

Daily Safety Focus

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Daily Safety Focus

Jan 01: New Year's Resolutions to Improve Workplace Safety

People around the world commit themselves to making improvements in their lives as the year draws to a close, getting ready for a fresh start in the months ahead. A few common New Year's resolutions include leading a healthier lifestyle, saving money, or learning a new skill.



Just as individuals make goals to better themselves at the beginning of a fresh, new year, companies should do the same. Resolving to protect both valuable employees and assets allows your organization a tangible way to be its “best self.”

“There is a no more important cause, and no higher calling, than looking beyond yourself to the larger world in which your business and employees operate to make it a safer, more secure environment,” says Brad Wilkins, senior loss control specialist at AmTrust.

Keep your workplace safe by making these New Year's resolutions:

- Keep a cleaner, more organized workspace. Hazards can be found in any type of commercial establishment, from offices and machine shops to retail stores and restaurants. Injuries from slips and falls on wet floors or from tripping over clutter can easily occur when conditions are not kept clean and organized. Clutter can also increase the risk for fires, especially stockpiles of paper or boxes located near sources of ignition.
- Pay strict attention to driving safety. Every business has a level of driving exposure. In some companies, transportation and driving are central to the operation of their business. In others, it is only an incidental aspect, such as running errands from time to time. No matter how often employees get behind the wheel for company purposes, in almost all cases, it's by far your most dangerous activity — and the greatest source of fatalities in American workplaces. Driving safety is critical to the welfare of employees, their families, and your business.
- Eliminate taking shortcuts in processes or procedures. Not only is safety enhanced, but so is the quality of your product or service. Proper lifting techniques, how to use new equipment, wearing protective clothing and reporting any unsafe working conditions are important safety procedures. Additionally, keep accurate and detailed records of any incidents, including near-miss accidents, so you can continue to learn and improve those processes.
- Be a role model. As a leader, resolve to be the strongest role model for safety you can be. You set the tone, and if your behavior reflects the importance of doing things right, your organization will follow you. Unfortunately, the opposite will also be true. Make preventing accidents and injuries one of your top priorities in 2024.

Workplace safety programs should not be considered a short-term expense but as a long-term investment in the health of both your employees and your business. Companies with robust safety programs can reduce expenses related to worker injuries and illness by 40%. As you welcome the new year, spend some time thinking about the resolutions your operation can make to help ensure a happy, healthy, and injury-free 2024. (Corder, 2020)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 02: DUI Serious Matter

Today, applying for a job can be a long and emotionally charged process. As of November 2021, there are 6.9 million unemployed people in the US. With this many job seekers, it's important to put your best foot forward in the form of job experience, education, and strong references. Unfortunately, there may be aspects of your background that you are unable to update or improve, such as past criminal offenses.

According to a recent study, the average state-wide number of drivers with a DUI (driving under the influence) on their record is 2.16%, with North Dakota having the most DUI's.

Will a DUI Show Up in Background Checks?

A background check is a process that is used to verify that a person is who they claim to be. This process includes confirming the validity of their criminal record, education, employment history, and other activities from their past. DUI's often appear on background checks regardless if they are a felony or a misdemeanor since it is technically a crime, but this can vary depending on the state and if a DUI is considered a traffic violation.

If the candidate has been convicted of a DUI, it will trigger an alert on the background check. A trigger does not mean that you automatically "fail" the background check. This simply notifies the employer that there is an issue that requires review and consideration.

For someone facing a DUI charge, a common question that comes up is "What is the difference between a misdemeanor DUI and a felony DUI?" All states have different rules when it comes to deciding when a misdemeanor is upgraded to a felony. Most DUI's are charged as misdemeanors, and can be changed to a felony depending on past offenses.

How a DUI can Affect a Hiring Decision

While a DUI will not disqualify you for most positions, the criminal charge can cause the potential employer to have some concerns. This can include questioning the character and morals of the potential hire. Another factor could be if driving is a part of the job or having responsibilities that require frequent driving or travel.

Being charged with a DUI is a serious matter and can affect your future in ways you wouldn't expect. If you are planning a night out with friends, arrange for another mode of transportation to avoid the difficulties that a DUI charge can bring and ensure safe travels for everyone.



(Hana, 2021)

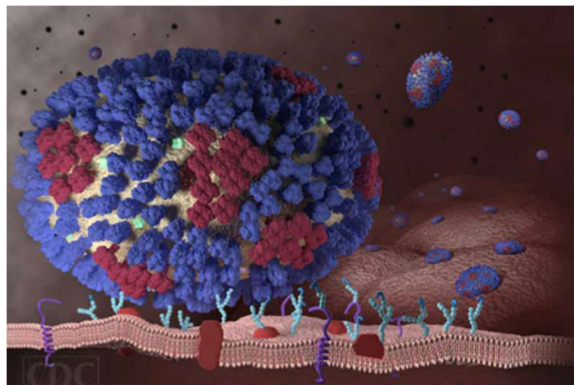
Daily Safety Focus

Jan 03: Help Prevent the Spread of COVID, RSV & Other Flu-like Illnesses:

Komatsu continues to be committed to the health and safety of our employees and families. As people are gathering with family and friends for the holidays, COVID, RSV and the flu are on the rise.

Here are a few health and wellness reminders as we head into the holidays and when we come back from the holidays in early January:

- If you are sick with any type of respiratory or flu-like illness or have any COVID symptoms or have been exposed out of respect for your coworkers, please stay home and do not come into work.
- Continue to practice the hygiene practices that help prevent the spread of COVID and other respiratory illnesses. This includes staying up to date with COVID and flu vaccines, improving ventilation, washing your hands often and covering your mouth when coughing or sneezing. Also maintain safe distancing with others when traveling or attending in person meetings. Please practice these recommendations when meeting internally, with vendors or socializing outside of work.
- COVID-19 symptoms can range from mild to very severe but most often include cold and flu-like signs – cough, headache, muscle aches, runny nose, and fatigue.
- If you are diagnosed with flu, RSV or COVID-19, treatment must be started within the first few days to be most effective. It is recommended that you contact your health care provider and discuss your symptoms, and isolation and recovery protocols. Follow the guidance from your health care provider on when to discontinue isolation and return to work. This will reduce the risk of disease transmission and enhance safety in our workplace.



(Reminders to help prevent the spread of COVID, RSV & other flu-like illnesses, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 04: 2023 MSHA Fatalities

2023 Started out badly with a fatality on Jan. 4, 2023, followed by an additional 5 fatalities by Jan. 30th. We concluded the year (at least as of today, Wed., Dec. 27th, with a total of 40. This is so very sad for the families and co-workers of these victims. We all have time for faith, family, and friends, however when fatalities happen this time of year the time shared with one another is saddened. Please take a moment of silence for these families and friends.

MSHA Fatality #39: Machinery – 12/14/2023, Bison Materials LLC – Bison No 1 – (34-02093) Bartlesville, OK

On December 14, 2023, a miner died while he was performing maintenance on a chute at a plant. The chute was not secure and moved, pinning him, and causing fatal injuries.

MSHA Fatality #40: Machinery – 12/14/2023, Stoker & Parson Companies – Beck Street Mine – (42-01452) Salt Lake City, UT

On December 14, 2023, a contractor died while **he was delivering parts to the mine site**. The contractor was struck by the boom of a telehandler that tipped over while pulling cable, resulting in immediate fatal injuries.



