

Safety Newsletter

A quarterly publication for injury and illness prevention

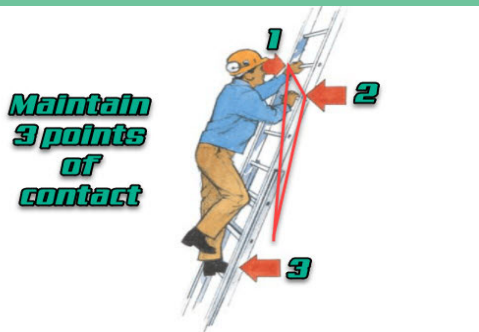
Spring 2024

Portable Ladder Safety

Falls from portable ladders (step straight, combination and extension) are one of the leading cause of occupational fatalities and injuries.



- **Read** and follow all labels/markings on the ladder.
- **Avoid** electrical hazards! - Look for overhead power lines before handling a ladder. Avoid using a metal ladder near power lines or exposed energized electrical equipment.
- **Always** inspect the ladder prior to using it. If the ladder is damaged, it must be removed from service and tagged until repaired or discarded.
- **Always** maintain a 3-point (two hands and a foot, or two feet and a hand) contact on the ladder when climbing (*see diagram*).



- **Ladders** must be free of any slippery material on the rungs, steps or feet.
- **Do not** use the top step/rung of a ladder as a step/rung unless it was designed for that purpose.

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Safety Moment Ideas



Creating a safe workplace for your employees is essential. Not only are there legal and moral obligations to do so, but when you have a safe workplace, you are less likely to have absenteeism and more likely to have higher productivity.

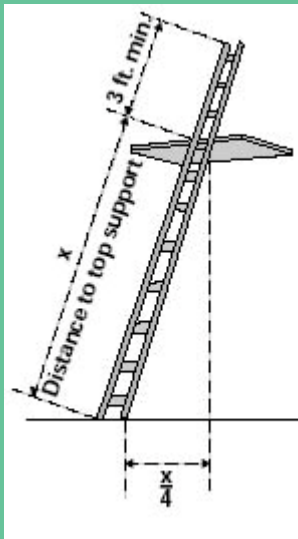
Here are some safety moment ideas that you can deliver in your workplace in 2024:

- ✓ **Lifting Heavy Objects**
Many workplace injuries happen when employees lift heavy objects incorrectly. Employees need to understand they must always be careful when lifting heavy objects in the workplace, taking care to use correct posture to avoid back and joint injuries:
 - Always bend your knees and keep your back straight
 - Hold objects you are lifting close to your body
- ✓ **Situational Awareness**
Situational awareness is an extremely important skill for employees to have in the workplace. This means staying focused on the work that is being done while simultaneously being aware of what is happening in your surroundings.
- ✓ **Slips, Trips and Falls**
Slips, trips and falls are extremely common causes of workplace injuries. The most common are:
 - Wet and slippery floor/ground surfaces

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Portable Ladder Safety (continued)

- **Do not** use a self-supporting ladder (e.g., step ladder) as a single ladder or in a partially closed position.
- **Use a ladder only** on a stable and level surface, unless it has been secured (top or bottom) to prevent displacement.
- **Do not** place a ladder on boxes, barrels or other unstable bases to obtain additional height.
- **Do not** move or shift a ladder while a person or equipment is on the ladder.
- **An extension** or straight ladder used to access an elevated surface must extend at least 3 feet above the point of support (see diagram). Do not stand on the three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder.
- **The proper angle** for setting a ladder is to place its base a quarter of the working length of the ladder from the wall or other vertical surface (see diagram).
- **A ladder placed** in any location where it can be displaced by other work activities must be secured to prevent displacement or a barricade must be erected to keep traffic away from the ladder.
- **Be sure** that all locks on an extension ladder are properly engaged.
- **Do not** exceed the maximum load rating of a ladder. Be aware of the ladder's load rating and of the weight it is supporting, including the weight of any tools or equipment.



