

JANUARY 2011

San Benito County Safety & Health Newsletter



ANNOUNCEMENTS

DSR Investigation Training on
January 11th from 8:30am to
11am at H&HSA

Martin Luther King Jr. Holiday
on January 17th

Individual Highlights:

OSHA Top 10	1
Injuries 2009	2
Fire Safety	3
Relief for cold	4
Head Sets	5
Get to know your DSR	6
What's Wrong With this	
Picture	7

OSHA's Top Ten List for Violations in 2010

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has been around since the early 1970's and its primary objective is to set and enforce safety standards in workplace environments. Each year OSHA releases information on the most common violations they find in terms of safety compliance. Here is OSHA's recently updated top ten list for violations in 2010.

Scaffolding – 72% of workers injured in scaffold accidents attributed the accident either to the planking or support giving way, or to the employee slipping or being struck by a falling object.

Fall Protection – Work over four feet off the ground and your employer needs to be addressing fall protection. Since this issue is second on the list it's obvious more work needs to be done here.

Hazard Communication – If you have any kind of chemicals or hazardous materials in your workplace OSHA regs require that they be properly labeled, stored, and workers need proper training in handling these materials.

Respiratory Protection – Under OSHA regulations, as many as 5 million workers in 1.3 million job sites across the country need to wear respirators on the job. With this many people needing proper breathing equipment and protection it's no wonder this issue would show up on the list.

Lockout/Tagout – Lockout/Tagout (LOTO)' is a short term that describes specific safety practices that safeguard employees from the unexpected startup of machinery and equipment, or the release of hazardous energy during service or maintenance activities," according to OSHA. A good number of companies failed in terms of LOTO compliance and training.

Electrical – Wiring Methods – Electrical systems are common in the workplace and for those that work around them, most are aware of the need for safety, however if untrained or unassuming workers are exposed to electrical hazards many of them may not know what to do. Avoid loose wires and contact trained repair technicians when necessary.

Ladders – The use of ladders is one of the most common things that can lead to accidents in the workplace as well as at home. According to the Department of Labor, falls are one of the leading causes of traumatic death by workers, accounting for eight percent of all occupational fatalities from trauma. Unfortunately many people are too comfortable around ladders and forget about basic ladder safety. It's simple but effective at reducing accidents.

Powered Industrial Trucks – According to OSHA, tens of thousands of workers are injured during fork lift incidents or when lifts are left alone on the work site. Over 2,900 accidents occurred last year alone.

Electrical – General – Found twice on the top ten list, electricity represents one of the most common hazards that cause injury or death. Ample training, and compliance is necessary to maintain safety when working with or around electrical hazards.

Machine Guarding – Moving parts on machines continue to represent a common hazard in the workplace. Ensuring that proper guards and protections are helpful but it's also important to provide proper operational and safety training when working around any piece of industrial equipment.

Top 10 Workplace Injuries -- 2009

1. Overexertion

The number one most common workplace injury – overexertion. This is mostly related to manual handling such as pushing and pulling, carrying, holding, throwing, lifting and other activities that require the use of hands and limbs. Most common incidents filed under overexertion involve hand and arm strain, back pain and others.

2. Falls On Same Level

This pertains to falls that have happened on same level surfaces. Common injuries filed in this category are slipping on wet floors, falling on snow covered surfaces, and others. Most victims of this accident are elderly employees who have lesser control over their balance.

3. Falls To Lower Level

Falling from stairways, roofs, ladders and other elevated areas are the top three most common workplace accidents in 2009. It has consistently been among the top three incidents for the past couple of years.

4. Bodily Reactions

Slips and trips are, without a doubt, among the most common accidents occurring in the workplace. These are listed as the fourth most common accident in 2009 because at least \$5.4 billion were spent on giving medical attention to employees who have tripped or slipped in the workplace.

5. Struck By Objects

These involve accidents such as tools falling directly on any part of the workers' body as well as falling debris and concrete objects from elevated surfaces that resulted to hospitalization. Accidents as minor as books hitting the head of the worker are also included under this category.

6. Highway Incidents

Official business trips account for more than \$2.5 billion spent on hospitalization, surgeries and treatment in 2009. This type of accident involves car collisions and other accidents that occurred in highways and pedestrians.

7. Caught In/Compressed By

These are injuries that result from workers being compressed by or caught in any operation workplace machineries. Injuries of this kind can also result from exposure to extreme heat.

8. Repetitive Motion

Prolonged repetitive motion accounts for hundreds of insurance claims filed every year. Clerical jobs and other types of jobs that require extended period of physical repetitive work are often the cause of job-related carpal tunnel syndrome, vision problems, and physical injuries.