(Cattles, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 05: 5 Safety Tips to Follow When Using a Powder-Actuated Tool

Powder-actuated tools are commonly used to join materials to steel and concrete. Also known as Hilti guns, they feature single-use explosive cartridges. Pulling the trigger will ignite one of these cartridges, resulting in a small explosion. While effective at joining materials to steel and concrete, powder-actuated tools pose a risk of injury when used improperly. Here are five safety tips to follow when using a powder-actuated tool.

1. **Wear PPE:** Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when using a powder-actuated tool. There are several forms of PPE that can lower your risk of injury. Since the explosions created by powder-actuated tools are loud, you should wear hearing protection. Noise-canceling headphones or earplugs will protect you from hearing loss. You should also wear impact-resistant glasses or goggles. Powder-actuated tools can create debris that shoots in random directions. If a piece of debris comes toward your face, impact-resistant glasses or goggles may protect you from injury.
2. **Point in a Safe Direction:** Keep powder-actuated tools always pointed in a safe direction. They are designed to generate a small, controlled explosive charge at the tip. If you point a powder-actuated tool at another worker or yourself, injury may occur. The powder-actuated tool may accidentally go off, resulting in potentially serious bodily injury.
3. **Don't Carry Loaded:** Another safety tip to follow when using a powder-actuated tool is to wait to load it. In other words, don't carry around a loaded powder-actuated tool. Wait until you've arrived at the job site and are ready to use it. Only then should you load the powder-actuated tool.
4. **Hold Perpendicular:** When you are ready to use a powder-actuated tool, hold it perpendicular to the object that you want to fasten. Holding a powder-actuated tool at an angle is never a good idea. Powder-actuated tools work by generating a small explosion, which they use to drive fasteners like nails into objects. If you hold the powder-actuated tool at an angle -- even if it's a small angle -- the fastener may shoot out of the object.
5. **Read and Follow the Owner's Manual:** If you haven't done so already, you should read the owner's manual for the powder-actuated tool. There are dozens of different powder-actuated tools, some of which have different features than others. And because they are designed differently, they may require different steps to use and maintain. Always follow the instructions in the owner's manual to ensure safe operation.



(5 Safety Tips to Follow When Using a Powder-Actuated Tool, 2023)

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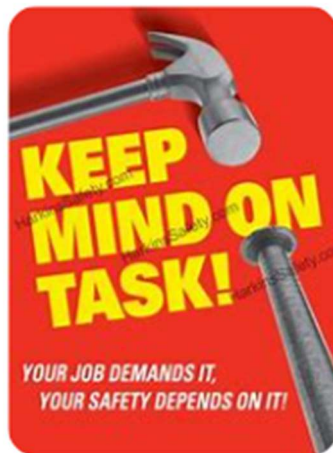
Jan 06: Mind on Tasks

Rushing, fatigue, frustration, complacency, anger, etc.—all these emotions and states can contribute to the making of critical mistakes.

A person who's normally a safe driver becomes a different person once he sleeps through the alarm and is now running late for work. Suddenly the good habits disappear and are replaced by tailgating, cursing and speeding. It's when people get into such states that accidents are most likely to happen. The same thing happens in the workplace.

Accidents are basically caused by four things:

1. **Not Watching What We're Doing:** Most of us have had our fingers pinched in a car door at one time or another. If we had our eyes on what we were doing, our reactions would have taken over and we would have jerked our hand out of the way—no injury, just a close call. Not watching what we were doing took away our ability to react.
2. **Not Concentrating on What We're Doing:** Not all hazards are visible. Some hazards must be thought about and prepared for. We need to know they're lurking even if we can't immediately detect them with our eyes. We need to concentrate on the task we're performing so that we can recognize and avoid the hazards.
3. **Being in or Moving into the "Line of Fire":** Failing to recognize that we're in the line of fire is another cause of accidents. It's often the result of not keeping our eyes and mind on the task at hand.
4. **Loss of Balance, Traction or Grip:** This type of error is also apt to occur when our eyes or minds are not on task.



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Jan 07: Cold Stress: How Cold is Too Cold?

What constitutes extreme cold, and its effects can vary across different areas of the country. In regions that are not used to winter weather, near freezing temperatures are considered “extreme cold.” A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its temperature. Whenever temperatures drop below normal and wind speed increases, heat leaves your body more rapidly. Cold stress occurs by driving down the skin temperature and eventually the internal body (core) temperature. This may lead to serious health problems, including tissue damage and possibly death. Some of the risk factors that contribute to cold stress are:

- Wetness/dampness, dressing improperly, exhaustion.
- Predisposing health conditions such as hypertension, hypothyroidism, and diabetes, poor physical conditioning

Common cold induced illnesses & injuries:

- Hypothermia occurs when body heat is lost faster than it can be replaced, and the normal body temperature (98.6°F) drops to less than 95°F. Hypothermia occurs most often at very cold temperatures. It can also occur at temperatures above 40°F if a person becomes chilled from rain, sweat, or submersion in cold water.
- Frostbite is an injury to the body that is caused by the freezing of skin and underlying tissues. The lower the temperature, the more quickly frostbite will occur. Frostbite typically affects the extremities, particularly the feet and hands. Amputation may be required in severe cases.
- Trench Foot or Immersion Foot is caused by prolonged exposure to wet and cold temperatures. It can occur at temperatures as high as 60°F if the feet are constantly wet. Non-freezing injury occurs because wet feet lose heat 25-times faster than dry feet. To prevent heat loss, the body constricts the blood vessels to shut down circulation in the feet. The skin tissue begins to die because of a lack of oxygen and nutrients, and the buildup of toxic products.

Preventing Cold Stress: Wear at least 3 layers of loose-fitting clothing:

- An inner layer of wool, silk or synthetic to keep moisture away from the body.
- A middle layer of wool or synthetic to provide insulation even when wet.
- An outer protection layer that allows some ventilation to prevent overheating.
- Cover your head with a hat and hood to help keep your whole-body warmer.
- Use a knit mask to cover the face and mouth.
- Use insulated gloves to protect the hand (water resistant if necessary).
- Wear insulated and waterproof boots.

(Toolbox Talk: Cold Stress, 2023)



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 08: Loading Docks: 5 Steps for Safe Operations:



Workers at height. Stacked materials. Pedestrian, forklift, and truck traffic. All in one place. “Loading docks are very dangerous areas for employees.

1. Look at the work area: Hazard assessments, proper work practices and other general safety principles are needed to help keep workers safe when they’re moving and handling equipment. Employers and employees should work together on a routine to identify – and correct – any unsafe conditions or equipment that are present around the loading dock.
2. Apply controls: Workers who move items in or out of trailers can encounter hazards related to ergonomics, lighting, ventilation, noise, and materials. OSHA requires employers to select, and use PPE based on the hazards present or likely to be present, and to communicate the selection of PPE to its intended users. Gloves, loading straps (to withstand rough edges and sharp instruments), eye protection, steel-toed shoes or boots, and high-visibility vests are common PPE for workers near loading docks.
3. Prevent falls: Section 1910.28 of OSHA’s standard on walking-working surfaces (1910.22) requires the use of fall protection such as a guardrail system, a safety net or personal fall protection systems if a worker could fall 4’ or more from an open or exposed dock door or opening.

