should be safe. Make it your business to practice good housekeeping as you go about your work. You may save yourself or your fellow workers from a serious injury.

## HOW TO LIFT SAFELY

While work in the food industry has always required repetitive lifting, bending and stooping, back injuries have been comparatively few, both on and off the job because our employees have learned the proper way to lift.

Since back pain could affect us, both on and off the job, it is important that we understand and have some knowledge of the various causes of backaches. These causes are:

70% result from degeneration or aging of the spinal disc.

20% are due to inflammation (arthritis, urinary infection, etc.)

10% are due to actual back injuries and miscellaneous causes.

If you should suffer back pain, it is important to determine what the cause of the pain is. The problem may or may not be job related. A diagnosis and evaluation by a doctor can help you understand your particular condition.

We must remember, before we lift - We only have one back and we must take care of it.

The factors that determine if objects can be lifted and carried safely are:

1. Approach the load and **size it up** (weight, size and shape). Consider your physical ability to handle the load. Get help if there is any doubt.
2. Place your feet close to the object to be lifted and 8-10 inches apart - one along side, one behind the object.
3. Bend your knees to the degree that it is comfortable and get a good handhold. Then, using both leg and back muscles....Lift the load straight up - smoothly and evenly. Pushing with your legs, keep the load close to your body.
4. Lift the object into carrying position, making no turning or twisting movements until the lift is completed.
5. Turn your body with changes of foot position, after looking over your path of travel to make sure it is clear.
6. Setting the load down is just as important as picking it up. Using leg and back muscles comfortably lower load by bending your knees. When load is securely positioned, release your grip.

Over-reaching and stretching to reach overhead objects may result in strains or falls. Use a ladder instead of pallets, chairs, boxes carts or flat tops.

Avoid awkward positions or twisting movements while lifting.

Get help if the weight, shape or size factor indicates that the object cannot be lifted or carried safely.

## **MORNING WAKE UP**

I got up this morning turned off the clock and spilled the water as I was doing so. Was I safe?

I cleaned up the water and got ready for work and as I was doing this I stubbed my toe on the end table. Was I being safe?

I was running late so I hurried out to start my truck, I missed a step on the porch and fell. Was I being safe?

I was speeding to work because was really late now. Am I being safe?

I got to work rushed around to get the job done because I was behind. Am I being safe?



All of this could have been prevented if I eliminated any possible hazard that might occur. Like slowing down to pay attention to what is going on in my surroundings. An SPSA is a mental tool to make me aware of my surrounding. (Like not having the water to where I could knock it over. That would have been a start, and I would not have been late.)

Every day basic common sense is the key factor of getting a job done, and done safely.

Being aware of the hazards and eliminating as many hazards as possible, will ensure a safe work environment. Good housekeeping eliminates most slips trips and falls. Using our equipment properly, following the rules of the job, and looking out for each other is just daily common sense.

Pay attention to weather, and Road conditions; Wear gloves, Shovel, steps and walkways; properly operating equipment and Vehicles. These are part of our daily processes that can be taken for granted when they become routine. When the routine is done safely it can eliminate hazards. Remember: SPSA, Housekeeping, 360, and PPE, these should be just like taking a break, it is something we need to do. Slips, Trips, falls, Pinch Points, should be eliminated all together and not even considered.

## **HOW TO READ MATERIAL SAFETY DATA SHEETS**

### SECTION 1 – Material Identification

The name of the product and name, address, and emergency telephone number of manufacturer are provided.

### SECTION 2 – Hazardous Ingredients/Identity Information

This section contains a list of all the hazardous ingredients which make up more than 1% of the mixture (or .1% for cancer-causing substances). They also list the Permissible Exposure Limit (PEL) for each hazardous ingredient and Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) recommended by the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) and National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH).

### SECTION 3 – Physical/Chemical Characteristics

Physical and chemical characteristics include the chemical's appearance and odor, along with physical properties that indicate how easily a chemical will evaporate and release potentially harmful vapors into the air.

### SECTION 4 – Fire and Explosion Hazard Data

This section will provide information on the fire hazards of a product and special precautions necessary to extinguish a fire.

FLASH POINT= if a material has a flash point less than 100° it is flammable; if it's flash point is between 100-200° it is considered to be combustible and they both have special handling and storage precautions.

