

# Safety Newsletter

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

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## TOP 10 WORKPLACE SAFETY TIPS EVERY EMPLOYEE SHOULD KNOW

**1. Be Aware Of Your Surroundings.** This step requires knowing the particular hazards of your job or workplace. Once you've learned these risks, you are able to keep clear of potential hazardous areas, and potential hazardous situations. Also, always be alert of machinery.

**2. Keep Correct Posture To Protect Your Back.** If you work at a desk, keep your shoulders in line with your hips to avoid back problems. If you're picking things up, use correct form so your back doesn't get hurt. Avoid stooping and twisting. Set up your work area so everything you need is within easy reach.

**3. Take Regular Breaks.** So many work-related injuries and illnesses occur because a worker is tired, burned out and not alert to their surroundings. Taking regular breaks helps you stay fresh on the job. One trick to staying alert is to schedule the most difficult tasks when your concentration is best, like first thing in the morning.

**4. Use Tools And Machines Properly.** Take the proper precautions when using tools, and never take shortcuts. Taking shortcuts is the leading cause of workplace injury. It's a huge safety risk to use scaffolding as a ladder or one tool in place of another for a specific job. Using tools the right way greatly reduces the chance of workplace injury.



**5. Keep Emergency Exits Easily Accessible.** In case of an emergency, you'll need quick, easy access to the exits. It's also recommended to keep clear access to equipment shutoffs in case you need to quickly stop them from functioning.

**6. Report Unsafe Conditions To Your Supervisor.** Your supervisor needs to be informed about any workplace safety hazards or risks. They are legally obligated to ensure their employees have a safe working environment and will take care of the unsafe conditions and make them safe for you and your coworkers.

**7. Use Mechanical Aids Whenever Possible** Instead of attempting to carry or lift something that's really heavy in an attempt to save a sliver of time during your workday, take the extra minute to use a wheelbarrow, moving dolly, rolling cart, or forklift. Too many injury risks are involved with trying to lift something that weighs too much.

**8. Stay Sober.** Around three percent of workplace fatalities occur due to alcohol and drugs. When a worker's ability to exercise judgment, coordination, motor control, concentration or alertness is compromised, this leads to any number of risks for workplace injury and fatalities.

**9. Reduce Workplace Stress.** Stress can lead to depression and concentration problems. Common causes of workplace stress include long hours, heavy workload, job insecurity and conflicts with coworkers or

managers. Take your concerns about workplace stress to your supervisor to see how they might help you address them.

**10. Wear The Correct Safety Equipment.** If you're not wearing the correct safety equipment for a task, you may get injured. Depending on the job, equipment like earplugs, earmuffs, hard hats, safety goggles, gloves or a full-face mask greatly reduce the risk of workplace injury.



## SAFETY - ATTITUDE AND BEHAVIOR

Humans instinctively seek to avoid pain and death. And yet, we may behave in a manner that is a threat to our well-being. There are a couple of reasons why this occurs. The first is lack of knowledge. What you do not know, can hurt you!. The second reason we may act in a risky manner is attitude. Now might be a good time to do a quick self-analysis. What is your attitude toward safety? Your attitude affects almost all that you do and how you do it.

Have you ever noticed that people who are successful in life, or are just happy, tend to have a positive attitude? And so it is with safety - safety rules and procedures are written to protect employees from harm. They are not written to make your work life more uncomfortable or inconvenient.

No one is perfect. Even the best of us can forget or make errors in judgment. To maximize our safety efforts, we must look out for one another. If someone tells you that you are not working in a safe manner, don't become angry or defensive. They're just looking out for your well-being. If you did not know you were doing something wrong, be thankful your errors were noted before someone got hurt. If you simply forgot or got a little careless, be grateful that someone cares enough to get you back on track. If you see someone doing something unsafe, speak up, but do so diplomatically. Treat others just as you would like to be treated in the same situation. Remember, attitude affects behavior. If you have a positive attitude, odds are you will exhibit safe behavior.

## ARE YOU OPTIMISTIC OR PESSIMISTIC?

Are you a glass half full or glass half empty kind of person.



1. Do you expect the best or worst outcome?
2. Does your outlook affect your motivation?
3. Do you have trust and faith in people?
4. Do you expect the best?
5. If something can go wrong for you, will it?
6. Do good things happen to you?