Guardrail requirements are covered under OSHA 1910.29(b) and its subparts. These include:

1. The top edge height of top rails, or equivalent guardrail system members, are 42”, plus or minus 3”, above the walking-working surface. The top edge height may exceed 45”, provided the guardrail system meets all other criteria of paragraph (b) of this section.
2. Midrails are installed at a height midway between the top edge of the guardrail system and the walking-working surface.
3. Guardrail systems are capable of withstanding, without failure, a force of at least 200 pounds applied in a downward or outward direction within 2” of the top edge, at any point along the top rail.
4. Midrails, screens, mesh, intermediate vertical members, solid panels, and other equivalent intermediate members are capable of withstanding, without failure, a force of at least 150 pounds applied in any downward or outward direction at any point along the intermediate member.
5. Keep forklifts top of mind: Slow down, look around for other workers, and be mindful of dock edges and wet or icy conditions on surfaces – these are some best practices for forklift operators.
 - Maintain a safe distance from the edge of the loading dock.
 - Watch out for tail swing (when the rear of the forklift moves to the opposite side of the direction it’s being steered).
 - Keep working surfaces clear and clean.
 - Paint the edges of the loading dock to improve visibility.
 - Jackson also warns about damaged or weak trailer floors. Trailers should be inspected before forklifts or other material handling devices are allowed to enter.

Control traffic: With delivery trucks entering and leaving and powered industrial trucks loading and off-loading, high activity levels at loading docks is common. Needed: a traffic control plan to help workers stay safe. Post speed limits throughout the facility.

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 09: To be Seen is Your Responsibility

The ability to see where you're driving is one of the most important factors in driver safety. But are you doing everything you can to be seen by other drivers? One of the threats to clear vision that might face any driver is high humidity that will cause condensation of fog on inside glass surfaces. You should be alert for this situation, which is hardly perceptible as it starts but soon builds up to block your vision.

At the first sign of condensation on the inner surface of the windshield, turn on the defroster and open a side window slightly. The air conditioner should be turned on, regardless of temperature, to dry out the atmosphere. In extreme conditions wipe the inside glass surfaces.



Outside fog, the natural variety that often obscures all vision along highways, can be dangerous and calls for the utmost caution. The first light patch of fog you encounter can be a fortuitous warning which tells you to slow down, because it lets you know that fog conditions exist. You never know when light fog can suddenly turn into dense fog, the "pea soup" kind, that blinds every driver on the road and often results in multiple crashes and long pileups caused by inattentive drivers.

Good drivers slow down when clear vision is obscured by fog. Even in daylight turn on low beam headlights, mainly to help other drivers know you're there. High beam is not used, because the particles of moisture in the fog act like a reflectorized sign, reflecting the more intense light, with its higher reflectance angle, right back into the driver's eyes.

If the fog becomes dense, the cautious driver slows to a crawl, or pulls onto the shoulder as far off the road as possible and stops altogether turning on the flashing warning lights to warn other drivers.

Many drivers seem to need reminders about the deceptive illumination at dusk. At this period, daylight is fading, yet it may not seem dark enough for headlights. After driving for some time in normal daylight, hazards along the way are no longer clearly defined by the twilight. This is the time to turn on headlights-low beam-to help you to see clearly and to help oncoming drivers see you. They may also be fooled by the twilight, and they need to know that you're there.

When you drive east at sunrise, or west at sunset, you have another visibility problem. The sun's glare is right in your eyes, and you must take special precautions. At such times, you should use sun visors and sunglasses, and slow down until you're in command of the situation. But if the sun is at your back, remember that oncoming drivers have the sun in their eyes and may not readily see you.

Headlights should be turned on whenever weather reduces visibility. These will make your vehicle more visible to other drivers. If the change in weather means rain, snow, or sleet, you have other aids to visibility in your windshield washers and wipers. Some drivers seem loath to turn on their wipers for the first few drops of rain because the mixture of dust and moisture will mean a smeared windshield. That's when washers prove their worth. A few squirts of the washer fluid will clear the smear so the wipers can take care of rain. Drops of rain on windows may distort what you see through your rearview mirrors, so check more carefully than usual when this happens. If you're not certain you are seeing clearly as you pull into another lane or prepare for to turn, you should open your window enough to get a clear view. (Its Your Responsibility to be Seen, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 10: 6 Common Signs of Work-Related Fatigue

Do you know the signs of work-related fatigue? According to OSHA, injury rates are 18% higher during evening shifts when compared to daytime shifts. Many workers who work evening shifts don't get enough sleep, so they experience fatigue.



Here are six common signs of work-related fatigue.

1. **Slower Reaction Times:** Work-related fatigue can affect your reaction times. It will take you longer to react when you are fatigued. This is why it's dangerous to operate vehicles or machinery when fatigued. The slower response times can result in accidents.
2. **Impaired Memory:** Impaired memory is a common sign of work-related fatigue. As you become more and more fatigued, you may struggle to remember things. Memory is a cognitive function, and work-related fatigue can adversely affect many cognitive functions, one of which being memory.
3. **Stress:** If you're feeling more stressed than usual, you may be suffering from work-related fatigue. Stress is the result of increased hormone levels. There are stress hormones, such as cortisol, that your body produces naturally. Your body will produce more of these hormones when you feel fatigued. Higher levels of stress hormones can lead to chronic stress.
4. **Sleep Problems:** There's a correlation between work-related fatigue and sleep problems. Many workers who suffer from work-related fatigue also have trouble falling asleep or staying asleep. They may also have disrupted sleep patterns, such as insomnia or waking up feeling unrefreshed. Chronic sleep deprivation due to work-related fatigue can have long-term consequences of which all workers need to be aware.
5. **Lack of Energy:** One of the most common signs of work-related fatigue is lack of energy. Fatigue, of course, is characterized by low energy levels. When you feel fatigued, you may not have the energy to perform certain tasks. This lack of energy is your body's way of telling you that it needs to rest. And until you rest, you will continue to feel fatigued and with little or no energy.
6. **Low Productivity:** Another common sign of work-related fatigue is low productivity. Workers who suffer from work-related fatigue are often less productive than their rested and non-fatigued counterparts. They can perform tasks faster and more efficiently, making them more productive.

In Conclusion, you can't ignore work-related fatigue. As fatigue begins to set in, it can affect your body in different ways. You may have slower reactions, more stress, experience sleep problems, a lack of energy or low productivity.

(6 Common Signs of Work-Related Fatigue, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 11: Can You Identify These Health & Safety Signs?

1. What Will Blue, Circular Signs with White Pictograms Typically Indicate?

- That a certain action in the area is prohibited
- That wearing a certain type of PPE in the area is mandatory
- That certain types of machinery are subject to fault
- That you should be aware of nearby hazards



2. What Will Triangular, Yellow Signs with Black Pictograms Typically Indicate?

- That there is a hazard nearby and caution should be taken/you should not proceed
- That the use of PPE in the area is prohibited
- That certain types of machinery are subject to faults
- That you should only enter with a companion



3. What Will Red Circular Signs with A Diagonal Line Through Them And Black Pictograms Typically Indicate?

- That the hazards present within the area are very serious
- That the use of PPE in this area will not stop hazards
- That certain actions are prohibited
- That your employer should accompany you on entry



4. What Will Square or Rectangular, Green Signs With White Pictograms Typically Indicate?

- That you are in a hazard-free environment and should not wear PPE
- That you should proceed with caution
- They will inform you that it is safe to use any machinery in the area.
- They will indicate what emergency procedures are or an emergency location.



5. What Will Square or Rectangular, Red Signs with White Pictograms Typically Indicate?

- That you are entering seriously hazardous environment
- That you will be disallowed to carry out certain activities in this environment
- They will help you locate and identify firefighting equipment.
- They will direct you to the nearest fire exit and assembly point.



6. What does this classic warning signal indicate? (describe or show picture).

- An anatomy lab
- Flammable material
- Toxic or poisonous material.
- Burial Ground
- Eye check-up area begins.