#### SECTION 5 – Reactivity Data

This describes the reaction of chemicals when they are mixed together with other chemicals, or when stored or handled improperly.

#### SECTION 6 – Health Hazard Data

This section describes the health effects of the product, including signs and symptoms of exposure and medical conditions made worse by exposure. Acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) effects of the exposure as well as routes of entry (inhalation, skin contact, swallowing) are also included.

#### SECTION 7 – Precautions for Safe Handling and Use (Spill or Leak Procedures)

This section contains information on proper equipment to use and what precaution to follow if a spill or leak occurs. It also describes safe waste disposal methods and precautions to be taken in handling and storing.

#### SECTION 8 – Control Measures

Lists control measures that can reduce or eliminate the hazard, including ventilation and other engineering controls, safe work practices, and personal protective equipment. Also contains information on the appropriate filter cartridge for respirators and the correct type of glove to be used if necessary.

### **PPE PROTECTION**

Hard hats, safety glasses, face shields, hearing protectors, gloves and safety shoes! What do all of these items have in common? They are all various forms of personal protective equipment, designed to help protect you from serious injury. Yet, data collected by the Bureau of Labor Statistics for a one year period show:

- 84% of workers who sustained head injuries were not wearing hard hats;
- 99% of workers who suffered face injuries were not wearing face protection;

- 60% of workers who sustained eye injuries were not wearing eye protection;
- 77% of workers who suffered foot injuries were not wearing safety shoes or boots;

Personal protective equipment is designed to protect you, but it only functions if you wear it. There is nothing automatic about eye protection. Safety glasses are of value to you only when you use them as they are meant to be used.

A hard hat is a beautifully engineered product—it is designed to protect your head from serious injury, but only if you wear it.

Hearing protectors are proven effective in preventing hearing loss, but if not worn, or worn incorrectly, they can't do their job. Just like those gloves you are required to wear when doing certain jobs or handling specific chemicals, they only work if you use them.

Sometimes it may seem like a lot of trouble to take a few seconds to obtain and put on protective equipment for a job that may only take a short time to complete, such as that small grinding task that may only take a few seconds. Did you know that a 10-inch diameter grinding wheel, traveling 1,850 revolutions per minute (rpm) will throw a particle 55 mph toward your face? If your eye were located three feet from the grinding wheel, the particle can strike your eye in 0.04 seconds.

An exposure can happen anytime during the task; the first minute, second hour, or anytime during the whole job, and it may happen more than once. I am sure you will agree, those few irritating seconds it takes to put on goggles is a small price when you consider the years of pain which may result from an eye injury. Do your body a favor, obtain the protective equipment your job, and hopefully you demand, and wear it properly.

## **BEING MENTALLY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES**

Would you know what to do if an emergency occurred while you were on the job? Do you know what actions to take if a co-worker was seriously injured, a fire ignited, or a structure collapsed? *Are you prepared to react?*

Emergencies and disasters are a reality of everyday life. Local and international news programs document such occurrences every day throughout the world. Too many lives are lost and property is damaged because no one was prepared to properly react when immediate decisions and actions counted.

A good start in learning how to respond to an emergency is through certification in Basic First Aid and CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation). These courses teach important

skills. But even more important than the first aid skills gained, they teach *how to respond* to an emergency. Programs offered by organizations such as the highly respected American Red Cross teach people about the kind of situations or conditions that might precipitate an emergency. Knowing what to look for and how to react could save the life of a co-worker or family member.

Your company should have an emergency action plan. Review it periodically, and be aware of what steps to follow when calling for emergency help. Know the course of action to take in likely emergencies at your facility. This will improve your safety awareness in everything you do.

Safety awareness may be gained through the company's regular safety meetings, safety training or your own personal interest in safety & health. This awareness will increase your ability to respond if, some day in the future, you are a bystander in an emergency. This is particularly important if you work in a hazardous industry. You should be able to answer the following:

- How and who do you notify in an emergency?
- Are you prepared to react responsibly?
- Should you stay with the injured person or run for help?
- If you are not First Aid certified, do you know who in your crew or the company is?
- Does the emergency scene need to be secured?
- Do you know the chain of command? Who's in charge during an emergency?

