

Safety Newsletter

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

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First Aid – Do You Know What to Do?

In an age of sophisticated technology and immediate emergency response by pressing three buttons on any phone, you may not think you need to know first-aid. Even if a paramedic-equipped ambulance can be at your jobsite in five minutes, a lot can happen to a human body in that time. First aid can keep a bad situation from getting worse. In simple terms, first aid is any kind of emergency care in response to a sudden injury or illness before trained medical professionals can take over. A first aid program is an important component in a comprehensive safety effort.

Supplies are important. Most types of first aid require some type of supplies or equipment, ranging from gauze pads to an automated external defibrillator (AED). First-aid kits should be readily available, and should be stocked with all of the types of supplies needed to treat normal workplace injuries and accidents. Kits should be checked regularly to ensure that supplies have not been depleted.



Assess the situation. Professional emergency responders don't run when they arrive on the scene. They take their time to develop a complete understanding of what is happening and what actions need to be taken, so they become a solution to the problem, rather than part of it.

Similarly, the first thing a responding employee needs to do is consider all aspects of the situation. Are there environmental dangers such as fumes that could overcome other employees? Is there an energized electrical circuit? Is there a potential for injury from sharp objects? Taking a few moments to size up what's happening will allow for the most effective response possible. When appropriate, professional help should be called in -- typically, that involves a call to 911. In a situation in which several workers have been injured, the responder should determine which workers have the greatest need for assistance, and tend to them first.

Remember the ABCs. Next, the responder needs to consider the condition of the injured or ill worker. One of the most basic processes taught in first aid classes is the ABCs of first aid.

A refers to making sure that the person has an unobstructed airway,

B involves checking to see if he or she is breathing, and **C** is a reminder to check circulation at one of the major pulse points.

If the individual is conscious, the responder can ask questions to get a better understanding of the nature of the illness or the extent of any injuries. If he or she is not conscious, the responder should talk to them and gently shake them in an effort to awaken them. However, it's important to avoid moving a victim unless there is an immediate danger for their safety, or if they appear to be choking. If the individual has suffered any injuries

to the spinal cord, movement could worsen his or her condition.

If the person must be moved to restore breathing, it's important to align the neck and head and carefully roll them over while supporting the head. Lifting the chin will usually open the airway. If an individual is unconscious but still breathing, it's usually a good idea to roll them on their side to ensure that the airway isn't blocked by their tongue or vomit. If the individual is not breathing and does not have a pulse, begin CPR immediately.

When dealing with bleeding or similar injuries, if the victim is breathing and has a pulse, the responder should begin to control the bleeding and follow steps that will prevent shock. Be sure to follow Universal Precautions and wear personal protective equipment, like gloves.

When professionals arrive. It's important for the responder to stay with the individual until professional assistance arrives. In addition to monitoring his or her condition, that includes being a calming presence and continuing to prevent against shock. Once the medical professionals are on the scene, the responder can provide a quick summary of the situation and actions that have been taken. At this point, it's best to stop talking and wait to answer any questions from the professionals. Based on what they've been told, they will perform their own assessments, and they need to be able to concentrate on the details. While the natural tendency is to be helpful and volunteer additional information, that may actually be counterproductive. After the incident has been completed, make sure to prepare summary of exactly what happened and what actions were taken. What you learn from each incident can then help you improve the response to the next one.

Safe Lifting Techniques

Lifting can put great strain on your back. Lifting from the floor can be particularly risky. For example, lifting a 25-pound box from the floor requires about 700 pounds of back muscle force, even when you bend your knees. Below are some tips that can help protect your back when you need to lift heavy objects.



- Try out the load first. If it is too bulky or heavy, get help.
- Avoid lifts that require stretching or bending to reach the load. Redesign the work area so objects you lift are close to the body and at waist height.
- Don't lift awkward objects such as long pipes or large boxes by yourself. Get help or use mechanical assistance like a dolly, lift truck, or cart.
- When lifting, keep your back straight and lift with your legs. Lift slowly and carefully and don't jerk the load around.
- Keep the load as close to your body as possible while lifting it.
- Don't twist or turn your spine while carrying the load.
- Make sure your path is clear while carrying the object. Remove obstacles that could cause you to trip.

Prevent Slips, Trips, and Falls

It is a fact that more than 50 percent of all workplace falls result in injuries or illness that affect the productive environment of a workplace. It is so important to work to prevent falls. Falls at the workplace can result from slipping, tripping, walking while carrying things, and performing other simple tasks. The resulting injury is often extremely painful and long-lasting.