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Can You Identify These Health & Safety Signs Answers:

- 1.** That wearing a certain type of PPE in the area is mandatory.
- 2.** That there is a hazard nearby and caution should be taken/you should not proceed.
- 3.** That certain actions are prohibited.
- 4.** They will indicate what emergency procedures are or an emergency location.
- 5.** They will help you locate and identify firefighting equipment.
- 6.** Toxic or poisonous material

(Javed, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 12: Cell Phones

Use of cell phones by operators of moving equipment has become an important issue, raised after a New England Journal of Medicine news article which linked use of cell phones to a quadrupled risk of motor vehicle collisions.

There are many significant safety hazards in a construction work environment, and it is critical to reduce those hazards when possible. Elimination of unnecessary hazards such as those caused by cell phone usage is critical for the safety of heavy equipment operators and others at the work site.

Safe Work Practices & Tips:

- Cell phone usage can cause inattention on the job site.
- Co-workers can be distracted by others' cell phone usage.
- Inattention and distraction may result in property damage or personal injury.
- Never use a cell phone while operating equipment. Make use of voice mail and return calls during breaks or equipment downtime.
- Turn cell phones off near any refueling station or hazardous chemicals and obey all signs and instructions.
- Never use a cell phone to send or receive text messages while operating equipment.
- Store your cell phone in a location that will prevent its ring from startling you or anyone in the work area.
- Do not operate a cell phone near a flammable liquid.
- Turn off cell phones within 100' of a blasting area.
- Know site-specific hazard areas associated with cell phone usage.
- Only use cell phones in designated areas.
- Avoid use of cell phones for phone calls or text messages to and from a job site.



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 13: Sun Damage is Still a Risk During Colder Months

Sunscreen is usually associated with beaches, the pool, and sweltering summer days. We spend less time outside in winter, and when we do, we bundle up to protect ourselves from the cold. Ultraviolet (UV) levels (the number of damaging rays from the sun) are lower in the winter because the earth tilts away from the sun. However, temperature and UV levels are less connected than you might think.

Aging is a natural and unavoidable part of the skin's lifecycle, but prolonged or serious sun damage can make your skin age prematurely. The sun causes as much as 90% of the visible skin changes commonly attributed to aging, and protection from UV radiation is the simplest way to avoid it.

UV levels are invisible to the human eye, but the skin can still feel them—even in the winter. Their radiation passes through and can damage skin cells. Skin cancer is the most common type of cancer in the US. That is why the National Cancer Institute (NCI) recommends wearing sunscreen and limiting direct sun exposure during peak daylight hours (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.) **all year round**. And since clouds can only reduce UV levels by about 50%, it's also important to wear sunscreen on cloudy days. Be sure to put on sunscreen with an SPF of 30 or higher on uncovered areas like your face and ears when outside. Wearing a winter hat or earmuffs is another way to shield parts of the face and ears from damaging UV rays.

Sun damage runs deeper than sunburns: Sunburn is just one kind of sun damage and may fade in a matter of days, but overexposure to the sun can cause changes that only appear many years later. UV exposure can cause your skin's texture to change, wrinkle, bruise, and tear more easily. The sun also causes the appearance of tiny blood vessels in the skin especially on the face. Brown spots and large freckles, also known as age spots or liver spots, may appear on frequently exposed areas such as the hands and arms—especially in lighter-skinned people—and may appear as small white spots and red patches.

Precancerous skin changes may include actinic keratoses, which are red, scaly lesions on the face, ears, and backs of the hands, as well as a condition called actinic cheilitis when it occurs on the lips. A doctor should also check for these and any other changes to your skin. Skin cancer: What to look for: It is normal to have moles or birth marks on your skin, but what looks like just another spot could be a sign of skin cancer. If you are concerned about a mole or spot, follow the "ABCDEs" to help identify an atypical mole:

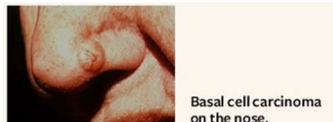
A – Asymmetrical: Does it have irregular sides?

B – Border: are the edges squiggly or bumpy?

C – Color: is it more than one color?

D – Diameter: is it larger than a pencil eraser?

E – Evolving: Has the size, color, border, or width changed in the past few weeks or months?



Basal cell carcinoma on the nose.



Basal cell carcinoma spreading.



Malignant melanoma.

If you see any of the following, a new mark, or a change in an old mark – including moles on areas with less sun exposure – see your health care provider.



Melanoma on the fingernail.



Squamous cell.

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 14: Tool Quiz

1. Which Of the Following Is NOT A Safe Rule When Working with Tools?
 - a. Do not pull-on wrenches: push them.
 - b. Never use wrenches as hammers.
 - c. Do not use screw drivers to test electrical circuits.
 - d. Do not strike a hardened steel surface with a steel hammer.
2. Which Of the Following Tool Categories Accounts for Most Hand Injuries?
 - a. Chainsaws, impact wrenches, and nail guns.
 - b. Saws, drills, and nail guns.
 - c. Hand grinders, chainsaws, and hammers.
 - d. Hammers, hand grinders, and drills
3. Most Often, The Damage to Power Extension Cords Is Only to the _____.
 - a. Hot side of the circuit
 - b. Ground wires
 - c. Insulation
 - d. Plugs
4. Machine Guards on Power Tools Help Protect the Employee from Each of The Following Hazards, EXCEPT _____.
 - a. Transverse motion
 - b. Rotating parts
 - c. In-running nip point
 - d. Point of operation



Answers:

1. Do not pull-on wrenches: push them.
2. Hand grinders, chainsaws, and hammers
3. Plugs
4. Transverse motion

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 15: Machinery and Equipment Safety

Anyone who operates, cleans, services, adjusts, and repairs machinery or equipment should be aware of the hazards associated with that machinery. Any powered machinery or electrical equipment that can move in a way that would put people in danger is a hazard that can be prevented by following locking or tagging procedures. Failure to lock out or tag power sources on equipment can result in electrocutions, amputations, and other serious-sometimes fatal-accidents.

What are the most common causes of these accidents?

- The machine or piece of equipment was not completely shut off before a maintenance or repair operation. Not only must the machine be turned off but also the power source that goes to it.
- The machine was turned on accidentally, either out of carelessness or because the person who turned it on didn't realize that another worker was there and could get hurt.
- The machine wasn't working correctly but wasn't fixed, turned off, locked, or tagged, and someone who didn't know about the problem used it.
- Moving equipment wasn't blocked.
- Safety procedures were inadequate or hadn't been properly explained.



Remember the dangers and be on your guard around any machinery and moving equipment.

Even if you don't operate the machinery, you could get caught in it and injured if it isn't properly disconnected. So, what can you do to prevent accidental injury from moving machinery?

- Identify all jobs and equipment that require lockout of power sources.
- Post warning signs wherever possible to indicate that lockout is required.
- Develop written procedures explaining how lockout is to be done.
- Train all personnel in the lockout procedures for their job and offer periodic refresher training.
- Allow no deviation from the written policies and procedures.
- Use engineering and administrative controls as much as possible to eliminate the need for lockout.
- Perform regular maintenance to prevent malfunctioning equipment.

Be aware of your personal safety and the safety of others when working with or around moving equipment and machinery. Always follow proper lockout and tagout procedures, even Safety is 24 / 7 /365. Don't think you can let your guard down when you punch out for the day. Your shift may be over, but Safety issues are a 24/7 concern, and you need to keep your guard up.

In fact, studies have shown that you are more likely to get injured off the job. Approximately 70% of all deaths and more than 55% of all injuries happen away from work. Home-related accidents account for an estimated 20,000 deaths and 25 million injuries annually.

