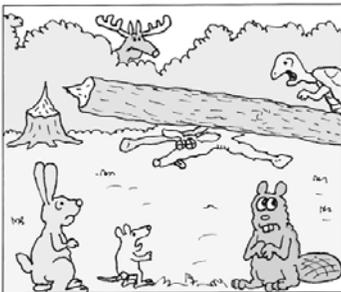


news & notes

INCIDENT RESPONSE

If you are on the scene of an accident:

- ⇒ **First, help the injured.** Call for emergency medical assistance if necessary.
- ⇒ **Second, deal with immediate safety and health hazards.** Turn off, clean up, block, or otherwise act to stop the problem (for example, leak, release of airborne contaminants, electric shock, etc.).
- ⇒ **Report the incident** to your supervisor right away. Report an incident even if nobody is hurt or nothing is damaged.
- ⇒ **Help secure the area** so that no valuable evidence is lost. Don't touch anything or disturb the area. Put yellow tape or other barriers around the scene so that no one except investigators can enter the area. Investigators need to see the accident scene exactly as it was at the time of the accident in order to figure out what happened and why.
- ⇒ **Write down everything you can remember about the incident** while it is fresh in your mind. You think you'll remember, but you probably won't. Every hour that passes, valuable information could be lost. Include the what, where, when, who, and why of the incident, exactly as you saw it.
- ⇒ **Don't talk to co-workers about the incident** until you talk to the investigators. Other impressions of the incident could cloud your memory or cause you to doubt what you saw.



"Oh my gosh! Does anyone know what happened?"



OMAO Monthly Safety Newsletter

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Incident Investigation

Do your part

One of the best ways to prevent tomorrow's accident is to investigate the causes of today's accident. In some ways, a good incident investigation is like a crime scene investigation—only we're not trying to blame anyone.

We are trying to get in, check the scene, and assemble evidence before anything is moved or changes. We also need to interview witnesses while the experience is fresh in their minds. And then we piece all this information together to try to understand why the incident happened so that we can make sure something like this doesn't happen again.

You play a very important role in this process. Here's what you can do to help:

- **Report all incidents and near misses right away.** Even if nobody was hurt, your supervisor needs to know what happened so steps can be taken to prevent future problems.
- **If you witness an incident, remember what happens.** Write down what you see—what, where, when, who, and why—as soon as possible.
- **Don't disturb the accident scene.** You may destroy valuable evidence that investigators need to figure out exactly how the accident happened.
- **Provide information you have.** Come forward right away with what you know. Your cooperation is essential to the investigation's success.
- **Offer your expertise to the investigation.** If you have special knowledge about the equipment or procedures involved, the circumstances surrounding the accident, etc., tell what you know and offer your suggestions.
- **Encourage co-workers to cooperate.** Remind them that the purpose of investigations is to prevent future incidents—incidents that could involve them.
- **Join with co-workers to implement corrective measures.** Follow any new safety rules that result from an investigation.

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CHEMICAL SAFETY

DO:

- Read the label and the MSDS before starting a job and follow instructions.
- Use protective equipment and clothing.
- Use approved and labeled containers for storing and transporting chemicals.
- Follow instructions when removing chemicals from containers, and only remove as much as you need.
- Make sure there's enough ventilation.
- Keep flammable liquids away from ignition sources.
- Store chemicals properly, keeping chemicals that may react with other chemicals apart.
- Check containers frequently to ensure they're tightly sealed and aren't leaking.
- Wash carefully after using any chemical, and dispose of contaminated clothing and equipment properly.
- Know who to contact and what to do in an emergency involving chemical exposure.

DON'T:

- Leave chemical containers open when not in use.
- Depend on a bad smell to warn you of hazardous vapors—some chemicals are odorless.
- Mix a chemical with another substance—even water—unless you've been told to do so and have checked the MSDS.
- Breathe chemical vapors. Wear a respirator, if necessary.
- Smoke, eat, drink, or apply cosmetics around chemicals.
- Wear contact lenses if chemical vapors may be present.
- Pour chemicals down the sink. Dispose of them according to instructions.
- Hesitate to ask your supervisor if you are unsure of any hazard or procedure.

SOLVENT SAFETY: TRUE OR FALSE?

QUESTION: If you wear gloves when using solvents, you don't need to wash your hands when you are finished with the job.

ANSWER: False. Always wash thoroughly with soap and water after using solvents.

QUESTION: Most solvents can be poured down the drain.

ANSWER: False. Many require special disposal procedures. Check the MSDS.

Handle with Care!

