



Prioritizing Hand Protection in the Workplace

Many different job tasks can put your hands at risk, such as operating certain tools and heavy machinery, handling potentially dangerous objects and materials, and working in extreme temperatures. Hand injuries—which can range from minor cuts, bruises and sprains to severe lacerations, crushed bones and permanent nerve damage—are unfortunately quite common in the workplace, but many are preventable.

There are several precautions you can take to keep your hands safe at work; here are a few of the most common.

Make Use of Machine Guards

When safety guards are missing from machinery, hands, fingers and arms can easily be caught, amputated or crushed. As such, never operate machinery without a working guard to protect your hands. Always use a lockout device on machinery when you have to reach into it for any reason. Immediately replace guards when you remove them.

Wear Proper Safety Gloves

A recent OSHA study found that 70% of workers who sustained hand injuries were not wearing gloves. The remaining 30% were using damaged, inadequate or inappropriate gloves for the job. Considering these findings, it's crucial to always protect your hands by wearing safety gloves when handling rough materials or performing operations that involve using your hands to lift or move objects. Choose the right gloves for the task and inspect them thoroughly before use.

Be Cautious of Sharp Objects

Utilize the correct safety procedures when handling knives, box cutters and other sharp objects. Never attempt to pick up broken glass, nails or other sharp objects not meant for handling with bare hands; always use appropriate gloves or a broom.

Remove Hand Jewelry

No matter how much sentimental value they carry, hand jewelry (e.g., rings and bracelets) can put your hands in grave danger on the job. Specifically, they can very easily catch on machinery and other objects, resulting in lacerations, amputations or broken bones. With this in mind, remember to always remove hand jewelry before beginning work.

Watch for Pinch Points

When using your hands to move an object, whether it is on a hand truck or you are carrying it, be sure your path is wide enough for you to move through safely before you start the job. When setting a heavy object down, be aware of the placement of your hands. Always be alert for possible pinch points.

Speak Up

If you are unsure about the type of gloves to wear to adequately protect yourself, or if you have any other issues regarding the protection of your hands on the job, talk to your supervisor.

Consult your employer for additional workplace safety guidance.

Ensuring Electrical Safety

May is National Electrical Safety Month. This annual event, organized by the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI), is intended to raise awareness of electrical hazards and help reduce electrical fires, injuries and fatalities. One of the most common types of electrical injuries on the job is electrical shock, which occurs when an electrical current comes in contact with or passes through a person's body.

According to the ESFI, over 20,000 electrical injuries have taken place in the workplace over the past decade, with more than 1,600 incidents resulting in fatalities. Furthermore, 70% of these incidents occurred in nonelectrical occupations.

Regardless of industry, it's important for employees like you to understand how electrical shock occurs and what you can do to prevent it, thereby keeping yourself and others safe on the job.

Causes of Electrical Shock

According to OSHA, electricity travels in closed circuits, normally through a conductor. However, sometimes a person's body—an efficient conductor of electricity—mistakenly becomes part of the electrical circuit, causing a shock. Electrical shock can occur when a person's body completes the current path with the following:

- Both wires of an electric circuit
- One wire of an energized circuit and the ground
- A metal part that accidentally becomes energized (e.g., a break in insulation)
- Another conductor that is carrying a current

When a person receives an electrical shock, electricity flows between parts of their body or through their body to the ground. Some incidents of electrical shock may only cause mild tingling and muscle spasms, while others can lead to deep tissue burns, lasting nerve damage, neurological issues and, in some cases, fatal cardiac arrest. As a result, it's vital to ensure electrical safety on the job.

Prevention Strategies

Accidental grounding is one of the most common (and preventable) causes of electrical injuries at work, often due to improper use of electrical tools. One way to avoid this is by always inspecting your tools for these unsafe conditions before use:

- Defective or broken insulation
- Improper or poorly made connections to terminals
- Broken or otherwise defective plugs
- Loose or broken switches
- Sparking brushes

If any of these conditions exist, report it to your supervisor and have the tool repaired before using it. In addition to inspecting electrical tools, here are some other safety precautions to keep in mind:

- Do not attempt to repair or adjust portable electrical tools while they are plugged in.
- Never use portable electrical tools in the presence of flammable vapors or gases, unless they are designed for such use.
- Wear any required personal protective equipment for electrical tasks, even if it may seem unnecessary.
- Always confirm that electrical tools being used to handle energized conductors are designed to withstand the voltage and stresses to which they have been exposed.
- Ensure portable electrical tools are equipped with a three-prong plug—the best way to guard against electrical shock.