Most falls occurring from slips and trips at the same level are caused due to slipping on a surface or tripping over an object. A fraction of the falls occurring from different levels happen when people fall off ladders, steps or a higher floor. It is also a fact that **falls at the workplace can be prevented**. Although accidents are not easy to predict, it's still quite possible to prevent them from happening. Doing away with unsafe acts and conditions can control such accidents. Look for ways to prevent slips, trips and falls from occurring at the workplace. Once these hazards are eliminated you can usually prevent accidents from taking place.

Some of the precautions you can take to avoid slip/trip/fall incidents are:

- Ensure that all spills and wet surfaces are immediately cleaned up from the floor. Do not allow food, water, or other liquid spills to go unreported as it could be a cause for a potential slip or fall. Clean up the spill or call a Custodian.
- See to it that all walking pathways in the office are clutter-free. Do not allow normal walkways to be littered by any materials that might result in people tripping and falling over.
- In case you need to reach up to something that's high up in the office or classroom, always use a safe stepladder. Never use chairs or desks to climb up to access things above your head.
- Make sure that you only carry loads that you can safely handle. While carrying objects, make sure that your line of vision is not affected and that you are not carrying a load that is too heavy. Carrying heavy objects may make you stumble under the weight.
- Always have good illumination around the office space. Whether indoors or near to the exteriors, ensure that lighting is adequate and visibility is not affected.
- Always wear good footwear. We may not have control over the condition of the surface that we walk on. But we do have control over what we choose to wear on our feet. Increasing friction between the soles of your shoes and the surface on which you are walking greatly reduces the risk of slip-injuries.
- Follow safety tips to choose the right shoes for the prevailing conditions. Wear hard rubber soles for greasy, concrete or wood flooring. Soft rubber shoes are good for dry surfaces. Crepe soles are best for rough concrete surfaces, dry or wet, and neoprene soles are good and safe on most wet or dry surfaces.



Top 10 Myths about Workplace Safety:

Myth # 1: Workplace Violence Is Random and Unpredictable. This type of myth is dangerous. It allows one to deny that there is anything that can be done to address violence, and to step back from the responsibility for violence prevention. All employees should pay close attention to how an employee speaks to others in the workplace. The Tuolumne JPA works with districts to assist with training and develop appropriate emergency response procedures.

Myth # 2: Crazy People Commit the Most Violence. It is a fact that, since only 5% of severely disturbed individuals are actually violent, and the vast majority of those individuals are either incarcerated or hospitalized, most violence is not committed by "crazy" people.



Myth # 3: Workplace violence is a guy thing and women shouldn't worry about it. Women share the field almost equally when it comes to being the attacker and the victim. Women are involved in workplace violence 65% of the time.

Myth # 4: Security guards and metal detectors will prevent workplace violence. The security measures can do little to stop a determined perpetrator of a crime. In fact security guards and detection devices can do little more than cause an attacker to think more creatively.

Myth # 5: He just "snapped." We can't prevent it because there are no warning signs. In 80% of all incidents of workplace violence, there are warning signs that go unheeded. Awareness heads the list and it is the easiest and most successful means for surviving a workplace violence attack. Early awareness and action can save property, lives, and money.

Myth # 6: The Tuolumne JPA insurance will cover the cost of damages: Most workers wrongly believe that they are covered completely by the district insurance coverage is in place to protect the district. But you may find that the insurance policy may have clauses that exclude damages from certain types of actions.

Myth # 7: We have a workplace violence prevention policy so we're safe. Even if you have a well thought out plan, it is important to review the procedures. Know what your specific responsibilities during an emergency



Myth # 8: It will never happen here – we live in small town in the foothills – we're too small to have it happen here. The truth is that workplace violence can happen in any school, at any time, and anywhere. And, it does.

Myth # 9: We don't have to worry about the money – the costs won't affect me personally. There are direct and indirect costs that result from a disaster or an emergency – these include damages to the school, injuries to students, staff, and volunteers, death, and record destruction. These are in addition to the loss of school days, repair of facilities, and psychological damage that can be the result of an emergency situation. This can impact each employee.

Myth # 10: Verbal Threats Are "Just Talk". Verbal threats of violence are a real warning sign, and should not be ignored.