You come to work everyday prepared for the task at hand and knowledgeable on how to handle production problems in the workplace. Being mentally aware is also your best preparation for a potential emergency. Analyze beforehand what to do if one of your co-workers is injured, and if that injury is life threatening. Know how to protect yourself, your co-workers and the company in case of a serious chemical spill. Chances are, during a crisis, you won't have much time to plan the best possible action-so make those decisions ahead of time.

When an emergency does occur, it is your responsibility to be mentally ready.

## PREVENTING STRAINS & SPRAINS

This Safety Meeting Outline is structured to help you apply general material handling rules to specific activities in which your employees are involved. You can choose work activities which apply to these principles and structure your safety meeting presentation to address them.

1. Identify a task involving material handling (lifting, pushing, carrying, setting down, etc.).
2. Break the task down into its most basic steps. What does the worker do? (Example: lift a case of material from a truck bed, turn and carry it to a location in the building where it is set on the ground).
3. Apply the lifting principles shown below, as applicable:

PRE-LIFT TIPS	LIFTING FROM GROUND LEVEL	LIFTING FROM OVERHEAD	LIFTING FROM A SHELF, DESK, ETC.	SETTING LOADS DOWN	TIPS WHEN CARRYING	MOVING CARTS, HANGING LOADS
Determine the weight of the load to be lifted or carried.	Get as close as possible to the load.	Make certain you are standing on a stable surface before you attempt the lift.			Look ahead to make certain the way is clear.	
Are you able to do it alone? Is help or mechanical assistance needed?	Bend your knees, not your back.	Test the load to be sure you can lift it safely.	Pull the load close to your body and test it for weight.	Bend your knees, not your waist.	Set the load down if it becomes too heavy or unstable.	Remember to <i>push</i> , not pull whenever possible.
Does the size/shape of the load present any problem?	Get a good grip on the object and test its weight.	Bring the object off the shelf or support carefully, maintaining your balance.	Shift the weight of the load to your legs by keeping it close.	Set down the corner or edge of the object closest to you first - keeping your fingers out from under the load	Avoid stairs when ever possible. If unavoidable, use the banister or wall or to help you maintain balance.	Position the load so that your legs supply the force.
Will you have to turn/change direction while carrying the load?	Keep the load close to your body and lift using your legs.	While maintaining control of the load, bring it down to waist level.	Avoid reaching and lifting at the same time.		Have someone open doors, gates, etc. for you.	Use hands and arms for control and direction of the load.
Is the route you will take clear of obstructions, slip, trip, or fall hazards?	Be aware of your balance and what part of your body is doing the work. It should be your legs.	Whatever the task, GET HELP for heavy loads!			Change direction by moving your feet not your hips.	Keep hands & fingers inside the load whenever possible.
Do you have a back support belt, and are you wearing it properly?					Keep shoulders, hips and feet pointing the same direction.	Watch for pinch or shear points on carts, dollies or hoists.
					Never twist at the waist while carrying a load.	

## PROPER REPAIR OF ELECTRICAL CORDS

It shouldn't happen, but it does. Even heavy duty extension cords become damaged. Be-cause they can be expensive, you may be asked to make a repair, rather than get a new cord. But merely re-attaching and wrapping the wires doesn't mean the repair is proper or safe. Let's review the correct way to repair electrical cords. The first *obvious* step is often overlooked. Unplug the cord and take control of both ends.

**Splices:** Cut back only enough of the outer and inner insulation to make the repair. Keep in mind that the color-coded wires on one side need to be connected to the like-colored wires on the other. In other words, black-to-black, white-to-white, green-to-green. Stagger the lengths of the inner wire so that, even if the insulation goes bad, the conductors will not come in contact with each other. If the black wire is long on one side, it should be short on the other. Make good mechanical connections. Twist the conductors together and solder, using electrical solder. The splices now need to be insulated. Electrical tape is not very reliable. Shrink tubing works well. This is a sleeve of plastic put over one of the wires before it is connected to the other. When the joint is completed, the sleeve is slipped over the joint, and heated with a small heat source. A hair dryer, match or lighter will do. When heat is applied, the tubing shrinks around the conductor, forming tight insulation. We now need to pay attention to the outer jacket. This is important because the outer jacket protects the inner wires from additional damage. Shrink tubing could again be used, although, for additional strength and protection, it could also be wrapped with electrical tape, duct tape, or other durable, non-conductive material. NOTE: See NFPA-70 (National Electric Code) for restrictions on splicing flexible cords.

