

San Benito County



Is Your Protective Gear Doing Its Job?

TopSafety

Individual Highlights

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Personal protective equipment (PPE) is designed to safeguard you from serious workplace injuries or illnesses resulting from contact with electrical, chemical or other workplace hazards. But if you're wearing the wrong type for the job or if it doesn't fit properly, it won't protect you. To make sure you're getting the maximum benefit out of your PPE, follow these guidelines:

1. **MAINTAIN** PPE properly by cleaning and inspecting it every day for damage or wear.
2. **MAKE** sure your PPE fits properly.
3. **UNDERSTAND** your PPE's limitations. Simply wearing protective gear isn't enough; you have to follow safe work practices, too.
4. **WEAR** ear protection if you work in a noisy environment every day. Most employees who suffer from occupational hearing loss work where there is only a moderate level of constant noise (85 decibels – about the same as heavy traffic).
5. **WEAR** the proper kind of eye protection for your type of work. Ninety percent of workplace eye injuries are preventable.

When used in conjunction with machine or tool guards, proper engineering controls and safe work practices, PPE cannot only protect you, it can save your life.

*** PLEASE SAVE THE DATE ***

October 1st at 9am
New Hire Orientation

October 15th
Preventing Workplace Harassment
9am to 12pm or
1pm to 4pm at Vets Hall
Please RSVP with Julie Avera in HR

October 22nd
9am to 12pm
Handling Grievances Training
Please RSVP with Julie Avera in HR

October 22nd
1pm to 4pm
FLSA Training
Please RSVP with Julie Avera in HR



When You Spot A Hazard

If you can correct the problem on the spot, do it. Wipe up the spill, pick up the fallen screwdriver, move the board sticking out into the aisle.

When you cannot correct the problem yourself, report it immediately to your supervisor. You can't replace a missing fire extinguisher or repair damaged equipment, but you can set the wheels in motion.

Until the hazard can be properly dealt with, warn co-workers about the problem to help avoid an accident by posting a sign or installing a barrier or laying paper towels over a spill.



Protective Equipment Close-Up: Foot Protection

Your feet take a lot of abuse on the job. That's why it's important to wear good foot protection. According to OSHA, you must wear protective footwear in areas where there's danger of foot injuries due to falling or rolling objects, piercing of the sole, or chemical or electrical hazards.

If you work where there's a danger of falling and rolling objects or cuts and punctures, wear steel toed safety shoes, add-on devices, metal foot guards or puncture –proof inserts and shin guards.

If you work where there's danger of exposure to chemicals and solvents, wear footwear made of rubber, vinyl or plastic with synthetic stitching.

If you work where there's danger of electric current, wear shoes or boots with rubber soles and heels, no metal parts and insulated steel toes. Caution: Some shoes have metal shunts imbedded in the rubber soles.

If you work where there's a danger of sparks or molten metal splashes, wear foundry boots with elastic sides or quick-release buckles for speedy removal.



Preventing Workplace Violence

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), after motor vehicle incidents, homicide is the leading cause of death in the workplace. With a statistic like that it's important for you to know how to deal with hotheads at work. Follow these prevention strategies:

BE CALM, COOL AND COLLECTED. Showing anger, fear or anxiety can trigger a reaction in a potentially violent person. Always talk in a calm voice, lower and slower than the other person. Speak respectfully and avoid talking down to him or her.

GIVE YOUR FULL ATTENTION. Try to talk less and listen more. When you speak, use "I statements," saying things such as, "I understand," or "I can see why you're upset."

APOLOGIZE WITHOUT BLAMING. Use positive, cooperative language, such as "I'm sorry you are upset. How can we correct this?" Avoid inflammatory statements such as "You're way out of line" or "You've got to stop this."

If your efforts don't help and the person becomes angrier, hostile or doesn't seem to be making sense, you may be dealing with a potentially violent situation. If you believe you're in danger, call 911.

The ABC's of Safety

ATTITUDE BEHAVIOR CONTROL

Safety is more than just following your department's guidelines while on the job. Safety is actually a combination of safe attitude, behavior, and control add up to a safer, more productive you.

ATTITUDE

When it comes to safety, attitude isn't exactly everything, but it's darn near close. A safe attitude means staying alert and focused on the job at hand, taking safety guidelines and practices seriously, never horsing around on the job, and not letting emotions like anger and frustration get in the way of job performance.

BEHAVIOR

How you react to a situation is an important part of being safe. Following established safety guidelines and procedures, refusing to take "shortcuts", using personal protective equipment, asking questions when you need more information about the task at hand – all of these are safe behaviors. Safe behavior also means helping friends, coworkers, and family members understand the importance of safe practices at work, home, or play.

CONTROL

Control means taking responsibility for making your worksite, home, or recreational facility, a safe place to be. You can help keep your surroundings safe from potential hazards by keeping them clean and orderly. Keep machines in good repair, clean up spills and debris (or report them to the appropriate person), and make sure that walkways are free from obstacles. Store chemicals properly (both at home and on the job), and never switch containers. At work, be sure to report faulty equipment, ventilation, or any potential hazards to your supervisor.

Attitude, Behavior, and Control are the three most important (and perhaps the simplest) aspects of personal safety both on and off the job. Take a moment to review your safety ABC's to see if you are doing all you can to protect yourself, your coworkers, and your loved ones from careless, needless injury.

