

Safety Focused

October 2025



Making the Most of Fire Prevention Week

[Fire Prevention Week](#)—an annual campaign established by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA)—takes place from Oct. 5-11 this year. This event calls attention to the importance of fire safety at home and in the workplace and encourages businesses and individuals to take steps to minimize potential fire hazards.

Fires pose a significant threat to any organization, often causing severe property damage and employee injuries. While employers are required to implement specific NFPA standards and fire prevention safeguards in the workplace, there are additional measures you can implement to protect yourself and your co-workers on the job. This week and beyond, consider the following fire safety tips.

Lowering the Risks of Fire

There are some simple things you can do to limit the likelihood of a fire starting at work:

- Ensure compliance with local fire safety regulations and building requirements.
- Obey “No Smoking” signage.
- Dispose of cigarettes and matches in the proper receptacles after confirming they are completely extinguished.
- Watch for frayed electrical cords and overloaded circuits.
- Dispose of flammable waste and scraps by placing them in metal containers.

Storing Combustible Materials

Always store combustible materials in a safe area. Fumes can travel a considerable distance and become ignited by a furnace, stove, electrical equipment or even a lit cigarette. If you need to dispose of flammable liquids, do not pour them down drains. Educate yourself on the proper method of disposal. Reach out to your supervisor if you are unsure of safe disposal protocols.

Using Electrical Equipment

Proper equipment maintenance procedures are critical to fire safety. If you use electrical equipment or tools, inspect them regularly to make sure they are working correctly. Keep mechanical equipment properly lubricated to avoid excessive friction. Maintain spark arrestors on exhaust systems.

Preparing for a Fire

Even with proper safeguards in place, fires can still happen. As such, here are some fire preparation measures to keep in mind:

- Become familiar with the different types of fire alarms used on-site and know the location of any firefighting equipment.
- Review how to operate fire extinguishers and take note of what types of fires they are to be used on.
- Participate in periodic fire drills to practice fire response and emergency evacuation procedures.

If the fire alarm goes off, always treat it as a true emergency. Just because you do not see smoke or flames does not mean a fire is not present. Always use the stairs instead of the elevator. If the room fills with smoke, stay low to the ground and get out as fast—but as safely—as you can. Contact your employer for more fire safety tips.

Prioritizing Your Mental Health

The World Health Organization recognizes Oct. 10 as [World Mental Health Day](#). This annual campaign is intended to raise awareness of mental health issues, their challenges and ramifications, and different strategies that individuals can implement to better their mental health.

The American Psychological Association defines mental health as “a state of mind characterized by emotional well-being, good behavioral adjustment, relative freedom from anxiety and disabling symptoms, and a capacity to establish constructive relationships and cope with the ordinary demands and stresses of life.”

Your mental health doesn't just impact your mood; it also affects your physical health and, in turn, your safety at work. Poor mental health can cause digestive issues, headaches, fatigue and other physical symptoms—many of which can affect your ability to focus and make you increasingly vulnerable to potential safety hazards on the job. By prioritizing your mental health, you can improve your overall well-being and stay safe at work.

Mental Health Overview

Everybody has mental health, just like everyone has physical health. Mental health is important at every stage of life. It can change over time, as it's influenced by numerous factors, including:

- Stress
- Burnout
- Grief
- Physical or mental fatigue
- Financial hardship
- Work-life balance

Although mental health may look different for everyone, it's often measured by one's ability to:

- Cope with stress, change and adversity
- Maintain healthy relationships
- Participate in work or school activities
- Realize full potential

Managing Your Mental Health

Poor mental health can develop into mental illness if symptoms are unmanaged, which can cause distress and the inability to function in everyday activities. It's important to understand the early warning signs of mental health problems. Watch for the following feelings or behaviors:

- Eating too much or too little
- Sleeping too much or too little
- Having unexplained aches and pains
- Having low or no energy
- Pulling away from people and your usual activities
- Lacking the ability to perform daily tasks (e.g., getting to work)
- Using substances (e.g., alcohol, tobacco and drugs) more than usual
- Feeling helpless, hopeless or like nothing matters
- Feeling unusually confused, forgetful, on edge, upset or worried
- Yelling or fighting with loved ones
- Thinking of harming yourself or others