**Plugs:** Remove only as much outer jacket as is needed to make the repair. The outer jacket must be long enough to go into the plug or cap and be gripped by the strain relief clamp. After the jacket and wires are cut to length, we again must pay attention to the color coding. *The black (or sometimes red) wire is "hot". It goes to the smaller prong on the plug, which has a brass screw for attachment. The white wire is neutral. It goes to the larger prong, which is attached with a chrome screw. The green wire is "ground." This goes to the half-round or curved prong and is attached with a green colored screw.* Make a good connection. All screws must be tight. Reassemble the plug and tighten the clamp until it is snug on the cord. Do not over-tighten the clamp.

**Testing:** The repair is not done until the cord has been tested. The easiest way to check for continuity and correct wiring is to use a simple, inexpensive test light. This device plugs into the end of the cord and, by way of three lights, indicates if you have continuity and proper polarity. If you do *not*, you must redo the repair. You have created a dangerous situation. Good repairs take simple skills--but you cannot take shortcuts. Incomplete or improper repairs create fire and shock hazards. Do the job right!

## PROTECT YOUR HANDS

Most jobs require that you use your hands in some way. In fact, next to your eyes, your hands are probably the most important part of your body when it comes to doing your job. Your hands are your wage earners, a valuable asset that must be protected.

It's up to you to prevent your hands from being among the over 500,000 injured each year. Your employer helps by developing safety measures to overcome the hand injury hazards in your workplace, but it's up to you to use them.

Play your part in the hand safety effort. Remember, it's up to you to:

- Wear proper hand protection, for the job. Be sure you know the right kind of glove for the job. If you're not sure, ask.
- Think through each task before you do — know what you're asking your hands to do.
- Follow safety rules, even if you've gotten away with short cuts before. It only takes one wrong move to suffer a serious hand injury.
- Seek prompt treatment if an accident does occur. Prompt treatment can help prevent more serious consequences, such as an infection from occurring.
- Report all injuries to your supervisor, immediately. He needs to know the specifics of the accident to help prevent it from occurring again.

Remember, your employer is committed to helping you prevent injury to your hands, but the hand safety effort takes team work. You must do your part by learning basic safety rules developed by your employer and following them.

## SEVEN COMMON ACCIDENT CAUSES

Consider this statistic: 80 out of every 100 accidents are the fault of the person involved in the incident. *Unsafe Acts* cause *four times* as many accidents & injuries as *unsafe conditions*.

Accidents occur for many reasons. In most industries people tend to look for "things" to blame when an accident happens, because it's easier than looking for "root causes," such as those listed below. Consider the underlying accident causes described. Have you been guilty of any of these attitudes or behaviors? If so, you may have not been injured-but next time you may not be so lucky.

- Taking Shortcuts: Every day we make decisions we hope will make the job faster and more efficient. But do time savers ever risk your own safety, or that of other

crew members? Short cuts that reduce your safety on the job are not shortcuts, but an increased chance for injury.

- Being Over Confident: Confidence is a good thing. Overconfidence is *too much* of a good thing. "It'll never happen to me" is an attitude that can lead to improper procedures, tools, or methods in your work. Any of these can lead to an injury.
- Starting a Task with Incomplete Instructions: To do the job safely and right the first time you need complete information. Have you ever seen a worker sent to do a job, having been given only a part of the job's instructions? Don't be shy about asking for explanations about work procedures and safety precautions. It isn't dumb to ask questions; it's dumb not to.
- Poor Housekeeping: When clients, managers or safety professionals walk through your work site, housekeeping is an accurate indicator of everyone's attitude about quality, production and safety. Poor housekeeping creates hazards of all types. A well maintained area sets a standard for others to follow. Good housekeeping involves both pride and safety.
- Ignoring Safety Procedures: Purposely failing to observe safety procedures can endanger you and your co-workers. You are being paid to follow the company safety policies-not to make your own rules. Being "casual" about safety can lead to a casualty!
- Mental Distractions from Work: Having a bad day at home and worrying about it at work is a hazardous combination. Dropping your 'mental' guard can pull your focus away from safe work procedures. You can also be distracted when you're busy working and a friend comes by to talk while you are trying to work. Don't become a statistic because you took your eyes off the machine "just for a minute."
- Failure to Pre-Plan the Work: There is a lot of talk today about Job Hazard Analysis. JHA's are an effective way to figure out the smartest ways to work safely and effectively. Being hasty in starting a task, or not thinking through the process can put you in harms way. Instead, Plan Your Work and then Work Your Plan!

