Head, Eye, Hand, and Foot Safety Personal Protective Equipment



HAND PROTECTION

Our hands help us to perform many tasks throughout the workday. Since many things we do with our hands are done quickly, and with little thought, it is important to work safely to avoid injury.

Here are the most common types of hand injuries and what you can do to prevent them:

Contact Injuries result from working with solvents, acids, cleaning solutions, flammable liquids, and substances that can cause burns or injure tissue.

Protect yourself against these injuries by reading the product labels, wearing the proper protective gloves, and washing your hands frequently throughout the workday. Don’t touch unintended objects or surfaces with contaminated gloves.

Repetitive motion injuries occur when tasks require repeated and rapid hand movements for long periods. Manufacturing, assembling, or computer work can lead to this type of injury.

Reduce the occurrence of repetitive motion injuries by changing the grip you use when handling different items. Also, change the physical position of your hands and alternate the hand motion as you complete your work. Select tools that are safe and easy to use. Do not make repetitive unnatural or awkward motions.

Traumatic injuries often occur from careless use of machinery or tools. Your hands and fingers can be caught, pinched, or crushed in the chains, wheels, rollers, or the gears of a machine. Chop saws, metal shears, and grinders can also cause hands and fingers to become cut, seriously injured, or even amputated.

To avoid traumatic injuries to the hands and fingers, take safety precautions and use shields, safety guards, gloves, or safety locks when working with machinery. It is also important to make sure jewelry, loose clothing, or long hair do not become entangled in any moving parts. Long hair should be pulled back or in a bun. Baggy clothing should be avoided when working around machinery with moving parts.

You can help protect yourself from hand injuries by remembering the following basic safety rules:

- **Recognize hazards before starting work**
- **Think through each job before you begin**
- **Follow all safety rules**
- **Avoid taking shortcuts**
- **If an accident does occur, seek prompt treatment**
- **Report injuries to your supervisor as soon as possible**

Injuries, in many cases, can be permanent but they can be reduced or even eliminated if the proper precautions are taken to guard against them.

EYE PROTECTION

In just the blink of an eye, an accident can injure or even blind you if you are not wearing proper protective eyewear. However, eye protection such as safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or protective helmets must also meet the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health

Administration (OSHA) and the American National Standards Institute (ANSI).

In hazardous workplaces, street-wear eyeglasses should only be worn in conjunction with ANSI approved additional eye cover protection.

Signs showing that eye safety is required should be posted in all areas that require industrial quality eye protection; anyone working in these areas should always wear the proper eye protection.

Eye injuries can be reduced or eliminated when you are trained to recognize hazards and are required to wear correct eye protection on the job.

Below are some of the causes for eye injuries:

Chemical splashes from solvents, paints, hot liquids, or other hazardous solutions can cause severe eye damage. If your eyes are exposed to chemical splashes, go immediately to the nearest emergency shower or water source; look directly into the stream of water; hold your eyes open with your fingers, and flush them for at least 15 minutes.

Light burns can be caused from exposure to welding, lasers, or other radiant light. The effect may not be felt until hours later when the eyes begin to feel gritty and become sensitive to light and redness or swelling may occur. In the case of a light burn, keep your eyes closed while awaiting medical attention.

Swelling from bumps and blows to the eyes can be minimized if a cold compress is applied for 15 minutes. This will also help reduce pain and swelling.

Cuts that occur in or around the eyes should be loosely bandaged. Do not move your eyes until a doctor treats them.

Never rub, press, or wash the cut as this can cause further damage.

Foreign particles such as dust, dirt, metal, wood chips, and even an eyelash can cause eye damage. These particles can get into the eye from the wind or from activities like chipping, grinding, sawing, brushing, hammering, using power

tools, equipment, or machinery. Flush the object out with water.

Never rub or try to remove objects embedded in the eye without medical attention as this can cause further damage.

FOOT PROTECTION

You may be exposed to a variety of hazardous conditions on the job, including slippery surfaces, climbing hazards, operating or working around heavy equipment and machinery. These varied working conditions often require different types of safety footwear to protect your feet from injury.

When choosing the right safety footwear, select the legally approved shoe or boot required for the job activity. Some situations may require metal-toed boots or shoes to provide extra protection against objects falling on the feet. In other instances you may need to choose footwear that is slip resistant, waterproof, or even to protect against electrical currents.

HEAD PROTECTION

Wearing a hard hat is the first line of defense against preventing head injuries on the job. A hard hat can protect your head against the hazard of falling material and guard against receiving accidental bumps or bruises.

The hard hat will help soften any blow to the head and will resist and deflect the blow by distributing the impact over a large area. Make sure the hard hat fits correctly to provide you with the most comfort and protection.

Choose the hard hat most suitable for the work being performed and only wear approved hard hats manufactured to meet required standards. These are designed to give your head maximum protection.

It is important that sweatbands and suspension straps be properly adjusted. Sunlight and heat can also ruin the sweatband and straps, so do not leave your hard hat on the window ledge of your vehicle. Do not drop your hard hat, throw it, or drill holes in it. Inspect your hard hat daily for cracks, gouges, and frays or breaks in the straps.

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