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 16: Avoid Slips, Trips and Falls

During winter weather, slips and falls can increase. Below are several suggestions which, if followed, can reduce the number of slips and falls. Please read them carefully.

To Avoid Slips:

1. Concentrate on the path ahead -- take your time and proceed slowly.
2. Where possible, avoid slippery surfaces -- take a route around obvious slippery hazards,
3. Use handrails wherever they are provided -- a secure handhold can prevent a fall if you should slip.
4. Beware of changes in walking surfaces -- many falls are caused when someone doesn't realize he/she is leaving a secure area for a slippery one.

If You Slip:

1. Try to /roll with the fall/ if you begin to fall forward.
2. Sit down if you begin to fall backward -- when a falling person relaxes, an injury is less severe than when he/she tenses.

Fighting a fall can cause twisting or bending injuries which may be worse than the bump the fall would have produced.

A few precautions can prevent a serious and painful injury!



(Renfroe, Avoid Slips, Trips and Falls, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan. 17: Caught-In Hazards

Construction is among the most dangerous industries and in recent years, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that there are more than 800 fatal on-the-job injuries to construction workers annually - more than any other single industry. OSHA has identified the 4 leading causes of fatalities in the construction industry and Caught-in Hazards are one of the Focus Four. Caught-in or Caught-between hazards are defined as Injuries resulting from a person being squeezed, caught, crushed, pinched, or compressed between two or more objects, or between parts of an object.

OSHA Standard 1926.21(b)(2): The employer shall instruct each employee in the recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions and the regulations applicable to his work environment to control or eliminate any hazards or other exposure to illness or injury.

- To prevent injuries and possible fatal incidents the first step is to recognize the potential hazards.
- Never place yourself in a dangerous area or position.
- Make sure that all guards and covers are placed correctly and not damaged.
- Keep gloves and loose clothing away from moving gears or rotating shafts.

OSHA Standard 1926.300(b)(2) Belts, gears, shafts, pulleys, sprockets, spindles, drums, fly wheels, chains, or other reciprocating, rotating, or moving parts of equipment shall be guarded if such parts are exposed to contact by employees or otherwise create a hazard.

Remember these important tips to avoid caught-in hazards:

- Look for possible caught-in hazards.
- Avoid removing guards and replace immediately.
- Follow trench safety and cave-in protection rules.
- Be visible by using reflective clothing.
- Never take shortcuts behind or around heavy equipment
- Ensure all back-up alarms and horns are working.
- Avoid the swing areas of excavators and cranes.



Daily Safety Focus

Jan. 18: Ladder Safety

We get so comfortable around ladders that it's easy to forget what could happen if they are used incorrectly. In this meeting, we'll review ladder safety basics so you can avoid easily preventable injuries.

Get Back to the Basics: A portable ladder can be self-supporting or made to lean against a structure; it can be moved easily. Step stools, step ladders, platform ladders, telescoping ladders, and extension ladders are all portable ladders. A fixed ladder is an integral part of a structure. A job-made ladder is fixed and is made from wood at the construction site.

Ladder safety can be summed up this way: regular inspections, correct setup, and safe climbing.

1. **Inspect your ladder before you use it.** Note its intended use and weight capacity. Mark damaged ladders for replacement or destroy them immediately.

Do not use the ladder if you find:

- Structural damage such as split or bent side rails.
- Missing safety devices or broken rungs or steps.
- Grease, dirt, or other substances that could cause slips or falls.
- Paint, tape, or stickers, except warning labels, that could hide defects.
- For job-made ladders, incorrect or unstable construction.



2. Use Ladders Safely

- Select the correct ladder for the task.
- Place all feet of the ladder on a stable and level surface.
- Extension ladders used to access upper levels must extend at least three feet above the roof edge.
- Ensure the ladder's length will allow you to safely reach the work area.
- Never load ladders beyond the maximum intended load or rated capacity.
- Be sure the load rating can support the weight of the user and the job materials.
- Don't use metal ladders for electrical work or near overhead power lines.
- Keep the area around the top and bottom of the ladder clear.
- Never use the top step of a ladder.
- Never carry your equipment or loads as you climb the ladder. Hoist the tools you need up and down.
- Do not tie or fasten ladders together to create longer sections.
- Don't place ladders on crates, barrels, truck beds, lifts, etc.
- Use ladders safely every time. Even when you want to just get'er done, risking yourself & others isn't worth it.

3. Climb Safely

- When climbing, face the ladder and use the hand-over-hand method, placing your hands on the rungs & always maintain 3 points of contact.
- When using a stepladder, do not climb using the cross-bracing on the back of the ladder.
- Ensure a metal spreader or locking device is on each stepladder to hold the front and back sections open when the ladder is being used.
- Make sure the ladder's components will not cause punctures, lacerations, or snag clothing.
- Never move a ladder while it's occupied.

(Construction Ladder Safety, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan. 19: Stroke Prevention

Stroke ranks as the third leading killer in the United States. A stroke can be devastating to victims and their families. It is the most common cause of adult disability. According to the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke (NINDS), each year more than 700,000 Americans have a stroke, with about 160,000 of the victims dying from stroke-related causes.

What is Stroke?

Strokes are a type of cardiovascular disease. They affect the arteries leading to and within the brain. There are different types of strokes, but regardless of type, surviving a stroke can have a devastating impact, not only on the survivor, but also on everyone who cares about them.

What Causes Stroke?

Stroke can be caused either by a clot obstructing the flow of blood to the brain or by a blood vessel rupturing and preventing blood flow to the brain. When that happens, part of the brain cannot get the blood (and oxygen) it needs, so it starts to die.

Stroke Warning Signs

A stroke is a medical emergency. Know these warning signs of stroke and teach them to others. Every second counts:

- Sudden numbness or weakness of the face, arm, or leg, especially on one side of the body.
- Sudden confusion, trouble speaking or understanding.
- Sudden trouble seeing in one or both eyes.
- Sudden trouble walking, dizziness, loss of balance or coordination; or
- Sudden, severe headache with no known cause.

Call 9-1-1 immediately if you experience symptoms! Time lost is brain lost! Doctors say everyone can recognize a stroke by asking three simple questions:

- Ask the individual to SMILE.
- Ask him or her to RAISE BOTH ARMS.
- Ask the person to SPEAK A SIMPLE SENTENCE.

If he or she has trouble with any of these tasks, call 9-1-1 immediately and describe the symptoms to the dispatcher.



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 20: Sudden Traffic Stops

My mom and I were driving on I-80 to my nephew's high school graduation. We were traveling at 75 mph when traffic just stopped. I began looking in my rearview mirror, fearing that others wouldn't realize that we were stopped.

Suddenly, a utility truck, a car and a semi were approaching fast. I looked for an exit, so I did not get rear ended. Those three vehicles ended up getting involved in an accident. The utility truck ended up in the shoulder to the right of our vehicle and the semi went off the road to the right as well.

There was one lane road construction ahead marked 65 mph (which I thought was still too fast) and we thought maybe there was a wreck that caused the sudden stop in traffic. We never saw a wreck. I don't know if someone was distracted while driving or why the sudden stop in traffic.

Some of the things I learned from this were:

1. Always leave plenty of room between you and the car in front of you if you need to make an exit
2. Turn your hazards on when traffic starts slowing down like that so others behind you are aware.
3. If everyone had turned on their hazards maybe it could have all been avoided.



(Aulrick, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 21: A Can-Do Attitude Can Get You Killed

People with a “can do” attitude almost always get the job done – regardless of the obstacles. Unfortunately, many with that same “can do” attitude sometimes consider safety one of those obstacles. This brings out the tragic, and actual, case of John, who no doubt “attacked” his work with a “can do” attitude.

