

Safety Newsletter

Merced County Schools
Insurance Group

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Spring 2023

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY: YOUR SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY

People go to work every day, but don't expect to be injured. You have a right to a safe and healthful work environment. But employers are not the only ones responsible for your safety. You are, too.

We all share the responsibility for encouraging a safety culture to improve behavior and performance in the workplace. We all share accountability to encourage our peers to value safe work practices and safety programs in a positive, proactive way.

Here's how you can do it.

Get involved. If you think a job or a task is unsafe, stop the work. If you see something unsafe, report it. Make a commitment today to take an active role in safety. Don't wait until something happens and an injury takes over your life.

- Follow established safety policies and procedures.
- Maintain your personal work area in a clean and orderly manner.
- Wear, maintain and properly store your personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Attend all safety training.
- Using safe work practices to eliminate slips, trips and falls.
- Lifting safely and helping others to do the same.
- Labeling all chemical containers and become familiar with Safety Data Sheets.
- Know evacuation procedures and the location of emergency equipment.

Speak up. Talk to your supervisor if you have safety concerns. No one knows your job and tools better than you do. Never operate equipment or machinery unless you've been properly trained. Give suggestions to make a process or equipment safer. Immediately notify your co-workers and supervisor of any damaged equipment, hazardous conditions, or unsafe behavior. Promptly report all injuries, illnesses and near misses to your supervisor. By getting involved and speaking up, you'll gain confidence, leadership skills and a sense of ownership that will help you identify job hazards and take the appropriate precautions to protect yourself and others.

NEAR MISSES AND INCIDENT REPORTING

A near miss is defined by OSHA as an incident "in which a worker might have been hurt if the circumstances were slightly different". This includes "close calls" where colleagues narrowly missed an accident. Examples of near misses include escaping from a falling object, a hazardous chemical leak or the blade of cutting equipment.

It is so important to report all near misses. A near miss one day could be an injury or a fatality on the next.

WORKPLACE SAFETY TIPS

- 1. Be Aware of Your Surroundings.** Know the particular hazards of your job and workplace.
- 2. Keep Correct Posture to Protect Your Back.** If you work at a desk, keep your shoulders in line with your hips to avoid back problems. If you're picking things up, use correct lifting techniques so your back doesn't get hurt. Avoid stooping and twisting.
- 3. Take Regular Breaks.** So many work-related injuries occur because a worker is tired, burned out, or not alert to their surroundings. Take regular breaks to help you stay fresh on the job.
- 4. Use Tools and Machines Properly.** Taking shortcuts is one of the leading cause of workplace injury. It's a huge safety risk to use scaffolding as a ladder or one tool in place of another for a specific job.
- 5. Keep Emergency Exits Easily Accessible.** In case of an emergency, you'll need access to the exits.
- 6. Report Unsafe Conditions to Your Supervisor.** Your supervisor needs to be informed about any workplace safety hazards or risks.
- 7. Use Mechanical Aids Whenever Possible.** Instead of attempting to carry or lift something that's really heavy in an attempt to save a sliver of time, take an extra minute to use a wheelbarrow, cart, dolly, or forklift. Too many injuries happen while trying to lift something that weighs too much.
- 8. Reduce Workplace Stress.** Stress can lead to depression and concentration problems. Common causes of workplace stress include long hours, heavy workload, job insecurity and conflicts with coworkers or managers.
- 10. Wear the Correct Safety Equipment.** Depending on the job, equipment like earplugs, earmuffs, hard hats, safety goggles, or gloves greatly reduce the risk of workplace injury.

SPRING CLEANING TIPS



Spring cleaning is tiring work, so don't forget to take it slowly and pause when you think you need a break. Speeding through the cleaning process isn't only unsafe, it also makes your cleaning less effective.

