# Safety Matters

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## Can You Hear Me Now?

### *How to protect your hearing*

There are many causes for hearing loss, including:

- **The aging process**
- **Some ear infections**
- **Some ototoxic medications, such as some antibiotics and aspirin**
- **Hereditary conditions**
- **Loud noise**

According to the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders, "more than 30 million Americans are exposed to damaging noise levels every day. Already, 22 million American adults between 20 and 69 years of age have permanently damaged their hearing due to exposure to loud noise." Since hearing loss caused by **loud noise is 100 percent preventable**, let's focus on that.

- **Limit your exposure to noise** that reaches 85 decibels and over. (As an example: telephone dial tone - 80dB; inner city traffic noise from inside a car - 85 dB.) Lawnmowers (107dB), snowblowers/ motorcycles (100 dB), firecrackers (up to 140dB), and loud music (between 115 - 150 dB) can reach or exceed these levels.
- **Lower the volume** on the TV, radio, and stereo.
- **Keep the volume down** on earbuds and headphones for your Ipod and other entertainment devices.
- **Wear personal protective equipment (PPE),** such as earplugs, canal caps, or ear muffs:
  —When using loud machinery: *or*
  —When exposed to loud noise at concerts or fireworks displays.

Loud noise can also contribute to hearing loss from **the aging process,** which is yet another reason to protect yourself from exposure to excessive noise throughout your life.

**Ear infections** are common in children but can occur in adults as well. You can help prevent them by washing your hands frequently and by getting flu shots annually.

Be careful when taking **antibiotics and aspirin.** If you notice a loss in your hearing, talk with your doctor immediately about changing your medicine.

### SAFETY TIP OF THE MONTH

There's no fast "cure" for sunburns - it may take days for your skin to heal. To treat the pain, take an over-the-counter pain reliever and keep the area moisturized with aloe or other lotions. Keep the skin cool by using cold compresses or taking a cold bath. Keep in mind that there is no such thing as a "healthy tan." Unprotected sun exposure causes premature aging of the skin. If you are going to work outside, it is recommended you use sun screen at least every 3-4 hours or as recommended.

## *News & Notes*

### HAND IN GLOVE

To protect your hands and fingers use the proper glove. Workers who deal with acids and detergents need rubber gloves. Healthcare workers use latex gloves—and change them for each patient. But some workers are allergic to the natural latex and must find other kinds of gloves that will avoid the allergic response yet still protect against infection.

It's not only in specialized trades that gloves are a useful part of the working wardrobe. While performing material handling of various kinds, gloves help guard against splinters, strapping cuts, and scraped knuckles when carrying material through narrow aisles and doorways.

Don't forget to wear gloves when doing work around the house or in the yard! Cotton fabric gloves are for work involving dirt, splinters or slippery objects. Leather gloves protect against rough objects, chips, sparks and medium heat.

The two most important things to remember about the various kinds of work gloves are:

**1.** Choose the right type for the job, *and*
**2.** Wear them—they are of no use to you while they're in your locker or tucked in your back pocket.

### GOOD AND SAFE HOUSEKEEPING

Take time each shift to spotcheck and clean up your workplace. Is your area free of clutter or excess materials? Are aisles and walkways clear of obstructions?

Don't rely on the custodian or co-workers to clean up a spill, pick up scrap, or put items in their proper places.

### RIDDLES OF THE MONTH

1) What do you get when you combine a ghost, a french poodle, a cocker spaniel and a rooster?
2) What word has 26 letters but only 3 syllables?
3) What do you call a skunk in court?

**Answer on page 2 Safety Bits & Pieces**

# *Safety Bits & Pieces*

## SUMMER HEAT SAFETY

Summer time is here!!! High temperatures may affect the way we conduct business. For office personnel whose job requires them to attend meetings at other locations, going from the nice cool office to the heat outside the office can be a drastic change in temperature. For field personnel that are exposed to the direct sun and heat for a long period of time they can be even more drastically affected. Here are some tips on what to do to prevent a heat related stroke.

### HOW TO HYDRATE

➲Drink plenty of fluid. Don't wait until you're thirsty to drink.
➲If you must exercise, drink two to four glasses of cool, nonalcoholic fluids each hour. Water is recommended.
➲Avoid liquids with alcohol or sugar -- they will cause you to lose more body fluid.
➲Stay away from very cold drinks -- they can cause stomach cramps.

Limit your outdoor activity to morning and evening hours and wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing. Monitor young children and elderly people because they are more sensitive to heat exhaustion or heat stroke. Body temperature can rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes. A very important tip for summer health is to drink enough fluids -- hydrate, hydrate, hydrate.

## GASOLINE SAFETY

Follow these safety tips from American Burn Association whenever you handle gas:

➲Don't smoke or use matches, lighters, or other ignition sources anywhere around gas. Gas vapors can travel far from gas containers in enclosed areas.
➲Use gas only in well-ventilated areas.
➲Turn off equipment and let cool before filling the gas tank.
➲Never use gasoline to start charcoal on a grill—use proper charcoal starter.
➲Never use gas as a cleaning fluid or solvent—or to clean your hands.
➲Don't store gas cans in your vehicle.
➲Store gas in approved containers in a cool, well-ventilated area, such as a shed or garage, but never in the house, and only keep a minimum amount on hand.
➲Never use glass or plastic bottles for gasoline storage.

## RIDDLES OF THE MONTH ANSWERS

1) Cocker - poodle - boo!
2) The alphabet
3) Odor in the court!

# The Painful Pinch!

## Pinch points and how to avoid them

Chances are that you've been the victim of a painful pinch. It could have been at work or at home. Maybe you pinched your fingers when closing a drawer or pinched your hands when carrying a big box through a door frame. If you were lucky, the injury wasn't too serious. But pinch point injuries can be severe, and that's why you need to be aware of the risks.

The first thing is to understand what pinch points—also called nip points—are. You can easily visualize them by thinking of a wrench, a pair of tweezers, a thumb and forefinger, or a lobster's claw. These are all pairs of surfaces that can catch an object between them. Often, that catching is intended, as with the use of a wrench or tweezers. Not so, however, with a lobster's pincer except, of course, by the lobster.

Some workplace pinch points are pretty obvious, such as rollers and other reciprocating parts on machinery. Other pinch points are less obvious and can cause injuries of varying severity, from something as simple as a blood blister up to and including death. For example, the rungs of an extension ladder can catch fingers, hands, or feet when sliding past each other.

What are the keys to avoiding pinch point injuries? Be aware, be alert, and be careful!

## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE...

## QUOTATION OF THE MONTH

*"I believe life is a series of near misses. A lot of what we ascribe to luck is not luck at all. It's seizing the day and accepting responsibility for your future. It's seeing what other people don't see and pursuing that vision."*

**Howard Schultz,**
**CEO of Starbucks**

## From the State of Delaware's Office of Highway Safety...

## Share the Road

Whether it is the warmer temperatures or the sky-rocketing gas prices...motorcyclists have taken to the roads across Delaware. OHS is reminding everyone how important it is for motorcyclists to ride safe and for motorists to share the road with them. When we look out for each other, we all arrive alive.

- **If you are a motorist** – Share the road by being alert for those riding motorcycles. Give them proper space and passing room.
- **If you are the motorcyclist** – Ride Safe by always wearing appropriate safety gear, never pass between vehicles or on the shoulder, and never ride side by side with another motorcyclist in the same lane.

Riding safe and sharing the road is a responsibility that you owe to yourself and others. For more information on this and other traffic safety programs, go to www.ohs.delaware.gov.