Most of us know someone like John, and maybe we know the person all too well. John was a supervisor at a concrete plant working during a rare Saturday evening shift. The newspaper article, printed on the Sunday morning following John’s “accident,” stated that John oversaw a crew of workers.

It’s my guess that John had a real “can-do” attitude at work. On the Saturday evening of the accident, John was working on a machine that makes concrete blocks. The newspaper article didn’t note if hardhats were required in the area where John was working, but it’s my guess they were. But John was not wearing a hardhat at the time of the accident.

People with a “can do” attitude don’t want anything, even safety equipment, to get in their way. The newspaper article also didn’t note if the machine that John was working on could be worked on while it was running, but it’s also my guess that this machine should have been shut down before being adjusted or repaired. John didn’t shut down the machine before he started to work on it. Maybe he thought shutting down the machine would slow him down.

People with a “can do” attitude don’t want to be slowed down when there’s a job to be done. It’s also my guess that the company had safety rules regarding the repair and adjustment of the machine John was working on, likely calling for the machine to be “locked out.” “Can do” people also usually believe they know the equipment in their work area so well that a “lock out” isn’t necessary and it’s OK to take a safety short cut and fix the equipment “on the go.”

To finish this tragic story, John’s head was crushed in that machine, and he died of massive head injuries on the job that fateful Saturday night.

What safety equipment are you not wearing? What safety procedures slow you down? What machines are you taking a “shortcut” with? If your “can do” attitude doesn’t have safety first on your list of things to do, then “accidents” will likely and unfortunately be one of the results you achieve.

Six Fundamental Elements of a Good Safety Attitude

- **Awareness:** Pay attention. Stay alert to the possible hazards in your work environment so that you can take steps to correct or guard against them.
- **Focus:** Concentrate on the task(s) at hand. Distractions, boredom, or fatigue can lead to accidents and other safety hazards.
- **Strength:** Have the strength to do the right thing even when it’s easier not to. Follow safety procedures and post orders completely, every time.
- **Patience:** Take the time to do things correctly every time – like always buckling your seatbelt, even on quick trips. There are no shortcuts to safety.
- **Responsibility:** Take responsibility for a safe work environment to benefit yourself and others.
- **Thought:** Stop to think before you act. Accidents are not always the result of bad luck. They occur when someone decides – consciously or not – to take a chance. Be smart and avoid taking unnecessary risks.



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 22: Disabled Vehicles

Whenever vehicles break down, it creates a hazard for other drivers and puts the occupants in the broken-down vehicle at risk. You as a driver are responsible for maintaining your vehicle in proper working order to reduce the risk of a crash and avoid putting other drivers in danger. Hundreds of people are killed each year, and thousands are injured in crashes involving stopped or disabled vehicles that may have not stood out enough to alert drivers to the danger they pose. From federal crash statistics an estimated 566 people were killed and 14,371 were injured each year from 2016-2018 in crashes involving a disabled vehicle. The annual societal cost of those crashes totals around \$8.8 billion in medical payments, lost wages and the qualified cost of death and disability.

So how do we prevent these accidents?

1. Make sure your vehicle has been properly maintained.
2. If your vehicle becomes disabled pull as far off the road that you safely can
3. Place on your Hazard lights
4. Raise the hood of your vehicle if you can do it safely.
5. If you can do so safely exit vehicle and move as far away from roadway as possible.
6. If you stay in vehicle keep your seatbelt on, remember you are at risk of getting hit from behind.
7. Call 911 from your cell phone if you feel you are in a hazardous situation.
8. Call for help as a tow truck or just to get police there to move traffic over.

All 50 states have move over laws, if you see a disabled vehicle or an emergency vehicle, you are required to move over to give the disabled vehicle or emergency vehicle additional room to prevent additional accidents.



Daily Safety Focus

Jan. 23: Parking lot Safety

Robberies can happen anytime and anywhere. They occur in both business and residential areas in urban, suburban, and country settings — anyplace a robber has an opportunity to strike. The most common locations for these “street” robberies are parking lots, shopping centers, streets, and malls. Surveys show that almost two-thirds of street robberies occur between 3 p.m. and midnight.

While street robberies happen year-round, they peak during certain periods, such as the holidays. Purse snatchings and other street robberies go up in November and December as criminals’ prey on shoppers, carrying money and gifts. (They also go up in the summer, when more people — criminals and victims — are out on the streets because of warm weather and vacations.) Business owners should be aware that street robbery can hurt the business. When customers fear being robbed at a specific location, they will avoid that location and head for a “safer” area. There are steps business owners and employers can take to discourage street robberies in a specific area and create a safe community for customers and neighbors!

- Light the parking lot and area immediately surrounding the business.
- Place video cameras in the parking lot and put-up signs announcing their presence.
- Keep windows clear of signs so employees can see any suspicious subjects outside the business and report them to the police.
- As a consumer, only frequent places who follow these safe practices.

It is also very helpful to stay in touch with police officers serving the area. The police want to help and want to stay in touch with businesses. Often local business groups sponsor security meetings in cooperation with the nearest law enforcement agency. These events provide the opportunity to share information on crime trends in the area. They also provide an opportunity to network with other local businesses and employers to discuss a wide variety of issues, not only crime.

Remember to practice safety. Don’t learn it by accident.



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 24: When Confidence Becomes Carelessness!

What's at Stake: It's easy to get overly confident once you've mastered something. Think back to your childhood when you mastered riding your bike with no hands. That worked great—until you rode over a pothole you hadn't seen and ended up with major road rash. Workers who take the “no hands” approach to their jobs can end up seriously injured, or worse.

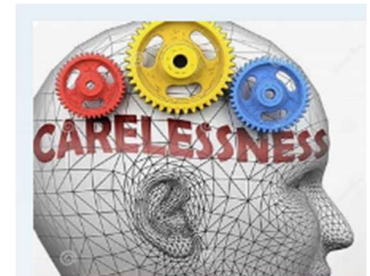
What's the Danger: Experienced workers have paid dearly for carelessness. They have been electrocuted because they failed to lock out the power when doing electrical repairs. They have been burned in explosions when they allowed an ignition source in a flammable atmosphere. They have been killed in falls from heights when they failed to hook up fall arrest gear. They have lost limbs while operating the same saws or punch presses, they have used for years. They have been disabled in vehicle crashes while driving familiar routes.

Example: An experienced process industry worker disobeyed safety regulations and entered a nitrogen tank without adequate protection. He collapsed from a lack of oxygen and died before he could be rescued.

How to Protect Yourself: Even though you're an experienced worker, you can still become entangled in the conveyor if you wear loose clothing. The kiln is just as hot as it's always been, and wet floors still are slippery. No matter how long you have been on the job and no matter how skilled you are, you must remember the basic safety precautions. Don't get complacent!

Here are some examples of complacency:

- Going on autopilot and letting your mind wander while working.
- Trying to do too many things at once and taking shortcuts.
- Fooling around or showing off.
- Letting anger, personal problems or frustration interfere with work.
- Working on too little sleep.
- Taking the attitude that safety is someone else's job.
- Performing a task without using the recommended personal protective equipment.



How do you avoid overconfidence when it comes to safety matters? Here are some suggestions:

- Stay aware of the hazards. Remain alert and focus on doing the job safely.
- Always follow the recommended safe work practices. Do not take short cuts.
- Wear your personal protective equipment — every time.
- Take the time to inspect your equipment and report any defective equipment to your supervisor.
- Take the time to clean up your workspace and ensure that traffic areas are clear of debris and obstacles.
- Pay attention during safety meetings. You may have heard it all before, but a reminder never hurts.
- Take advantage of any opportunity to upgrade your safety training. This will make you aware of new information about hazards and new ways to protect yourself.