If you or a co-worker does experience electrical shock, it is important to seek immediate medical attention. Even if there are no initial signs of injury or stress, internal injuries may have occurred due to the shock. In some cases, even low-voltage shocks can prove fatal.

Reach out to your supervisor if you have any further questions about workplace electrical hazards.

Live Well



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5 Tips to Prevent Skin Cancer

May is Skin Cancer Awareness Month. In recognition of this initiative and in preparation for the summer months, learn about key steps to limit your risk of developing skin cancer:

1. Apply sunscreen with an SPF of at least 30 when planning to spend time outdoors. An SPF of 50 or higher is recommended for extended periods.
2. Plan outdoor activities early in the morning or in the evenings, when sunlight is less intense.
3. Seek out areas with shade, such as those cast by buildings and trees. Alternatively, bring canopies, tents or umbrellas to cast your own shadows.
4. Wear long sleeves and hats to help cover your skin..
5. Avoid indoor tanning (e.g., tanning beds and booths) and the high levels of UV rays that come with it.



National Bicycle Safety Month - Tips for Cyclists

Bicycles can provide an affordable, healthy, expedient and environmentally friendly way to navigate communities. But since you'll often share the road with motor vehicles while on your bike, you need to be cautious to avoid potentially serious injuries.

Safety Tips for Cyclists

In recognition of May being National Bicycle Safety Month, commit to the following safe habits:

- Wear a helmet and clothing that is brightly colored or affixed with reflective strips, especially when riding at night.
- Check before every ride to ensure your bike's chain, brakes and other parts are

functioning, and your tires are inflated properly.

- Equip your bike with reflectors, a headlight and a bell or horn.
- Use hand signals to help drivers understand your intentions.
- Follow the rules of the road, including using bike lanes where available and obeying signals and signage, even if no cross-traffic is present.

[Click here to learn more](#) about National Bicycle Safety Month.

Live Well

Improving Mental Health With Lifestyle Changes

In many ways, your mental health may be just as important as your physical well-being. Even the strongest and most fit individuals can be floored by anxiety, depression and other mental health issues.

With this in mind, health care professionals and organizations across the United States have recognized May as Mental Health Awareness Month since 1949.

How Can I Improve My Mental Health?

Good mental health can be key to your overall quality of life, but achieving it may seem easier said than done. Fortunately, there are steps you can take to alleviate negative feelings and improve your mental well-being.

Consider these strategies:

- **Stay connected.** Reach out to friends and family regularly to strengthen and maintain your relationships.
- **Rest well.** Try to get at least 7 hours of sleep each night.
- **Enjoy the outdoors.** Studies have shown that spending time in nature can calm your mind.
- **Exercise regularly.** Whether playing sports, taking a walk or heading to the gym, physical activity can have a direct impact on improving your mental health.
- **Find new hobbies.** Learning new skills can boost your confidence and self-esteem, while also potentially helping you build a sense of purpose.

- **Be generous.** Volunteering, giving back to your community and helping others can feel rewarding and build a sense of self-worth.

Learn More About Mental Health

For more resources regarding mental health and well-being, contact us today.

Stay Safe in and Around the Pool This Summer

Summer is just around the corner. For many people, the coming long and sunny days are often spent swimming. Whether you're heading to a public venue or have your own backyard pool, safety is paramount.

Before heading out for your first day at the swimming pool this summer, remember these guidelines:

- Always make sure an adult is keeping an eye on children in the pool.
- Never run on the pool deck, even if the surface appears dry.
- When entering shallow water, be sure to do so feet-first.
- Steer clear of drains, as hair and garments could become tangled in them.
- Make sure a first-aid kit and someone certified in CPR are present.

Contact us today for more information on seasonal health and safety topics.