

MCLB ALBANY SAFETYGRAM

March Is Workplace Eye Wellness

Eye injuries in the workplace are very common. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports about 2,000 U.S. workers sustain job-related eye injuries that require medical treatment each day. However, safety experts and eye doctors believe the right eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of these eye injuries.

While **March is workplace eye wellness** it is still important to care of your eyes all year long. Taking care of your eyes should always be a priority while you are working. Many eye injuries are irreversible and can be permanent. *Workplace eye wellness month* is a great time to teach your employees about protecting their vision while working. Safety meetings are a great place to discuss eye safety. Training your employees in the proper use of machines and harmful chemicals will help to greatly reduce eye problems.

Two major reasons workers experience eye injuries on the job:

1. Not wearing eye protection.
2. Wearing the wrong kind of protection for the job being performed.



Potential eye hazards in the workplace

- ❖ **Projectiles** (dust, concrete, metal, wood and other particles)
- ❖ **Chemicals** (splashes and fumes)
- ❖ **Radiation** (especially visible light, ultraviolet radiation, heat or infrared radiation, and lasers)
- ❖ **Bloodborne Pathogens** (hepatitis or HIV) from blood and body fluids

How to protect your eyes from injury

- ⬇ Know the eye safety dangers at work.
- ⬇ Eliminate hazards before starting work by using machine guards, work screens or other engineering controls.
- ⬇ Use proper eye protection.
- ⬇ Keep safety eyewear in good condition and have it replaced if it becomes damaged.

High Risk Occupations for Eye Injuries:

Auto Repair	Manufacturing
Carpentry	Mining
Construction	Plumbing
Electrical Work	Welding
Maintenance	

What should be done in an eye emergency?

Seek medical attention as soon as possible following an injury, particularly if you have pain in the eye, blurred vision or loss of vision.

Don't accept eye injuries as just a part of the job!



The Eye & How We See

The eyes are wonderful sensory organs. They help people learn about the world in which they live. Eyes see all sorts of things - big or small, near or far, smooth or textured, colors and dimensions. The eyes have many parts - all of which must function in order to see properly.

Eye Safety Checklist

- 1. Create a safe work environment**
 - ✓ Minimize hazards from falling or unstable debris.
 - ✓ Make sure that tools work and safety features (machine guards) are in place.
 - ✓ Make sure that workers (particularly volunteers) know how to use tools properly.
 - ✓ Keep bystanders out of the hazard area.
- 2. Evaluate safety hazards.**
 - ✓ Identify the primary hazards at the site.
 - ✓ Identify hazards posed by nearby workers, large machinery, and falling/shifting debris.
- 3. Wear the proper eye and face protection.**
 - ✓ Select the appropriate ANSI Z87 eye protection for the hazard.
 - ✓ Make sure the eye protection is in good condition.
 - ✓ Make sure the eye protection fits and will stay in place.
- 4. Use good work practices.**
 - ✓ Caution—Brush, shake, or vacuum dust and debris from hardhats, hair, forehead, or the top of the eye protection before removing the protection.
 - ✓ Do not rub eyes with dirty hands or clothing.
 - ✓ Clean eyewear regularly.
- 5. Prepare for eye injuries and first aid needs.**
 - ✓ Know where the eye wash station is located or
 - ✓ Have sterile solution on hand.

One way to ensure that safety glasses provide adequate protection is to be sure they fit properly. Also, eye protection devices must be properly maintained. Scratched and dirty devices reduce vision, cause glare and may contribute to mishaps.

Don't be safety blinded, Be safety minded



Ten ways to prevent eye injuries at work

- 1. Assess.** Look carefully at plant operations. Inspect all work areas, access routes, and equipment for hazards to eyes.
- 2. Test.** Uncorrected vision problems can cause accidents. Provide vision testing during routine employee physical exams.
- 3. Protect.** Select protective eyewear that is designed for the specific duty or hazard. Protective eyewear must meet the current standards from the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and later revisions.
- 4. Participate.** Create a 100% mandatory program for eye protection in all operation areas of your plant.
- 5. Fit.** Workers need protective eyewear that fits well and is comfortable. Have eyewear fitted by an eye care professional.
- 6. Plan for an Emergency.** Set up first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Have eyewash stations that are easy to get to.
- 7. Educate.** Conduct ongoing educational programs to create, keep up, and highlight the need for protective eyewear.
- 8. Support.** Management support is the key to having a successful eye safety program.
- 9. Review.** Regularly review and update your mishap prevention policies.
- 10. Put it in Writing.** Once your safety program is created, put it in writing. Display a copy of the policy in work and employee gathering areas.

For more information about workplace eye safety, click www.preventblindness.org



Risk Management 639-5249
Prepared by Cathy Brannon

Mar 14