Taking care of your mental health is vital. In some cases, adopting the following healthy habits within your daily routine can help improve your mental health:

- Drinking enough water and eating a balanced diet
- Establishing a consistent sleep and exercise schedule
- Spending time outdoors and participating in different hobbies
- Engaging in gratitude and mindfulness activities
- Limiting screen time and socializing with friends and family

In other cases, you may need additional support or resources to properly manage your mental health. Reach out to your supervisor and contact your doctor or a mental health professional if you're concerned about your mental health.



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Live Well, Work Well

What to Know About This Year's Flu Season

The influenza (flu) season in the United States lasts from October through May, with peak flu activity between December and March.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that 47 million to 82 million flu illnesses occurred during the 2024-25 season. Data suggested that flu activity was at its highest level in more than 15 years.

Flu season in the Southern Hemisphere often indicates what's to come in the United States. Data revealed higher hospitalizations during the 2025 flu season in the Southern Hemisphere. With the potential for this year's flu season to be severe in the United States, vaccination remains the most effective way to prevent the flu, especially severe disease and hospitalization.

How to Stay Healthy

The flu can cause serious complications for people of any age, but children and older adults are especially vulnerable. To help keep your household healthy this flu season, consider these tips:

- Get vaccinated. The CDC recommends that nearly everyone aged 6 months and older get a flu shot every year.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick and stay away from others when you feel unwell. Flu, cold and COVID-19 symptoms are similar, so doctors say it's best to get tested to determine what you have.
- Wash your hands often using soap and warm water. If those are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Get seven to nine hours of quality sleep each night to boost your immune system.
- Exercise regularly to strengthen your body and make it more resilient against infections.
- Stay hydrated and eat a balanced diet.

Experts recommend getting vaccinated against the flu by the end of October, so don't delay getting your shot. Contact your doctor today to learn more.

The Benefits of Fast Walking

While it's recommended that people commit to 150 minutes of moderate activity per week to notice sufficient health benefits, a new study published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine found that fast walking for just 15 minutes daily could have the same benefits.

Study participants who fast walked for at least 15 minutes every day saw a nearly 20% reduction in premature death compared with a 4% reduction among participants who walked slowly for a total of more than three hours each day.

Generally, you can tell you're fast walking when you can talk but not sing. Remember to maintain good walking form by standing tall with your shoulders back and swinging your arms (in opposition to your foot movement). If you want to take it one step further, try nasal breathing (inhale and exhale through your nose) to help regulate blood pressure while walking.

Stocking a Nutritious Kitchen

You don't need to master the art of meal planning to eat well during the week. It can be as simple as stocking your kitchen with mealtime building blocks. By keeping a well-rounded selection of pantry, fridge and freezer staples on hand, you can create balanced meals in minutes and avoid the temptation of less nutritious options. Consider the following nutritious items:

- **Canned chickpeas** can easily be added to soups or mashed with seasonings for extra protein and fiber.
- **Chicken breast** is a great protein to build a meal around. You could make pasta, soups, casseroles, sandwiches and more.

In addition to the study's findings, consider the following benefits of walking, regardless of speed:

- Weight maintenance
- Reduced body fat
- Increased cardiovascular fitness
- Improved endurance
- Higher energy levels
- Better mood, memory and sleep
- Strengthened immune system
- Decreased stress

To learn more about incorporating walking into your routine, talk to your doctor and discuss what works best for you.

- **Extra-firm tofu** is full of plant-based protein and calcium. Its neutral flavor makes it great for stir-fries and curries.
- **Quinoa or lentils** are versatile options to round off meals. They are packed with fiber and protein.
- **Whole-wheat spaghetti** is a great last-minute meal idea. It has a sizable dose of fiber and helps reduce cholesterol.
- **Frozen spinach** is easily used in egg dishes, pasta and smoothies. It's also packed with four times the nutrients of fresh spinach.

By stocking your kitchen with nutritious staples, you'll always have the tools to build meals that nourish your body and fit your lifestyle.