How to minimize explosion risks

Many common substances have explosive properties. Material safety data sheets (MSDSs) reveal two key indicators of a chemical's explosion risk:

- **Flash point** is the minimum temperature at which a flammable liquid can give off enough vapors to ignite. When it gets near that temperature, start worrying about an explosion.
- **Flammability limits** are the safe minimum and maximum amounts of vapor or gas in the air. A liquid that's below the lower limit or above the upper one is not likely to catch fire or explode. However, flammability limits can change as can explosion risks. If the pressure or temperature rises, the possibility of an explosion does, too.

The MSDS will also tell you if a substance could explode if mixed or stored with another substance or if it's exposed to heat, air, or water. To prevent explosions, in addition to reading the MSDS, be sure to:

- Keep potentially explosive chemicals away from heat sources.
- Check that ventilation equipment works properly.
- Keep your work area clean and clean up spills promptly.
- Use properly grounded containers for transferring flammables.
- Keep reactive chemicals away from one another.

Hazard Warning

How toxic chemicals get into your body

Almost all chemicals in the workplace are toxic to some extent. Even common substances like solvents and cleaning products may be hazardous to your health. There are three routes that chemicals take to enter your body:

- 1. Skin or eyes.** Chemicals can cause burns, rashes, or allergies if they contact your skin. Some chemicals can pass through your skin into your bloodstream and poison you. If they get in your eyes, they can cause vision problems or even blindness.
- 2. Nose or mouth.** Breathing in hazardous chemical vapors, fumes, or dust can cause dizziness, nausea, or headaches. It could also damage your throat and respiratory system, including your lungs. In some cases, inhalation can lead to unconsciousness, asphyxiation, and death.
- 3. Mouth.** If you eat, drink, or smoke after handling chemicals without washing first there's a risk that poisons can get into your system and cause damage to your internal organs.

Always protect your body by wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), such as eye protection, gloves, and protective clothing to cover your skin. PPE provides a barrier between toxic chemicals and your body. Also be sure to read the health warnings on the container label and in the material safety data sheet (MSDS).

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WANT A SAFE PLACE TO WORK?

If you want a safe place to work, then do your share to make sure that this *is* a safe place to work. In the end, safety on the job isn't about government regulations or safety rules and procedures created and enforced by management.

Workplace safety is about each one of us working safely every day. Without your help and cooperation, this facility can't and won't be a safe place to work.

So make safety a top priority. Come to work determined to keep safe and prevent accidents, and think safety all day while you work. As Mark Twain said: "It's better to be careful one hundred times than to get killed once."

HOW TO PREVENT INJURIES

April is Prevent Injuries America Month. Of course, every month should be dedicated to preventing injuries on the job and at home. Here's how:

1. Follow safety rules on the job and apply the same rules when working around the house.
2. Use PPE, such as safety glasses, gloves, and hearing protection, when necessary at work and at home.
3. When you see a co-worker or family member doing something unsafe, speak up. Tell them you're concerned about their safety, and encourage them to take the proper precautions.
4. Read labels on products before using them at work and at home. At work supplement the information you get from the label by consulting the MSDS.

SECURE FOR SEA

By HMC (SW) James Misa
Naval Safety Center

STOP! Take a quick look around your spaces, do you see anything out of place? What about the two, 50-pound oxygen bottles in the general workshop tied down with string or the cleaning gear buckets next to the deep sink. Are those paint cans in the angle iron? Are your storage lockers bolted down? Is that swab supposed to be in the escape trunk? Don't worry. There is no real reason to secure for sea. The ship never rocks enough to topple that heavy tool locker and, you can pick gear adrift later, right? Wrong! As you walk around and through your spaces, ask yourself, "Are we ready for sea? Your life may depend on it."

Who Repeats Accidents?

Common traits of the accident prone

Last month a worker at the ABC Company crashed his forklift into a pillar. Thankfully, he was unhurt. This month, the same worker hit a stack of pallets, but this time a co-worker nearby was hit by the falling pallets and ended up with a broken collarbone.

One accident is bad enough. It's even worse when the same incident happens again. Unfortunately, however, repeat accidents do happen and often to the same people. Here are some traits that are common to people who repeat accidents:

- ☞ **Stoic "tough guys"** who work through any injury and consider it a sign of weakness to do otherwise
- ☞ **Workaholics** who won't stop to report for fear of losing work time
- ☞ **Angry people** who let passion distract them from working safely because they're "just so angry they can't see straight"
- ☞ **Shy workers** who won't draw attention to themselves by reporting an incident and risking an investigation of their work
- ☞ **Disengaged workers** who don't care enough to be careful
- ☞ **Tired people**, including shift workers, whose lifestyle doesn't give them enough energy or alertness to work safely

If you have any of these traits, work to change them so you can avoid accidents.