9. Struck Against Objects

\$2 billion dollars were spent on accidents involving the employee being struck against objects in 2009 alone. This category includes accidents such as running into doors, windows, walls, tables, chairs and other concrete objects.

10. Workplace Violence

It seems to many that workplace violence is not a reality. Well, it is. Every year, many people are victimized by violent assaults, sexual harassment, coercion, physical attacks, robbery, homicide and other forms of workplace violence.

10 Fire Safety Tips

Install and Maintain Smoke Detectors

Smoke detectors warn you of fire in time to let you escape. Install them on each level of your home and outside of each sleeping area. Follow the manufacturer's directions, and test once a week. Replace batteries twice a year, or when the detector chirps to signal that the battery is dead. Don't ever take the battery out for other uses!

Plan and Practice Your escape

If fire breaks out in your home, you must get out fast. With your family, plan two ways out of every room. Fire escape routes must not include elevators, which might take you right to the fire! Choose a meeting place outside where everyone should gather. Once you are out, stay out! Have the whole family practice the escape plan at least twice a year.

Space Heaters Need space

Keep portable space heaters at least 3 feet (1 meter) from paper, curtains, furniture, clothing, bedding, or anything else that can burn. Never leave heaters on when you leave home or go to bed, and keep children and pets well away from them.

Be Careful Cooking

Keep cooking areas clear of combustibles, and don't leave cooking unattended. Keep your pot's handles turned inward so children won't knock or pull them over the edge of the stove. If grease catches fire, carefully slide a lid over the pan to smother the flames, then turn off the burner.

A Match is a Tool for Adults

In the hands of a child, matches or lighters are extremely dangerous. Store them up high where kids can't reach them, preferably in a locked cabinet. And teach your children from the start that matches and lighters are tools for adults, not toys for kids. If children find matches, they should tell an adult immediately.

Use Electricity Safely

If an appliance smokes or begins to smell unusual, unplug it immediately and have it repaired. Check all your electrical cords, and replace any that are cracked or frayed. If you use extension cords, replace any that are cracked or frayed; and don't overload them or run them under rugs. Remember that fuses and circuit breakers protect you from fire: don't tamper with the fuse box or use fuses of an improper size.

Cool a Burn

If someone gets burned, immediately place the wound in cool water for 10 to 15 minutes to ease the pain. Do not use butter on a burn, as this could prolong the heat and further damage the skin. If burn blisters or chars, see a doctor immediately.

STOP, DROP, AND ROLL

Everyone should know this rule: if your clothes catch fire, **don't run!** Stop where you are, drop to the ground, and roll over and over to smother the flames. Cover your face with your hands to protect your face and lungs.

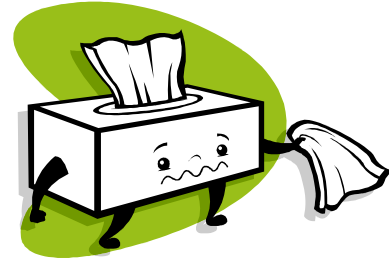
Crawl Low Under Smoke

If you encounter smoke using your primary exit, use your alternate route instead. If you must exit through smoke, clean air will be several inches off the floor. Get down on your hands and knees, and crawl to the nearest safe exit.

Practice Candle Safety

The popularity of candles as home decorations in recent years, has resulted in an increase of candle related fires. Some safe tips include: Never leave a lit candle unattended in any room of the house; Never leave candles burning when you go to bed; and never use candles near combustible materials such as curtains, drapes, bedding and cabinets. Visit our candle safety page for more information.

Relief for Cold & Flu Symptoms Without Meds



While over-the-counter medications can help treat cold and flu symptoms, many self-care measures can also bring relief. Consider alternatives for treating your symptoms without popping a pill.

SALTY SOLUTIONS

Gargle with a half teaspoon of salt in 8 ounces of warm water to relieve a sore or scratchy throat. Try saline nasal spray to rinse away nasal congestion. Premixed spray or nasal irrigators are available at your local drugstore.

STEAM TREATMENT

Create your own sauna by taking a hot shower with the bathroom door closed. The steam can help open airways and moisten irritated sinuses. Alternatively, you can lean over a bowl of steaming water with a towel draped over your head. Adding a teaspoon of menthol rub or a few drops of eucalyptus oil to the water can make breathing easier.