To see your results, check out <http://www.seemypersonality.com/personality.asp?p=Optimism-Test#q1>

## BEING MENTALLY PREPARED FOR EMERGENCIES



Would you know what to do if an emergency occurred while you were on the job? Do you know what actions to take if a co-worker was seriously injured, a fire ignited, or a structure collapsed? *Are you prepared to react?*

Emergencies and disasters are a reality of everyday life. Local and international news programs document such occurrences every day throughout the world. Too many lives are lost and property is damaged because no one was prepared to properly react when immediate decisions and actions counted.

A good start in learning how to respond to an emergency is through certification in Basic First Aid and CPR (Cardio Pulmonary Resuscitation). These courses teach important skills. But even more important than the first aid skills gained, they teach *how to respond* to an emergency. Programs offered by organizations such as the highly respected American Red Cross teach people about the kind of situations or conditions that might precipitate an emergency. Knowing what to look for and how to react could save the life of a co-worker or family member.

Your District has an Emergency and Disaster Preparedness Plan. Review it periodically, and be aware of what steps to follow when calling for emergency help. Know the course of action to take in likely emergencies at your facility. This will improve your safety awareness in everything you do.

Safety awareness may be gained through regular safety meetings, safety training or your own personal interest in safety & health. This awareness will increase your ability to respond if, some day in the future, you are a bystander in an emergency. This is particularly important if you work in a hazardous industry. You should be able to answer the following:

- How and who do you notify in an emergency?
- Are you prepared to react responsibly?
- Should you stay with the injured person or run for help?
- If you are not First Aid certified, do you know who in your crew or the company is?
- Does the emergency scene need to be secured?
- Do you know the chain of command? Who's in charge during an emergency?

You come to work everyday prepared for the task at hand and knowledgeable on how to handle problems in the classroom, office, or shop.. Being mentally aware is also your best preparation for a potential emergency. Analyze beforehand what to do if one of your co-workers or students is injured, and if that injury is life threatening. Chances are, during a crisis, you won't have much time to plan the best possible action-so make those decisions ahead of time. When an emergency does occur, it is your responsibility to be mentally ready.

### DRIVING IN FOG

Fog can be thought of as a cloud at ground level and forms when the temperature drops to the dew point-

invisible water vapor in the air condenses to form suspended water droplets. Fog can reduce visibility to 1/4 mile or less, creating hazardous driving conditions. If you can't postpone your trip until dense fog lifts-usually by late morning or the afternoon-follow these tips:

- Drive with lights on low beam. High beams will only be reflected back off the fog and actually impair visibility.
- Reduce your speed-and watch your speedometer. Fog creates a visual illusion of slow motion when you may actually be speeding.
- Listen for traffic you cannot see. Open your window a little, to hear better.
- Use wipers and defrosters as necessary for maximum visibility.
- Use the right edge of the road or painted road markings as a guide.
- Be patient. Do not pass lines of traffic.

### DEALING WITH MONEY STRESS

Did you overspend during the holidays? It seems like there's no shortage of stressors to contribute to the already-stressful daily lives that many are living. One thing that makes large-scale stressors like money especially difficult for many, and something that distinguishes them from the smaller-scale stressors of annoying colleagues, bickering kids or a too-busy to-do list, is that many people feel that they have little control. We can't control our circumstances as much as we can control our responses to them. No stress reduction program includes a formula to make the situation go away, or provide seeds to plant a money tree. These techniques can help you get through stress you may be feeling and build your overall resilience toward stress.

**Breathing Exercises:** Focusing on the sound and rhythm of your breath, especially when you're upset, can have a calming effect and help you stay grounded in the present moment.



**Mindfulness Exercises.** The practice of mindfulness can bring many benefits to your emotional and physical health, as well as to the relationships in your life. Mindfulness is a tool for stress management and overall wellness because it can be used at virtually any time and can quickly bring results.

**Meditation** brings many benefits in its own right, and has been one of the most popular and traditional ways to achieve mindfulness for centuries.

**Listen to Music.** Music has many benefits. You can play soothing new-age music, classical music, or whatever your favorite genre includes.

**Clean House** This has a literal meaning (cleaning up your actual house) as well as a figurative one ( letting go of things that no longer serve you), and both can be great stress relievers! Because clutter has several hidden costs and can be a subtle but significant stressor, cleaning house and de-cluttering as a mindfulness exercise can bring lasting benefits.



**Observe Your Thoughts:** Observing your thoughts might be a benefit. Rather than working against the voice in your head, sit back and "observe" your thoughts. As you observe them, you might find your mind quieting, and the thoughts becoming less stressful.