

MINI-INSPECTIONS

Starting the workday out safely with a work area inspection will certainly help keep you safe during the day. But remember that workplace conditions are always changing. If you let your guard down and take things for granted, a hazard might develop where you least expect it. So you have to keep alert throughout the workday.

Don't be lulled into a false sense of security just because the work area looked good at the beginning of your shift. Later in the day it might be a different story.

For example, your work area might have been nice and neat at the start of your shift, but trash or scrap might have built up and created a fire hazard. Or tools and materials might have been left lying on the floor where they could create a tripping hazard.

A good way to keep on top of changing conditions is to conduct mini-inspections all day long. A quick glance around from time to time will do the trick. Look for anything that's different—anything that could cause an accident or injury.

HOW'S YOUR SAFETY ATTITUDE?

Do you have a "want-to" or a "have-to" safety attitude?

That depends on whether you do the safe thing because you have to or because you *want* to. Why would you want to? Because you want to avoid injuries so that you can go home to your family in one piece at the end of the workday.

People with "want-to" safety attitudes are more safety conscious, more alert to hazards, more likely to follow rules and regulations—and more likely to avoid accidents and injuries. If you have any co-workers with a "have-to" safety attitude, help them see the value in always doing the safe thing, not just because there's a rule, but because it's the smart thing to do.



"Hey, Grog - put tools away at end of shift!"

Riddle of the Month

What falls but doesn't break, and what breaks but doesn't fall?

Answer on page 2 in "Safety Bits and Pieces."

Safety Matters



Produced by the Insurance Coverage Office

State of Delaware

Volume VII

February 2007

Workspace Safety

Always begin with a safety inspection

Your safety on the job depends on your ability to identify hazards and take proper precautions. An effective way to eliminate some of the hazards you might face is to take time at the beginning of every workday to conduct a quick inspection of your work area and your workstation.

To assist with your inspection, consider creating a checklist like the one below to make sure you identify all potential hazards. This one is a general list of what to look for. You need to add more specific items to reflect the nature of your work area and the hazards that exist there. Use this list to get started:

- Is the general work area clean and neat?
- Are walkways clear of obstructions and debris?
- Will co-workers and others working in the area be creating hazards you need to be aware of?
- Is your workstation and the area around it in orderly condition?
- Are personal possessions stowed safely away where they won't be in the way or misplaced?
- Are the items you use most during the day within easy reach?
- Have other tools and materials been stored in their proper place?
- Are trash and scrap containers empty?
- Do you have the personal protective equipment (PPE) you need for the day?
- Is PPE clean and in good condition?
- Are containers of hazardous materials kept tightly sealed and safely stored?
- Are chemical containers properly labeled?
- Are material safety data sheets (MSDSs) that you will need during the day readily available?
- Are machines and equipment clean and in good operating condition?
- Are machine guards in place and operating correctly?
- Is electrical equipment properly grounded?
- Are electrical cords and plugs in good condition?
- Have you avoided overloading electrical outlets or circuits?
- Is emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers and first-aid supplies, in their proper place and easily accessible in case they are needed during the day?

Safety Tip of the Month

Workplace violence can come from many sources: co-workers; former employees; spouses, friends, and relatives of employees; customers; vendors; delivery people; visitors; and criminals who get into our facility or onto our property. Since the Oklahoma City bombing and the attacks on September 11, 2001, the threat of terrorism is a real concern.

Don't hesitate to report potential violence, whatever the source, and take an active role in keeping yourself and your co-workers safe from the threat of workplace violence.

Safety Bits & Pieces

PERSONAL SAFETY TIPS

The following tips can help you avoid becoming a victim of crime when you are out and about or at work. By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risk to yourself, and also discourage those who commit crime.

Be Prepared

- * Always be alert and aware of the people around you and your surroundings.
- * Respect your intuition. Don't allow rationality to override your "sixth sense" - it could save you from danger.
- * Educate yourself concerning prevention tactics. Consider taking a self-defense course.
- * Be aware of locations and situations which would make you vulnerable to crime, such as alleys and dark parking lots.
- * Be prepared to scream or shout if attacked.
- * When you are socializing, do not drink too much; keeping a clear head makes it easier to make wise decisions when it comes to personal safety.