HEALING FOODS

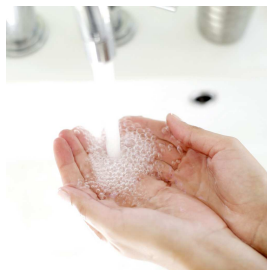
Hot, caffeine-free drinks and soups can soothe throats and ease congestion, thereby preventing sinus infections. Stay well hydrated by drinking at least 64 ounces per day. Hard candy or tea with honey may help quiet persistent coughing.

HOT OR COLD?

Apply hot, moist compresses on cheeks and sinuses to ease pain caused by congestion. Cold compresses can make you feel more comfortable when you have a fever.

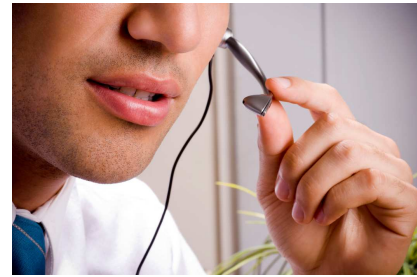
GET YOUR REST

A good night's sleep boosts the immune system and gives the body time to heal. If a stuffy nose keeps you awake, prop up your head with an extra pillow and use a warm mist humidifier to moisten the air.



DANGEROUS DESKTOPS...A recent study suggested that the norovirus (or what people often call "stomach flu") can be spread via a computer mouse and keyboard. To avoid this common gastrointestinal infection, wash your hands regularly especially after using shared objects and disinfect surfaces with diluted bleach or other cleaning wipes. These simple precautions can be the "keys" to getting you through the winter with a clean bill of health.

How To Select & Use Headsets



Aging, some drugs, head injuries and excessive noise can all cause lasting damage to hearing. The most common type of permanent hearing loss results from excessive noise.

What causes noise-induced hearing loss?

- Loudness of a sound (decibels)
- Pitch of a sound
- Length of exposure

The loudness of a sound and the length of exposure are directly related. The louder the sound, the shorter the time it takes to damage hearing. Sound levels of less than 75 decibels are unlikely to cause permanent hearing loss. Sound levels above 85 decibels can be dangerous after prolonged exposure. Repeated, prolonged exposure (more than eight hours) to noise above 90 decibels (motorcycles and lawn mowers) can cause gradual hearing loss. Rock concerts generate sound levels between 110 and 140 decibels and can cause damage in less than 15 minutes. Some of the hearing damage is reversible, but repeated and prolonged exposures to excessive noise can result in permanent damage.

What are the danger signs of noise-induced hearing loss?

- Ringing or buzzing in the ears
- Difficulty understanding speech
- Slight muffling of sounds
- Difficulty understanding speech in noisy places or places with poor acoustics.
- Shouting to communicate

Are headphone users at risk of hearing loss?

Normal conversation measures around 60 decibels. If you listen to headphones and keep the volume at a normal conversational level, you are not at risk of hearing loss. Your headphone volume should be kept low enough so no one else can hear it.

Headphone users are susceptible to a decreasing sensitivity to sound levels over time, as the ears adapt to loud sounds. The listener perceives a gradual drop in loudness even though the volume is the same. It is important to avoid listening fatigue when working by taking hearing breaks and resting the ears. Otherwise, there is a danger of increasing the volume to dangerous levels.

How can I make sure my headphone is at a safe level?

- Keep your headset volume as low as possible without straining to hear.
- Co-workers should not be able to hear sounds from your headset.
- With open-air headphones, you should be able to hear normal conversation through the headphones.
- Normal conversation may not be audible with closed-ear headphones. Lift one earpiece off an ear and compare the level in the other earpiece with that of normal conversation to set a safe volume level.

Get to know your Department Safety Representative



**One of Lupe's favorite safety quotes are:
"It's better to crash into a nap than nap into a crash"**

Lupe Eclarin of the Health and Human Services Agency Public Health Division has been with our County for 23 years. She has been the Department Safety Representative for 7 of those years. Lupe was born in Hollister and has lived here all her life. She's been married for 38 years and has 4 sons and 5 grandchildren. When Lupe is away from work she enjoys reading, puzzles, spending time with family and rides with her husband on their Harley Davidson. One of her favorite safety stories took place a couple of months ago when the Public Health office held a bomb threat drill. On the day of the drill one of the staff members was not present and the drill commenced as planned. As staff evacuated and waited at their designated meeting place the one member who was not present arrived and believed that the bomb threat was real but wondered why everyone was so calm and where on earth the fire trucks and police were.

What's Wrong With This Picture?????



I hope you all are enjoying this safety newsletter.
If you have any safety stories/information or suggestions you would like posted, please send me an email.

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