

WORKING ON THE SAFE SIDE?

Quiz

You're more likely to be hurt on the job if you are stressed and preoccupied with personal problems or distractions. Injuries can occur if you're physically unfit for a physically demanding job or when you don't wear your protective gear. Staying alert to conditions that can lead to injuries is the best way to prevent them. **Test your safety awareness. Check the safety habits you practice.**

TO PREVENT WORK INJURIES YOU:

- Focus on the present and deal with distractions later.
- Remove tripping hazards such as electrical cords and boxes from traffic areas, doorways and stairways.
- Observe safety signs, safe work practices and instructions for your job.
- Report or correct hazards rather than leave them for others to fix or fall victim to.
- Know how to properly operate equipment.
- Move oversized loads properly — by lifting safely or getting help.
- Use a step stool or ladder to safely reach overhead items.
- Wear your seat belt properly when driving whether on or off the job.
- Wear your hard hat, eye protection equipment, earplugs or other protective gear when needed.

- Avoid using medications on the job that can cause drowsiness.
- Keep outside doors locked when working late or alone.

If you checked fewer than half of these habits relative to your job, **HEADS UP!** It's time to step up your safety efforts. **Safety is your responsibility.**



More Workplace Safety Steps



Resist taking shortcuts.

Demonstrate safety in your work habits and in your personal conduct. In a sense, you're a walking advertisement for why safety matters. Shortcuts aren't worth the risk.

Avoid hazardous preoccupation. What is it? It's when your mind drifts until you hear a "BEEP!" and realize you've just had a close call with a forklift, for example. Many serious injuries occur when workers get distracted, unintentionally compromising their own safety and that of others. **Stay focused on the task at hand.**

Use your keyboard correctly. Bad posture may lead to hand and wrist pain and injury. **What you can do:** Coordinate your chair height and the position of your keyboard and mouse so that your elbows fall comfortably at your sides at right angles while you type. Your forearms should be parallel to the floor and your wrists straight. Use a gentle keystroke rather than a forceful one.

Store it safely. Improperly stored materials can cause problems such as poor visibility, fire hazards and toppling objects. **Storage basics:** Avoid stacking items too high or on top of filing cabinets; store heavy items on low shelves; and keep all aisles, walkways, corners and fire doors unblocked.

Refresh your memory. If you were trained on a safety procedure but don't remember all the steps, ask questions or ask to be retrained.

Look out for your co-workers. If you see co-workers doing something unsafe, let them know. They are putting themselves and others in jeopardy.

Final thought: Take personal responsibility for safety at work (and at home). Your attitude can influence the behavior of others in a positive way to prevent injuries.

PUT SAFETY FIRST

GUARD AGAINST THE HAZARDS



YOUR COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

Injuries are preventable when safety becomes a state of mind. Do you **THINK SAFE** at work? The information in this brochure can help you do your part to reduce unintentional injuries to yourself and others.



Did You Know? Safety Suffers When ...

You're sleep-deprived. Fatigue is a leading cause of accidents. If you are constantly tired during work hours, if you fall asleep immediately when you sit still or if you nod off frequently, you could be putting yourself at risk. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep per night. If you suffer from insomnia or wake up tired despite a full night's sleep, talk to your health care provider. Sleep problems can be treated.

Your medication causes side effects. Many prescription and over-the-counter medications, including pain relievers, allergy medicines, antidepressants and some heart medications, can cause drowsiness and unfocused thinking. **The solution:** Talk to your health care provider or pharmacist about the potential side effects of any medication you take. If you must use a medication that causes drowsiness, avoid driving, operating machinery or other dangerous tasks while taking it.

You're stressed-out. Your muscles tighten, your mind wanders, you have difficulty making decisions or focusing on the work at hand, you become forgetful. These are all symptoms of stress, and the distractions can lead to injuries. **The solution:** Find ways to manage the stress in your life. Exercise ... pursue a hobby ... find support through friends and family ... take time for yourself.

Hazard Hot Spots

▲ **LIFTING** Back injuries are among the most common workplace injuries. **Protect your back:** Use the "squat-lift" method. Bend at your knees (not at your waist); then use the strong muscles of your legs to lift, keeping your back straight. Avoid twisting movements. **More tips:** Push, don't pull. Get help if the load is too heavy.

▲ **LADDERS** Each year hundreds of thousands of injuries occur due to improper ladder use. **Step up safely:** Use the right size and type of ladder for the job — and use it correctly. Secure the ladder and make sure it is steady. Never climb on the top two rungs.

▲ **MACHINERY** When machine safeguards aren't used properly, moving machine parts can cause severe injuries such as crushed fingers or hands, amputations, burns, blindness and even death. **Stay safe around machines:** Familiarize yourself with the machine's hazards; learn about the machine's safeguard descriptions, functions and use; know how and when safeguards may be removed — and by whom (in most cases, repair and maintenance personnel only); and know what to do if a safeguard is missing or damaged.

▲ **FALL HAZARDS** This is where neatness really counts! **Stop slips, trips and falls:** Close file drawers to prevent tripping or other injuries from sharp edges. Keep stairways and traffic areas free of clutter such as supplies and cords. Take care on highly waxed or wet floors and uneven carpet. Slow down.

▲ **DRIVING** Distractions, drowsy driving, road and weather hazards, and unsafe vehicle conditions ... these are just a few of the situations that contribute to wrecks. **Be ready for the unexpected:** Driving can be unpredictable; however, driving defensively and responsibly can increase your odds of preventing or surviving a crash.



6 SAFETY PRINCIPLES

1. Be aware of your job hazards and take precautions.
2. Don't take chances or unnecessary risks.
3. Watch out for your co-workers' safety.
4. Follow the rules and use your equipment as specified.
5. Concentrate on your job and eliminate distractions.
6. Keep your work area clean and clutter-free.

Use Your Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Protective equipment alone can't prevent injuries, but it's your first line of defense. **Here's the gear:**

Eyes • **At work:** Whenever there is a risk of flying objects, chemicals or injurious radiation, wear eye protection goggles that meet American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards for on-the-job use. **At home:** Wear safety goggles during yard work or home projects — whenever there's a risk of flying objects or splashing chemicals.

Hands • **At work:** Whenever protective gloves are required, make sure they fit well, are comfortable and are rated to guard against the particular hazard. Use gloves that are not damaged. **At home:** You can avoid mild burns and dry skin by wearing gloves when using cleaners, detergents and chemicals.

Head • **At work:** A helmet or hard hat is needed in areas where there is a potential for head injuries, such as from falling objects. Check your hard hat or helmet for signs of deterioration such as stiffness or brittleness; don't store the hat in extreme temperatures or direct sunlight; and replace it after an accident or impact. **At home:** Wear a helmet when riding a bicycle or a scooter or while in-line skating.

Ears • **At work:** Wear earmuffs or earplugs to dampen the noise that can cause hearing loss. **At home:** Use earplugs from a pharmacy or hardware store when using motorized tools, or attending auto racing events or rock concerts.

Other • Protective clothing and shoes may also be needed for certain hazards.

When personal protective equipment is recommended, wear it.

