

## news & notes

### HOME SECURITY WHEN YOU'RE AWAY

When you go away on vacation, you want to be sure that you don't come home to an unpleasant surprise like a break-in or a home destroyed by fire. Before you leave:

- 🔒 **Lock all doors and windows.** All it takes is one unlatched window or door.
- 🔒 **Check the kitchen.** Turn off the stove and unplug appliances.
- 🔒 **Unplug TVs and turn off computers.**
- 🔒 **Shut off your water heater.**
- 🔒 **Put flammables (like gasoline for your mower) outside,** as far as possible from your house and neighboring homes.
- 🔒 **Don't hide keys outside.** If you normally do, take them with you.
- 🔒 **Ask a neighbor to pick up your mail** and check the house every few days.
- 🔒 **Stop newspaper deliveries.**
- 🔒 **Leave curtains and shades in normal positions,** and use a timer to turn lights on and off.
- 🔒 **Cut your lawn,** and arrange to have it cut again if you're away on a long vacation.
- 🔒 **Leave your second vehicle parked in the driveway** if you have one.

### KEEP SAFE IN THE SUN

- ☀️ **Use sunscreen rated SPF 15 or higher** (higher ratings offer more protection).
- ☀️ **Wear a hat** and sunglasses.
- ☀️ **Stay out of the sun** during the hottest part of the day (11 a.m. to 3 p.m.), if possible.

Also remember that sun intensifies when it reflects off sand, water, and concrete. And that you can get burned even in overcast or foggy conditions.



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## Back to Basics

### Three steps to safe lifting and carrying

Here's the latest back injury bulletin:

- 📄 Nearly 1,000 American workers injure their backs on the job every day—and many more get hurt off the job.
- 📄 The majority of injuries involve improper lifting, carrying, or unloading.
- 📄 The chances of injuring your back increase if you're out of shape and have weak abdominal muscles.
- 📄 Once you've hurt your back, you're much more likely to injure it again.

You can avoid appearing in the next bulletin by following these basic steps:

#### STEP I — To safely lift an object:

1. **Plan your lift.** Check to make sure you can handle the weight. If not, divide the load into smaller, lighter parts, ask for help, or use a material handling device, such as a handtruck or dolly. Check your route, too, to make sure there are no obstructions in your path.
2. **Stand close to the load** with your feet spread shoulder width apart, with one foot slightly in front of the other for balance.
3. **Squat down,** bending at the knees—not at your waist. Tuck your chin while keeping your back as straight as possible.
4. **Get a firm grasp** of the object before beginning to lift.
5. **Slowly begin lifting with your legs** by straightening them. Let your leg muscles—not your back muscles—do the work. Never twist your body.

#### STEP II — To safely carry an object:

1. **Keep the object as close to your body as possible.** As the load's center of gravity moves away from your body, there's a dramatic increase in stress to your lower back.
2. **Make sure you can see** over the load.
3. **Move slowly,** taking small steps.
4. **To turn, move your feet** in the direction of travel, don't twist your body.

#### STEP III — To safely unload an object:

1. **Bend your knees** and lower your body with the load.
2. **Keep your back straight** and let your leg muscles bear the weight.
3. **Keep your fingers away from the bottom** of the load as you place it down.
4. **If you're placing a load on an elevated surface, lower it to the edge,** then slide it back.

## news & notes

### **OSHA Adds APFs to Respiratory Protection Standard - 08/23/2006**

Three years after the agency unveiled the proposed rule in the Federal Register – and after some heated public discussions – OSHA is incorporating assigned protection factors (APFs) for respiratory programs into its respiratory protection standard. OSHA will publish its final respiratory standard on APFs in the Aug. 24 Federal Register.

This APF final rule completes the revision of the reserve sections of OSHA's respiratory protection standard as published in 1998. The respiratory protection standard now will contain provisions necessary for a comprehensive respiratory protection program, including selection and use of respirators, training, medical evaluation and fit testing.

APFs are numbers that indicate the level of workplace respiratory protection that a respirator or class of respirators is expected to provide to employees when used as part of an effective respiratory protection program.

Employers select respirators by comparing the exposure level found in the workplace and the maximum concentration of the contaminant in which a particular type of respirator can be used (the maximum use concentration, or MUC). Employers generally determine the MUC by multiplying the respirator's APF by the contaminant's exposure limit. If the workplace level of the contaminant is expected to exceed the respirator's MUC, the employer must choose a respirator with a higher APF.

OSHA mandates employers follow these new requirements and use APFs to select the appropriate type of respirator based upon the exposure limit of a contaminant and the level of the contaminant in the workplace.