2. Get Rid of Clutter First. Organizing before you clean makes cleaning easier. Decluttering is one of the easiest ways to reduce stress

4. Be Cautious on Ladders and Stools. Ladders and step stools can be great tools to help get rid of dust that has accumulated on hard-to-reach surfaces like the tops of bookshelves. Here are three simple ladder safety rules:

- Don't lean too far to one side
- Don't stand on the ladder's top step
- Ask someone to hold the ladder steady while you're on it

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IT WILL BE HOT!

HEAT EXHAUSTION	OR	HEAT STROKE
Faint or dizzy		Throbbing headache
Excessive sweating		No sweating
Cool, pale, clammy skin		Body temperature above 103° Red, hot, dry skin
Nausea or vomiting		Nausea or vomiting
Rapid, weak pulse		Rapid, strong pulse
Muscle cramps		May lose consciousness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get to a cooler, air conditioned place • Drink water if fully conscious • Take a cool shower or use cold compresses 	<h1 style="margin: 0;">CALL 9-1-1</h1>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take immediate action to cool the person until help arrives

The hot days of summer are here and will continue for a while. Throughout California, thousands of employees who work outdoors face the potential dangers associated with overexposure to heat. Factors such as working in direct sunlight, high temperature and humidity, physical exertion and lack of sufficient water intake can lead to heat stress. During the warm season, it is important to understand that exposure to heat can cause serious illness or death. Exposure to heat can cause heat cramps and rashes. The most serious heat-related disorders are heat stroke and heat exhaustion. Symptoms include confusion; irrational behavior; loss of consciousness; hot, dry skin; and abnormally high body temperature. Drinking cool water, reducing physical exertion, wearing appropriate clothing and regular rest periods in a cool recovery area can lessen the effects of working in summer heat.

1. Check the weather before leaving the house. You may encounter several types of weather in one day.
2. Keep an umbrella in your car, just like you would keep an ice scraper during the winter.
3. Check the air pressure in your tires frequently. Temperature fluctuations in the spring can mess with the balance of all four tires and increase your chance of an accident.
4. Always wear protective gloves even if it's hot outside.
5. Apply sunscreen before working in the sun.
6. Stay hydrated throughout your shift by always having a reusable water bottle handy.

Block Out UV Rays.

Cover up. Wear tightly-woven clothing that blocks out light. Try this test: Place your hand between a single layer of the clothing and a light source. If you can see your hand through the fabric, the garment offers little protection.

Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of UV rays. You want to block both UVA and UVB rays to guard against skin cancer.

Wear a hat. A wide brim hat is ideal - it protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose, and scalp.

Wear UV-absorbent shades. Sunglasses should block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation.

Limit exposure. If you're unsure about the sun's intensity, take the shadow test: If your shadow is shorter than you, the sun's rays are the day's strongest.

PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Slips, trips, and falls cause nearly 700 fatalities per year and many more injurious accident in the workplace according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Slips can be caused by wet surfaces, spills, or weather hazards like ice or snow. Slips are more likely to occur when you hurry or run, wear the wrong kind of shoes, or don't pay attention to where you're walking. You can help avoid slips by following these safety precautions:

- Practice safe walking skills. Take short steps on slippery surfaces to keep your center of balance under you and point your feet slightly outward.
- Clean up or report spills right away. Even minor spills can be very dangerous.
- Don't let grease accumulate at your work place.
- Be extra cautious on smooth surfaces such as newly waxed floors. Also be careful walking on loose carpeting.

Trips occur whenever your foot hits an object and you are moving with enough momentum to be thrown off balance. To prevent trip hazards:

- Make sure you can see where you are walking. Don't carry loads that you cannot see over.
- Keep walking and working areas well lit, especially at night.
- Keep the work place clean and tidy. Store materials and supplies in the appropriate storage areas.
- Arrange furniture and office equipment so that it doesn't interfere with walkways or pedestrian traffic in your area.
- Properly maintain walking areas.

Falls. To avoid falls consider the following measures:

- Don't jump off landings or loading docks. Use the stairs
- Repair or replace stairs or handrails that are loose or broken
- Keep passageways and aisles clear of clutter and well lit.
- Wear shoes with appropriate non-slip soles.