Lifting Awkward Loads

Most people whose jobs require lifting are familiar with the "safe" lift – bending your knees, hugging the load, and letting the strong muscles in your legs do the actual lifting. This standard way of lifting is safe, but in many situations, it's impractical. When the load you have to lift is awkward, or is in a hard-to-reach area, a standard lift can be difficult to perform. The following tips can help you lift safely in situations where the standard lift can't be used.

ODD-SIZED LOADS

Long objects that are relatively light, can be awkward to lift and carry. When lifting and carrying pipes, lumber, or other long, light loads don't "hug" the load close to your body. Instead, support it on your shoulder, keeping the front end of the object higher than the rear. If the load is long or heavy enough to require two people, each of you should shoulder it on the same side and keep the object level. (Be sure to keep in step while walking).

HARD-TO-REACH OVERHEAD LOADS

Overhead loads can be difficult to lift. If you have to lift an object that's above shoulder-level, use a step stool or ladder to avoid over-reaching. Test the weight of the load before removing it from its shelf. If it's under 25 pounds or so, slide it toward you and hug it close to your body as you descend. If possible, hand it down to a waiting coworker.

HARD-TO-REACH -- REACHING INTO LOADS

Reaching into a bin, container, or other storage area to lift an object makes the standard lift next to impossible. In these situations, stand with feet at shoulder distance apart, slightly bend your knees, and start to squat, bending at your hip joints – not at your waist. (The movement is that same one you make when you lower yourself into a chair.) Slide the load as close to your body as you can and raise yourself using your leg and hip muscles. Tighten your abdominal muscles as you lift, and if possible, rest your knees against the side of the container for additional support. Continued on next page...

TIPS TO REMEMBER

Whenever possible, use the standard lift. But, if a load is awkward, use the preceding tips to help you lift safely. Avoid extending your upper body to lift a load – you'll not only lose your center of balance, you'll also risk injuring your back. Finally, use your safety sense – if a load is too awkward or hard-to-reach to lift it safely – get help!

Preventing Back Pain

Supervisors Safety Bulletin

Lots of jobs place demands on the back, but injuries can be prevented. It pays to be aware of the four factors most associated with back pain: Repetition, posture, force and stress.

Test your knowledge of good back management by answering TRUE or FALSE to the following:

1. Repetition, at its simplest, refers to the number of times a worker repeats a certain movement.
2. Posture is really more important for workers who have to stand most of the day.
3. Force tends to cause the most injuries when heavy lifting is involved.
4. Stress, as it refers to back injury, is really the amount of time a worker must spend in a certain position, such as holding an object.

ANSWERS

1. True. Repetition refers to the number of times a worker must perform the same movement. What's key is the repetition can be damaging to the back if the movement requires awkward body positions or stretching to the limit of your range of motion.
2. False. Posture can be a factor whether a worker kneels, sits or stands. In general, the body will tolerate about 20 minutes in a position before a person feels the need to adjust.
3. True. Heavy lifting has ruined more backs than anything else. Along with stretching, it's helpful to try to stay fit and in generally good physical condition.
4. False. Stress refers to emotional stress, which can cause tension and tightness in the muscles.



Halloween Hints

Follow these dos and don'ts to help keep your little monsters safe this Halloween:

Do accompany younger children and make sure older children (over 10) travel in groups of three or more.

Don't let children walk alone in the dark. Give them a bright, lightweight flashlight and tell them to stay on sidewalks.

Do dress children in bright, flame-retardant costumes. If costumes are dark, add reflective tape. To avoid falls, make sure costumes aren't too long.

Don't let your child wear a mask. Your child's vision can be obstructed with a mask. Use face paint or makeup instead.

Do throw away all unwrapped treats. Check all candy before your children eat it.



A Physical? But I Feel Fine!

Even if you're feeling well, it's important to see your medical provider from time to time to review your general health. Whether you're getting a physical exam or following up on medical concerns, an office visit is a good opportunity for your provider to...

Screen for diseases – An exam can pick up indicators of conditions such as high blood pressure, elevated cholesterol, cancer or pre-cancer, depression and substance abuse.

Assess risk factors – Your family history may affect your chances of developing illnesses such as heart disease and cancer. Your provider can estimate your risk and devise a preventive plan of action.

Encourage a healthy lifestyle – You can ask for helpful pointers on losing weight, improving your diet, becoming more physically active and quitting smoking. You may also get reminders about important exams such as mammograms and Pap smears as well as blood pressure and prostate checks.

Update vaccinations – Vaccines aren't just for kids, adults need periodic tetanus boosters and may benefit from shots for the flu, pneumonia, hepatitis and shingles.

Medical office visits are not just about getting well – they're about staying well too.

Everyday Steps To Protect Your Health:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.*
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- If you are sick with flu-like illness, [CDC recommends that you stay home for at least 24 hours after your fever is gone](#) except to get medical care or for other necessities. (Your fever should be gone without the use of a fever-reducing medicine.) Keep away from others as much as possible to keep from making others sick.

Other important actions that you can take are:

- Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
- Be prepared in case you get sick and need to stay home for a week or so; a supply of over-the-counter medicines, alcohol-based hand rubs (for when soap and water are not available), tissues and other related items could help you to avoid the need to make trips out in public while you are sick and contagious.

Free Seasonal Flu Clinic on November 3rd from 1:30pm to 6:30pm at the Veterans Memorial Building will be administering fluMist as well as flu shots to those who qualify. For more information call 831-637-5367.

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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