## STAY ALERT

Stay alive. The more awake a worker is the less likely he or she is to get hurt. If your report to work, or during work hours, use any type of intoxicant, illegal drugs, or legal drugs that impair your ability to be alert to your surroundings, or hamper your ability to make sound judgments you are not only endangering yourself, but your are endangering your co-workers.

Be sure to let your supervisor know if you are taking any prescription drugs or over the counter medication that may affect your ability to stay alert and/or think straight.



If you witness any of your co-workers behaving in such a manner as to cause harm to others report it to your supervisor.

You may not realize or even think about the fact that you may be endangering someone else's life and/or livelihood by impairing your ability to be alert and have a clear mind.

**Remember work safe and watch out for the other guy.**

## **EMERGENCY! WHERE'S THE FIRE EXTINGUISHER?**

As you walk toward the maintenance shop, you smell something burning and see light gray smoke coming from the window. You run into the shop and find the contents of the plastic trash can burning. What will you do? What is burning in the trash can? Where is the closest fire extinguisher? What type of extinguisher is it? Is the fire too big for you to put out? Do you even need a fire extinguisher? Are there people in the shop that should be warned of the danger?

These are questions that should be going through your mind as you assess the situation you have found. Do you know where the closest fire extinguisher is right now? What type is it? Can you use it on grease or gasoline fires? Why or why not? Is the extinguisher behind a glass door that needs to be broken? Can you break it bare handed (or should you even try)?

The vast majority of portable, hand held fire extinguishers are loaded with a dry chemical powder that will extinguish the majority of fires you might encounter in your daily environment. This powder is not toxic but will make you sneeze and cough if you inhale it. (It tastes like sodium bicarbonate which is its base powder.) This powder will extinguish Class "A", "B", and "C" fires.

Class "A" fires involve material such as paper, plastic, wood and other common combustibles.

Class "B" fires involve grease, oil or gasoline. Dry chemical extinguishers will work, but these fires can be harder to extinguish and should be approached with extreme caution.

Class "C" fires involve burning electrical motors or transformer. This type of fire changes from "C" to Class "A" or "B" as soon as the power is cut off (or shorts out). Dry chemical can be used here also because it will not conduct electricity and will put out "A" or "B" type fires.

A dry chemical extinguisher works like most spray paint, hair spray, or shaving cream cans - it does not need to be turned upside down to use it. When a fire emergency calls

for its use, remember to sweep the extinguisher's nozzle back-and-forth at what is burning--not at the flames or smoke. The goal is to put a "barrier" between the fuel and the surrounding oxygen. Don't empty the extinguisher onto the burned item after the flames are gone. The fire might flare back up and you would be left without any extinguishing powder if it should "re-kindle" or "re-ignite."

Prior to starting to battle the fire, designate someone to call the fire department. Fire fighters are paid to put the fire out; they know what to do and what to look for--even after you think you have doused it. There have been deaths from fires that were supposedly extinguished, but came back to life hours later.

Know where the general use fire extinguishers are throughout your facility or work area. Don't hang your coat over them, or stack material in front of them. Extinguishers are never needed until they are needed NOW. Keeping them easily visible and easily accessible at all times helps ensure that when a fire emergency occurs, a fire extinguisher can be easily and quickly reached.

And remember-extinguishers are made for relatively small fires. If the fire is too big or moving too fast to control, hold others away and wait for the Fire Department.

IN THE FUTURE, MORE SAFETY ARTICLES AND REMINDERS WILL BE ADDED TO THIS DOCUMENT.