Final Word: As an experienced worker, you have a responsibility to set a good example for newcomers. Do things the safe way because someone may be watching and learning from you. Never let overconfidence compromise your safety or the safety of someone else. (Nutt E. , 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 25: Distracted Driving Consequences

Here is a graphic reminder of how serious an issue distracted driving continues to be. A few months ago, a fourteen-year-old girl who was walking along the side of the road here in our town, was struck and killed by a motor vehicle. The driver of the vehicle admitted to police he was texting and did not see the girl. This was a wide-open stretch of road with breakdown lanes on both sides during an afternoon with perfect weather conditions and normal traffic conditions.

The tragic loss of life of a high school freshman who had her whole life in front of her is horrible on its own. There is also the emotional trauma suffered by her family, the friend she was walking with and everyone she knew. The emergency responders, eyewitnesses and the driver of the vehicle will always carry that tragedy with them.

Please let this be a reminder next time you think it's so important to answer that call or send that message.



(Regan, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 26: Detecting Deadly Carbon Monoxide on Boats

I thought I had everything I needed onboard my pontoon boat to maximize the safety of myself & all my passengers until I discovered another item that you may not have considered either until you read this. To begin with, I'll summarize the standard required and recommended safety equipment that most safety-minded boaters have on any boats less than 26' long. They include wearable life jackets that fit everyone on board, a throwable rescue device, operable navigation lights, visual distress signals, engine cut-off system, sound producing devices (i.e., horn, water-proof whistles), anchor with line, first-aid kit, communication devices (i.e., cell phone), & fire extinguisher. The critical item I'm now adding to my list of safety equipment is a handheld, portable, carbon-monoxide detector.

Carbon monoxide poisoning is not limited to boats with enclosed cabins, and it has proven to be deadly on open motorboats. It is a colorless, odorless, and tasteless toxic gas created by gasoline-powered engines, including on-board generators that can kill you. It displaces oxygen in your blood and deprives vital organs of oxygen. Even though carbon monoxide has no odor, if you smell exhaust, carbon monoxide is present, but you don't have to smell anything for it to kill you. Carbon monoxide poisoning causes similar symptoms to dehydration, seasickness, or alcohol intoxication. They include dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, fatigue, seizure, chest pain, confusion, & loss of consciousness.

After a long day of boating, Andy Free was only 9 when he passed out and fell overboard from a docked boat. They were leaving for the day and the engine wasn't even running at the time that he fell overboard. The Free family's two older boys were discovered to have high levels of carbon monoxide poisoning, but they survived with medical treatment. The Free family had spent many years enjoying the water & always followed boating safety rules, but they didn't know about the hidden danger of carbon monoxide poisoning until after their tragic loss of Andy (<https://thelittledude.org/>).

The family of 7-year-old Afton Taylor also suffered the tragic loss of their son to carbon monoxide poisoning. Afton was a swimmer, enjoying the water since he was 6-months old. Afton fell overboard while sitting in the back of the boat as it was moving slowly in a no wake zone (<https://www.lovelikeafton.com>).

Carbon monoxide can also be very dangerous in the water around boats because it can accumulate near the water's surface, especially on calm days with engines running nearby. Ally Sidloski, a 21-year-old woman died from carbon monoxide poisoning after jumping into a lake for a swim off a boat she had been on for the day. Ally was an excellent swimmer, and her parents were shocked to hear that she died in the water because they had never heard of carbon monoxide poisoning associated with boats (<https://weplayfor3.com>).

The Triple A's, as the families call themselves in honor of Andy, Afton, and Ally, are working together to spread the word about the risk of carbon monoxide poisoning when boating. They encourage boaters to use a marine carbon monoxide detector, seat children in the forward-most seating on a boat, avoid idling and exposure to emissions from other boats, and always maintain fresh air circulation.

I've purchased a handheld, portable carbon monoxide detector to add to my boat's safety equipment. My hope is that anyone who boats or swims around motorboats gets one too. Share this information with those you know who enjoy boating and playing in the water around boats so we can prevent carbon monoxide deaths and save more lives on our nation's waterways!



(Garren, 2022)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 27: Towing a Trailer Safely

Friends of mine in Minneapolis were driving on Highway 35, minding their own business, when a trailer carrying a boat slammed into their car. The trailer had disconnected from the tow vehicle and darted across the median in a high-velocity trajectory that could have killed my friends had it not been a glancing blow. It was an accident that shouldn't have happened. Safety tips for towing a trailer: Safely towing a trailer requires attention to detail.

- **Know your weight limits:** Make sure your trailer and whatever you're hauling fall within the towing or hauling capacities of your vehicle. Check the owner's manual to find the trailer types that your vehicle can haul and the maximum weight it can pull. Use the right trailer hitch and make sure it is hitched correctly.
- **Distribute weight evenly:** If your trailer fishtails, back off the gas and see if it stops. If it continues when you accelerate again, check to see how the weight is distributed on the trailer. It may not be distributed evenly from side to side, or else it's too far back to place sufficient load on the hitch ball.
- **Ensure the trailer lights work:** Connect the brake and signal lights. Double check to make sure the trailer's brakes, turn signals and taillights are synchronized with the tow vehicle.
- **Properly inflate the tires:** In addition to staying within weight limits for your rig, be sure the tires are in good condition and properly inflated. Be sure to check your wheel bearings, too.
- **Know that your vehicle will handle differently:** Be sure to adjust your driving practices accordingly. Backing up is tricky, until you're experienced, have someone direct you from outside in those tight spots or places where you have limited visibility. Avoid sudden turns.
- **Trailer towing requires increased stopping distance:** When towing, you have more momentum than you would without a trailer. Remember that stopping requires more time and distance. Avoid tailgating and pay attention to what's happening a little farther down the road than you normally would.
- **Keep your head on a swivel:** once you're on the road, frequently check your mirrors to make sure everything looks good back there.
- **Upgrade your transmission protection:** Towing places enormous stress on a transmission. In fact, because of the intense heat, towing is probably the number-one killer of transmissions. For this reason, the "towing package" on many trucks includes a transmission-oil cooler.

(9 Tips for Safe Traler Towing, 2019)



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 28: How Important is Your Hand

Think of how often you use your hands in the workplace. Whether it's data entry or operating several hundred tons of machinery, your hands are involved almost every step of the way. The big difference? If you don't pay attention while typing, you probably won't lose a finger or two or more!

Hand injuries in the workplace make up **80% of all workplace injuries**. Of course, the length of time lost due to these injuries is all over the board. A sales representative could still function with a broken finger or even an injured arm.

But when it comes to heavy hauling or construction crane work, full use of your hands is vital. That's why preventing hand injuries on the worksite is so important. There's a reason so many safety precautions are posted: time lost due to injury means altering timelines and missed deadlines, not to mention the cost associated with an injury.

The best way to prevent injury, of course, is to stay alert. Even closing a door on the cab of a crane can lead to smashing a few fingers if the operator isn't paying attention. By always following the best work practices, many injuries can be prevented. If an engine needs service, make sure the ignition is off and the key removed. Don't put your hands near moving pieces of machinery, keep machine guards in place, and be aware of all potential pinch points.

Wearing gloves provides an extra level of protection for hands and fingers, but only if they fit properly. Gloves that are too large may get caught in pinch points and take the hand right along with it. If the gloves are too tight, it could restrict movement. A crew member should always be able to move comfortably while on the job.

