

Living Safely

Safety is important 24 hours a day. It is not just a matter of working safely, but of living safely.

- When discussing Personal Protective Equipment, use examples of off-the-job hazards and the PPE required. Eye protection for home workshop projects, head protection for biking and other sports and safety footwear for operating a lawnmower are common uses of PPE away from work.
- Chemicals used off the job such as fertilizers, cleaning products and solvents can be included in discussion of hazardous substances. Review the importance of reading labels, wearing eye protection and chemically resistant gloves.
- Environmental protection measures of concern at work also have off-the-job parallels. Motor oil, paint and pesticides can be used as examples when discussing spill prevention and proper disposal of hazardous materials.
- Slips, trips and falls away from work result in lost time, so include home hazards in any discussion of fall protection at work.
- At each safety meeting, remind your employees to take the information home to discuss with their families. Use bulletin board displays to promote family safety and wellness.

Safety training on the job gives your employees a better understanding of hazards off the job. It works the other way too. By encouraging safety off the job, you are creating interest in on-the-job safety. So send some safety home!

Risk Services Notes

How to Keep Safety on the Forefront

Being experienced in your work does not provide immunity from injuries. Nearly a quarter of acute injuries happen to experienced workers—as a result of human errors.

Statistics like this remind us of the need for continued safety training. Refresher courses, new training with new information and regular safety reviews are all necessary to keep you safe from workplace injury.

Near misses or minor incidents indicate something is wrong with the way you are working. Or perhaps it has simply been a long time since you covered the material. You may have forgotten some of it, or there may be new information or new methods to make it easier to understand.

Safety training starts with upper management and then needs to be passed down to every level of your employees.

It's never too early or too late to start safety training. Statistics show a high rate of injuries in new workers unfamiliar with the hazards, and a high rate in experienced workers—too familiar with the hazards.

If your idea of orienting a new employee to your workplace is to quickly introduce him around and show him the bathroom and coffee room, you need to re-orient yourself.

New workers are five times more likely to experience a lost-time injury within the first month than their more experienced co-workers.

Someone new to an industrial job may never have seen a machine large and fast enough to instantly crush a person whose sleeve is caught in some small rotating part. As for chemicals that explode if they are handled a little roughly or mixed with water—that sounds unlikely! Common sense and familiarity with everyday hazards does not prepare a person adequately for workplace hazards.

The risk of encountering a particular hazard varies greatly from one workplace to the next. Reactive chemicals may be present on a daily basis in some industrial plants and never in others. Some workers may frequently face the hazards of confined space entry while others may never encounter them.

That is why safety training needs to be specific and directly related to the dangers a worker is likely to encounter.

Take the example of blood-borne pathogens. In some jobs such as health care, law enforcement, sanitation and laundry the risk is greater than in other occupations. It is possible to get AIDS, HIV or Hepatitis C by being stuck with a contaminated needle or by other means. Workers such as these are carefully trained in a variety of techniques and equipment to protect them from blood-borne pathogens.

Remember that safety training needs to be specific and directly related to the dangers a worker is likely to encounter.

Effective job safety programs don't just grow on trees, they grow from foresight and planning.

Here are some tips on establishing a good program:

- Guide new workers - have a system where supervisors take new employees under their wings by showing them how to perform their jobs safely and observing the results.
- Train, train, train - workers need ongoing training on new and old hazards, new equipment, new policies and job tasks.
- Enforce the rules - ensure that employees take responsibility for their actions on the job. A weak accountability or discipline plan can ruin your safety program.

For most safety pros, the key to success is producing results—tangible evidence that employee safety and health is being improved to the benefit of the company.

The safety of your workers is important to your company 24 hours a day. It is not just a matter of working safely, but of living safely.

Even with a strong company commitment to safety, it can still be difficult to make the time for training. Somewhere amid the day to day realities of work, you have to find the minutes, days and hours. Keeping safety on the forefront is a win-win situation for everyone.

Please feel free to distribute the attached poster or display it in your facility.

SAFETY NEVER SLEEPS!



Look, listen and learn.

Working safely should be
everyone's concern