Personal Property Precautions

- * Never leave your wallet, bag or purse, or other items of property unsecured and unattended.
- * Only carry cash for your immediate needs.
- * Clearly mark your property.
- * Never let anyone see your PIN when entering it on an Automatic Teller Machine.
- * Always carry your bag or purse closed or zippered and close to you.
- * Lock your home and car when you leave it.

Street Precautions

- * Be alert to your surroundings and the people around you, especially if you are alone or it is dark. Stay on well-lit streets. Avoid shortcuts through alleys, vacant lots, and other deserted places.
- * Carry something that can make a loud noise that can scare off attackers.
- * Whenever possible, travel with a friend or a security escort.
- * Walk confidently and at a steady pace.
- * Don't wear headphones. They block your ability to hear someone approach you and could delay your reaction time in an emergency situation.
- * Do not respond to conversation from strangers on the street, continue walking.
- * If you carry a purse, hold it securely between your arm and your body.
- * Make eye contact with people when walking.

If a crime occurs - report it! Everyone should consider it his/her responsibility to report crime. When you report all the facts about a crime, it helps the police assign officers in the places where crimes are occurring or where they are most likely to occur.

Additional Personal Safety Tips will be provided in upcoming **Safety Matters** issues.

Riddle of the Month Answer: Night falls but doesn't break; day breaks but doesn't fall.

Don't Turn a Blind Eye

Why eye safety is so important

Because February is **Workplace Eye Safety Month**, let's conduct a little experiment. You can do it right at your workstation.

Close your eyes and keep them closed for several minutes while you do your job. Impossible? You betcha!

That's why eye safety is such an important issue. And not just eye safety on the job, but eye safety at home and in recreational pursuits, too. Because it doesn't matter how or where you lose your sight. It only matters that you can't see, can't drive, and probably can't continue to do your job. And that matters a whole lot.

The key to eye safety is wearing appropriate protection whenever eye hazards might be present. Eye protection must comply with the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standards (either ANSI Z87.1 - 1989 if purchased after July 5, 1994 or ANSI Z87.1 - 1968 if purchased before July 5, 1994). Eye protection should meet the following minimum requirements: provide adequate protection against the particular hazards for which they are designed; be of safe design and construction for the work being performed; be reasonably comfortable when worn under the designated conditions; and, fit snugly and not unduly interfere with the movements of the wearer, forming a protective seal when fitted properly. Here's a true story that makes the point about eye safety:

A maintenance worker was repairing a pipe that normally carried pressurized sulfuric acid. He assumed that the pipe was depressurized and the flow of acid had been shut off according to standard procedure. But as it happened, somebody made a mistake and failed to properly shut down the pipe. Fortunately, when the highly corrosive acid spewed out all over him, he was protected by goggles and a protective suit. Although he received minor burns to his face, this fortunate worker walked away with his eyesight intact, thanks to his safety goggles. He was one of the more than 2,000 eye injuries that occur in the workplace daily, but, thanks to the personal protective equipment (PPE) he was wearing, not one of the 10 to 20% of those injured that experience temporary or permanent vision loss.

SEVEN SMART MOVES

Here are seven smart ways to prevent accidents and injuries on the job:

1. **Learn how to do your job safely**, and then do everything you can to make sure you keep safe while you work.
2. **Think the job through.** Know what you're going to do and how you're going to do it.
3. **When in doubt, find out.** There are no stupid safety questions. Ask if you don't understand something.
4. **Get help when you need it.** Don't struggle with something too big to handle safely or be too proud to ask a co-worker to lend a hand. You can return the favor when a co-worker needs help.
5. **Use required PPE.** Find out what to wear, how to wear it, and how to maintain it so it keeps protecting you.
6. **Speak up** and tell your supervisor if you see anything unsafe that may hurt you or someone else.
7. **Report accidents and injuries.** It's important to find out what went wrong so that the problem can be corrected.

Notable Quotation

"To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a little better; whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is the meaning of success."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Did You Know?

- * An injury occurs every 18 seconds in the workplace.
- * 33,000 workers receive disabling injuries annually from falling on the stairs.
- * Approximately 10,000 employees die every year in job-related accidents.
- * 1,500 workers die annually from falls.

On the Lighter Side

Waiter: May I help you with that soup?
Patron: What do you mean, help me? I don't need any help.
Waiter: Sorry. From the sound I thought you might wish to be dragged ashore.

Definition: Junk is the stuff we throw away. Stuff is the junk we save!