Power Pop Quiz

Test your knowledge of electrical safety

It's important to know how to avoid electrical shocks and burns or electrocution. So test your electrical safety knowledge with this short quiz.

1. The human body is a very poor conductor of electricity. **T F**
2. If you are standing on a wet floor when you touch a piece of electrical equipment, you are more likely to get a shock than if you were standing on a dry floor. **T F**
3. Any experienced person is qualified to repair or perform maintenance on electrical equipment. **T F**
4. If an electrical cord is worn or damaged so that you can see wire showing through the insulation, you should wrap some tape around it. **T F**
5. Never contact anything electrical with anything metal. **T F**
6. Use ground fault circuit interrupters (GFCIs) in all wet locations. **T F**

Answers:

- (1) False. The body is a good conductor, which increases your chances of getting an electrical shock.
- (2) True. (3) False. Only specially trained, qualified, and authorized personnel may repair or maintain electrical equipment in this facility.
- (4) False. Report any worn or damaged wiring right away and don't use the equipment until it is fixed. (5) True. (6) True.

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ARE YOU A DROWSY DRIVER?

Research shows that inattention and other mental lapses contribute to as many as 50 percent of all motor vehicle crashes. While fatigue may not be involved in all these crashes, it contributes to many of them.

When you drive tired, you're at much greater risk of having an accident. Being tired behind the wheel affects you:

- ⌚ **Reflexes**, slowing your reaction time
- ⌚ **Judgment**, making it more likely that you'll make mistakes and take risks
- ⌚ **Concentration**, allowing your mind to wander and increasing the chances of being distracted
- ⌚ **Alertness**, increasing the chance that you'll miss important traffic cues
- ⌚ **Mood**, putting you in a bad mood and leaving you unmotivated

A Sleep in America poll shows that drowsy driving is more prevalent among males than females (59 percent vs. 47 percent), especially males aged 18-29. The poll also indicates that drivers with children living at home report driving drowsy more often (60 percent) than those without (48 percent).

REPORT NEAR MISSES

When you have a close call, you may think, "Boy, I was lucky!" and then go back to work. But you need to report every near miss, even if nobody got hurt and there was no damage to equipment or materials.

Why? Because the safety problem that caused your near miss might cause somebody else's accident if it isn't corrected.

Falls Can Be Deadly

Take precautions to protect yourself

Falls account for 1 in 10 workplace deaths each year and cause over 30,000 disabling injuries, plus thousands more lesser injuries, such as strains, sprains, and fractures. Falls are also the major cause of deadly accidents at home. Here are the three basic ways you can fall:

1. Slip and lose your balance
2. Trip over something on the floor
3. Fall from a position on which you are being supported above the floor or ground—for example, from a ladder or scaffold

Protect yourself from these hazards by:

- ➔ Wearing proper shoes
- ➔ Staying alert—look where you're going, notice what's around you, and eliminate unsafe conditions if you can and report them if you can't
- ➔ Walking, not running, and being more careful when you're tired
- ➔ Keeping walkways and stairs clear and cleaning up spills promptly
- ➔ Being extra careful when working on ladders

If you do fall, remember to (1) bend your elbows and knees so your legs and arms absorb the fall, (2) roll with the fall, (3) defend vital areas—protect your head by tucking it into either collarbone, (4) use the insides of your forearms along with your hands to break the fall, and (5) yell and exhale as you fall.

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Alcohol at Work

Working under the influence is dangerous

Alcohol abuse not only affects a person's health but also has an extremely negative impact on job performance. Alcohol abuse negatively affects:

- ◆ Concentration
- ◆ Thinking ability
- ◆ Judgment
- ◆ Coordination
- ◆ Mood
- ◆ Reflexes and reaction times
- ◆ Decision-making ability

Alcohol abusers are often less productive and have more absences than other employees. They can also be dangerous. Working under the influence of drugs increases the chances of:

- ◆ Mistakes
- ◆ Unreliable or erratic performance
- ◆ Reckless or violent behavior
- ◆ Accidents

A co-worker under the influence could, for example:

- ◆ Fail to recognize or report a safety hazard
- ◆ Skip an important step in a safety procedure
- ◆ Injure you and other employees through carelessness or inattention

What's more, people working under the influence of drugs may not realize that they are impaired, which makes them even more dangerous. **April is National Alcohol Awareness Month.** Let's recognize this serious workplace safety hazard and commit to preventing substance abuse at work—or anywhere.