

# We're Serious About Safety!

## Safety Glasses

Eye injuries of all types occur at a rate of more than 1,000 per day. Of these, 10% - 20% will be disabling because of temporary or permanent vision loss - 100,000 cases per year.

The workplace is the setting for at least 61,000 of such injuries each year. Common workplace eye injuries include sand, dirt and other 'foreign bodies' on the eye surface, embedded foreign bodies (an object penetrates the globe of the eye), chemical exposure, and black eyes, blunt injuries, or contusions.

Safety experts believe that proper eye protection could have prevented or reduced the severity of injury in at least 90 percent of all accidents.

Eye injury can cause permanent vision loss. If the loss is total, the result is blindness. If it is partial, the result is a vision impairment known as "low vision." A person with low vision has severely reduced visual acuity or a significantly obstructed field of vision — or both.

Wear safety eyewear whenever there is any chance that machines or operations present the hazard of flying objects, chemicals, harmful radiation or a combination of hazards.

Before removing safety eyewear, brush, shake or vacuum any dust and debris from the headwear, hair, forehead or top of the eye protection. Clean your safety glasses before the next wearing.

## Hard Hats

Someone receives a head injury every 15 seconds in the U.S. Every five minutes one of these individuals will die and another will become permanently disabled. Among survivors, 80% of all head injuries are considered minor. Moderate and severe head injuries account for 10% each.

Injuries to the head involve the skull, the blood vessels within the skull, or the brain. Even a minor cut to the scalp can bleed profusely. The "goose egg" or swelling that may appear on the scalp after a head blow results from the scalp's veins leaking fluid or blood into (and under) the scalp. It may take days or even weeks to disappear.

Traumatic brain injuries that damage the side of the head results in weakness in the limbs on the opposite side of the body. Injury to the left side of the brain or the brain stem itself tends to cause speech and language impairment. Coma, loss of power in the arms and legs, and speech impairment are the most visible signs of brain injury. However, traumatic brain injury causes numerous 'hidden disabilities' in that it results in changes to personality, thinking and memory.

Hard hats (helmets) are designed to provide limited protection for the head. Helmets that meet the ANSI standard should be effective against small tools, small pieces of wood, bolts, nuts, rivets, sparks from overhead work and similar hazards.

Inspect your hard hat periodically for loss of surface gloss, discoloration, surface chalking or flaking, cracked or frayed suspension, or frayed or cut straps. At the first appearance of any of these phenomena, the shell or suspension should be replaced.

## Ear Plugs

Noise-induced hearing loss is 100 percent preventable but once acquired, hearing loss is permanent and irreversible.

Loud noises can cause hearing loss by damaging the delicate hair cells in the inner ear. Most of the time this damage happens gradually when prolonged exposure to loud sounds exhausts these hair cells. Hair cells don't repair themselves. So when enough hair cells are damaged, a hearing loss results.

Over 34 million Americans are hearing-impaired. One in 10 Americans has a hearing loss that affects his ability to understand normal speech. Excessive noise exposure is the most common cause of hearing loss and one of the most common occupational diseases.

Approximately 30 million workers are exposed to hazardous noise on the job.



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## Propane - Liquefied Petroleum Gas

- In its natural state, propane is colorless and odorless.
- To increase the likelihood that a propane leak can be detected, ethyl mercaptan, a sulfur-based compound, is added to the gas at the time of production.
- Learn to recognize the odor of propane and always be sensitive to the slightest gas smell.
- Colds, allergies, sinus congestion, cooking odors, certain medications, age, prolonged exposure to the odor of propane, damp or musty smells and the use of tobacco, alcohol or drugs can reduce your ability to detect the smell of propane.
- If for any reason you are unable to smell odorized propane, notify your supervisor immediately. Your safety depends on your ability to smell leaking propane.

## Safe Handling

- If liquid propane is released into the air, it quickly vaporizes, expanding 270 times its original volume and causing a refrigerating effect that makes everything it touches extremely cold.
- When propane vaporizes, if it comes into contact with skin, it will cause freeze burns because exposed tissues will immediately be exposed to a temperature near -44°F.
- Gloves resistant to propane and safety glasses must be worn when filling propane containers to protect from freeze burns.
- When dispensing propane, ignition sources such as open flames, running vehicle engines or people smoking must be kept at least 25 feet away from the propane transfer point.
- Propane cylinders must be transported so that the pressure relief valve is in communication with the vapor space and must be secured in the vehicle to prevent shifting, movement or falling.

## Propane Tanks

- To help prevent overfilling of cylinders, all newly manufactured, refurbished or requalified tanks with a capacity of 4 pounds to 40 pounds must be equipped with an OPD, an overfill prevention device.
- Before filling any cylinder, it must receive a pre-fill visual inspection.
- The tank's foot ring should not be bent and should support the tank in an upright, stable position. Check for excessive corrosion on the bottom of the tank.
- If the tank has dents that are large, deep, have sharp angles or include a weld, do not fill the tank.
- The tank must not have cuts, gauges or digs that can reduce the thickness of the cylinder walls and weaken them.
- Inspect the welds that secure the collar to the cylinder for damage.
- If a cylinder is bulging or shows signs of fire damage, it must be taken out of service.
- Cylinders that fail a pre-fill inspection should not be filled until all problems are corrected. Never fill a container that is unsafe.



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## Causes of Back Injuries

- Lifting excessive weight.
- Using poor lifting techniques such as bending over at the waist or twisting with loads.
- Reaching overhead for elevated loads.
- Carrying awkwardly-shaped objects.
- Sitting or standing too long in one position for extended periods of time.
- Working in awkward positions for extended periods of time.
- Being in poor physical condition, overweight or having poor posture.
- Nearly 80% of Americans will suffer a back injury that will require medical attention. Over 30% of workplace injuries involve the back.

## Preventing Back Injuries

- Preventing a back injury is much easier than repairing one.
- Your back is critically important to your ability to sit, stand, walk and run - so take care of it!
- Get in shape. Pot bellies and excess weight exert extra force on your back. By losing weight, you can reduce strain and pain in your back.
- Maintain good posture. Slouching makes the back ligaments stretch and hurt, putting pressure on the vertebrae.
- Plan your lift. Think about the weight of the object you will be moving and the distance you will be moving it. Is it bulky? Will you need help? Are there any hazards that can be eliminated?
- Use carts and dollies when possible.
- Stretch before lifting.
- Slow down during heavy, repetitive lifting and take rest breaks.

## The Proper Way to Lift

- Don't lift more than 50 pounds by yourself.
- Position yourself correctly. Align yourself in front of the load with your feet straddling the load. Squat down by bending your knees, not your back. Use both hands to grab the load and bring it as close to your body as you can.
- Lift with your legs, not your back. Slowly straighten out your legs until you are standing upright.
- When reaching up, don't overextend.
- Push - Don't Pull. Squat - Don't Bend. Turn - Don't Twist.
- Avoid twisting while carrying a load; to change direction, use your feet.
- Set the load down correctly. Once you have reached your destination, it's equally important to set it down correctly. Reverse the above lifting procedures to reduce the strain on your back. Set the load down slowly and maintain contact with it until you are sure the load is secure and will not fall when you leave.



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