Pinch Points are found all over the worksite, can be large or small. For example, when setting up the rigging, a pinch point can occur if the load shifts when lifted. This occurs when the wire rope or straps are pulled tight or within the load if lifting several large beams at once. Cab doors, panel doors, and hatches are pinch points just waiting to happen. A turnbuckle, clevis, or hooks can provide pinch points if someone is not paying attention.

Pinch points can even be much larger: if a heavy load is being lifted near a large, stationary object, a huge pinch point can be created if the load sways incorrectly. Workplace injuries occur for any number of reasons, although inattentiveness is often the main culprit. When working with heavy machinery, however, those injuries tend to be amplified.



(Renfroe, How important is your hand, 2023)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 29: How to Prevent OSHA's Fatal Four on Construction Sites

The "fatal four" hazards in the construction world may be the industry's leading causes of injury and death, but we can lessen these threats and keep ourselves safe from harm with good planning, awareness, and the right PPE.

Minimizing Fall Hazards: Fall hazards are present at most worksites & because workers are at risk any time they are working at a height of 4' or more, OSHA requires that fall protection be provided for an employee working at a height of 6' & regardless of the fall distance, must be provided when working over dangerous equipment & machinery.

To prevent falls always:

- Wear and use personal fall arrest equipment.
- Install and maintain perimeter protection.
- Cover and secure floor openings and label floor opening covers.
- Use ladders and scaffolds safely.



Reducing Struck-By Injury Rates: Produced by forcible contact or impact between the injured person & an object or piece of equipment, struck-by injuries typically involve flying, falling, swinging, or rolling objects. To better prevent struck-by incidents, employees should wear appropriate PPE, stay alert of heavy equipment, & stay clear of lifted or suspended loads. Workers should also:

- Check vehicles before each shift to ensure that all parts and accessories are in safe operating condition.
- Never drive a vehicle in reverse gear with an obstructed rear view (unless that vehicle has an audible reverse alarm or another worker signals that it is safe).
- Always properly secure loads with appropriate rigging.
- Make sure that all tools and equipment are securely attached and/or tethered.

Preventing Caught-in/Between Accidents: Caught-in/between accidents involve those individuals who get caught or crushed in operating equipment, between other mashing objects, between a moving object and a stationary object, or between two or more moving objects. Cave-ins, trenching, and being pulled into or caught in machinery and equipment (including strangulation as the result of clothing caught in running machinery and equipment) all fall under this OSHA Focus Four category. To prevent caught-in/between accidents:

- Always use machinery that is properly guarded.
- Use other methods to ensure that machinery is sufficiently supported, secured, or otherwise made safe.
- Never enter unprotected trenches or excavations that are 5' or deeper without a protective system in place.
- Make sure the trench or excavation is protected either by sloping, shoring, benching, or trench shield systems.

Reducing the Chances of Electrocutation: Electrical workers have the most electrocutions per year, with the most serious concern being working "live" or near live wires. Proper protocol includes de-energizing & using LOTO procedures. Among non-electricians' failure to avoid live overhead power lines & a lack of basic electrical safety knowledge are the major concerns.: To prevent electrocutions, all workers should:

- Locate and identify utilities before starting any work.
- Look for overhead power lines when operating any type of equipment.
- Maintain a safe distance away from power lines.
- Learn the safe distance requirements.
- Avoid operating portable electric tools unless they are grounded or double-insulated.
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters for protection.
- Be alert to electrical hazards when working with ladders, scaffolds, or other platforms.

(How to Prevent OSHA's Fatal Four on Construction Sites, 2019)

Daily Safety Focus

Jan 30: Donnie's Accident

"This is one of those things you always figure will happen to someone else. Unfortunately, we're all someone else to someone else."

On August 12, 2004, I was connecting a large electrical generator in preparation for Hurricane Charlie. The meter I was using failed and blew carbon into the gear and created an electrical arc which resulted in an arc blast. The electrical equipment shown in the picture below is the actual equipment after the explosion when my co-workers were there trying to restore power and make temporary repairs.

I ended up with full thickness, 3rd degree burns to both hands and arms along with 2nd and 3rd degree burns to my neck and face. I was in a coma for two months due to numerous complications from infections and medications. During this time my family endured 4 hurricanes and the possibility of losing me. I am a husband, a father, a son, and a brother, not just an electrician. It took almost two years of healing, surgeries, and rehabilitation to only be able to return to work to an office job.

I can't use my hands and arms as well as I once could... BUT I'M ALIVE! There are those who have had similar accidents and fared much, much worse. I use my experiences to caution others. All of this could have been avoided if I had been wearing my personal protection equipment (PPE), which I was fully trained to do and was in my work van. I would have probably only gone to the hospital for a checkup! I am asking you to protect yourself by following your safety procedures. Accidents at work not only affect you; think about the effects on your family, your friends, your finances, your company, your co-workers... your entire world.

Most of these injuries can be prevented by following the safety rules your company probably has in place. Most of these rules were put in place because of accidents like mine. Be safe, wear your PPE; not for fear of fines, penalties or getting fired. Be safe for yourself and for all the people close to you. I got a second chance... You might not!!!!!!

(Johnson, 2004)



Daily Safety Focus

Jan 31: Workplace Violence

Workplace violence continues to be a pressing issue that companies from all sectors grapple with across the US. Today, millions of people fall victim to workplace violence each year. To understand the complexities and intricacies of workplace violence in the U.S., our data analysis team concluded:

- In the US, there are roughly 2 million victims of workplace violence each year.
- The healthcare and social assistance industries have an 8.2% workplace violence incident rate.
- Workplace violence deaths rates for men are roughly 75% higher than those for females.
- Workplace violence causes American businesses to lose, on average, \$250 to \$330 billion every year.
- 85% of workplace violence deaths are due to robbery.
- Workplace assaults resulted in 20,050 injuries and 392 fatalities in 2020 alone.
- 94% of American workers have been bullied at least once in the workplace.
 - A 2019 survey found that approximately 94% of U.S. workers have been bullied at work. Of the 94% who claimed to have been bullied at work, 51.1% of them said the bullying was done by a boss or manager.
 - Additionally, 23.3% of respondents said they were bullied with aggressive email tones, 20.2% of respondents said they were bullied through negative gossip by coworkers, and 17.8% of respondents said they felt bullied after being yelled at.

Workplace Violence Assault and Fatality Statistics:

- As of 2019, there were 454 fatal workplace violence incidents a year in the US.
- Of the over 450 fatal workplace violence incidents in 2019, the majority were caused by assaults and robberies. As such, workplace violence fatalities accounted for 9% of all deadly work injuries in 2019.
- Nearly 400,000 aggravated assaults occur in the workplace each year.
- Assaults and threats of physical violence make up a large portion of the total workplace violence incidents recorded in the US each year. Approximately 396,000 assaults occur in workplaces across the nation every year.

Workplace Violence by Demographics:

- Homicides are the next leading cause of workplace violence fatalities for women, accounting for 19% of female workplace violence fatalities. Meanwhile, the second leading cause of workplace violence death for men is falls, slips, and trips, which accounts for 17% of on-the-job fatalities involving workplace violence.
- Employees between the age of 20 and 34 are most likely to be victims of workplace violence.
- Approximately 16 out of 1,000 employees ages 20 to 34 are victims of workplace violence.

Conclusion: While workplace violence continues to be a top concern for many businesses across the country, most American employees still report feeling unsafe at work. Although workplace violence incident rates and fatality rates have increased in recent years, much work is still needed to combat this growing issue.

(Boskamp, 2022)