** The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.*

Safety Moment Ideas (continued)

- Unstable walkways
 - Tripping hazards being left in thoroughfares.
- ✓ **Ergonomics**
There are many ergonomic risk factors in the workplace that can lead to both long-lasting and acute injuries. It is important that employees understand these risks so that they can avoid them.
- What sorts of repetitive tasks can cause issues?
 - How to avoid overexertion
 - Why they should avoid sustained awkward postures
 - How to adjust their office furniture to reduce risk?
 - The importance of regular breaks
 - What stretches/exercises they can do to combat sitting for too long.
- ✓ **Wearing Appropriate Clothing**
It is important that all employees wear clothing that is suitable and appropriate for the tasks they are undertaking. This includes:
- Avoiding loose clothing that has the potential to be caught in machinery
 - Always wearing appropriate safety gear for the task (e.g.: goggles, gloves, helmets, boots, hi-vis vests).
 - For outside workers, dress for the conditions (e.g.: wet weather gear, warm clothing when cold).
- ✓ **Awareness of Emergency Exits and Routes**
It is important to take time to remind employees about where emergency exits are located and to familiarize themselves with any escape routes in advance of an actual emergency occurring. This way, they can be prepared to evacuate should a critical situation unfold.
- ✓ **Working with Hazardous Materials**
Working with hazardous materials can be extremely dangerous and potentially lethal. Employees must understand proper handling, storage, and disposal procedures. It is crucial to know:
- The importance of using personal protective equipment, such as gloves and goggles
 - The importance of being familiar with material safety data sheets
- ✓ **Avoiding Eye Strain**
Eye strain can occur in the workplace as a result of prolonged screen use or poor lighting, leading to discomfort and fatigue. It is important for employees to:
- Recognize symptoms like headaches and dry eyes
 - Take regular breaks
 - Use proper lighting
 - How to use the 20-20-20 rule (looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds every 20 minutes to reduce eye strain)

Safety Tips for School Bus Drivers



Ergonomics:

- Adjust your seat to fit your needs.
- Avoid twisting when getting into and out of the seat.
- Ask for help when lifting students and assisting them with their belongings.
- Stand and do gentle stretches when possible.

Slip and Fall Hazards

- Keep aisles and exits free of backpacks, baggage, equipment, and people.
- Use handrails when entering and exiting the bus. Make sure handrails are in good condition.
- Wear shoes with non-skid soles.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Be alert especially when getting on and off the bus.

Infectious Disease

- Wash your hands as frequently as possible.
- Stay home if you are sick.
- If you come into contact with blood or other bodily fluids:
 - Wear disposable gloves;
 - Wash your hands with soap and water; and
 - Disinfect any equipment or work areas that are affected.

7 Simple Ways to Get Outside More Often

Employees often feel they do not have time to get fresh air during the work day, but there are easy ways to get outside to recharge.



Many of us tend to move through the workday on autopilot, rarely going outside, and some days we do not go outside at all. There are studies that link time spent outdoors with happiness and overall well-being.

If something as simple as getting outside can help, it is worth considering – especially with the knowledge that it is healthier to be outside anyway.

How To Make It Happen

1. **Schedule a solo walk, or plan to go with a colleague.** Try to get out once a day, even if for a few minutes.
2. **Take phone calls outside.** Do this whenever possible, for both personal and work-related calls.
3. **Move small meetings to outdoor seating areas, such as picnic tables.** This relaxes the tone of the meeting and brightens the mood.
4. **Eat outside.** If you have days without lunch duties or meetings, take your meal outside. Encourage others to join you.
5. **Try walking meetings.** They work surprisingly well both one-on-one and in small groups.
6. **Bring work outside.** This is helpful if you need to be less accessible for a while and also allows you to reap the stress-reducing, creativity-boosting benefits.
7. **Just take a short break.** Bring a book, or clear your mind with a quiet meditation. Keep in mind that taking breaks helps us to focus on our work.

So, in the hustle of your workdays, try stepping outside.