An APF table guiding employers in the selection of air-purifying, powered air-purifying, supplied-air (or airline respirator) and self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) respirators is included in the standard. OSHA Administrator Edwin Foulke said the standard will help "employers and employees select the right respirator for the job."

"And with the right respirator, employees will have adequate protection to be safe and healthy at work," Foulke said.

Continue on Page 3

# Is Work Making You Fat?

## Survey says workers are piling on pounds

A recent work and health survey by CareerBuilder.com reports that 47 percent of workers polled say that they've gained weight since starting their present job. "It comes as no surprise that with today's tighter schedules come tighter waistbands," observes CareerBuilder VP Rosemary Haefner. "Who has time to cook healthy meals and exercise regularly?"

If you're one of those whose waistband has been expanding lately, Haefner offers these fat-busting tips:

- Brown-bag lunch instead of buying out. Bringing food from home makes it easier to control choices and portions. It's a lot cheaper, too!
- Avoid vending machines and their typically high-calorie, low-nutrition contents. Bring your own healthy snacks to work.
- Keep a bottle of water next to you and sip throughout the workday. It'll keep you hydrated and make you feel full without the calories.
- Get in a lunchtime workout, even if it's only a walk around the building.

**Another strategy:** Cut out just one or two high-calorie items from your daily diet. Remember, you only have to cut 3,500 calories out of your weekly diet (just 500 calories a day) to lose a pound. For example, forgoing those morning donuts or the lunchtime double cheeseburger could do the trick.

# The One That Gets You

## Don't overlook hazards

The accident that gets you may be the one you least expected. For example, consider the following true incident:

*A worker ended up in the hospital with his eyelids glued shut and burning pain in his eyes after he tried to dispense some glue from a tube with a clogged applicator. The accident took place at the end of the worker's shift. He worked with lasers and had just shut down his equipment and taken off his laser eye protection. He only had this one little job to finish up before heading home. Unfortunately, he neglected to put on safety glasses before dispensing the glue.*

Who would have guessed that an accident like this could have happened? But it did, and it serves as a reminder that you can never be too careful. Here was a guy who worked with highly hazardous equipment. He was a safe and conscientious worker and always used eye protection when operating the laser. But while his attention was focused on the big hazard, it was the little hazard that got him—the one he probably never gave a second thought to. He'd always used the glue before without incident.

What little safety hazards are you missing? Could it be the one that gets you?

## news & notes

### Continued from Page 2

Standard Gives Filtering Facepieces an APF of 10

The revised standard assigns an APF of 5 to quarter-masks (the lowest APF), 10 to half-mask air-purifying respirators (including filtering facepieces) and 10,000 to self-contained breathing apparatus helmets or hoods in certain modes (the highest APF).

While there appeared to be rough consensus on most of the APFs, the agency's decision to give the popular filtering facepieces an APF of 10 is sure to anger labor groups and other stakeholders who argued the APF is too high and will endanger workers. On the other hand, respirator manufacturers and NIOSH were among those who generally supported the APF of 10 for filtering facepieces.

- Katherine Torres, Occupational Hazards, Penton Media, Inc

### DRIVERS, TAKE NOTE!

According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, crashes involving large trucks are 10 times more likely to be caused by either the truck driver or the drivers of other vehicles rather than factors like weather, road conditions, and vehicle performance. So drive safely!

### BREATHE EASY WITH THE RIGHT CARTRIDGE OR CANISTER

Cartridges and canisters have color-coded labels to identify the respiratory hazard(s) they provide protection from. For example:

- Acid gas (e.g., sulfuric acid)—white
- Acid gas and organic vapor—yellow
- Acid, ammonia, and organic vapors—brown
- Acid gas, ammonia, carbon monoxide, and organic vapors—red
- Ammonia—green
- Carbon monoxide gas—blue
- Chlorine—white and yellow
- Dust, fumes, and mists (non-radioactive)—orange
- Organic vapor—black
- Other vapors and gases—olive

Check with your supervisor if you have any questions about respirators, including how to get a proper fit or which cartridge or canister to use.

# Continuous Improvement

## Never get complacent about safety

To keep everybody safe on the job, we have to keep improving our safety performance. Here's how you can help:

- **Set daily safety awareness targets.** For example, one day focus on PPE, one day on work area inspection, etc. Without neglecting your overall safety performance, examine each day's target for ways to make it safer.
- **Focus on the positive.** Make safety about what you DO, such as wearing required PPE and following required work procedures, rather than about what you DON'T DO, such as not having an injury or nearly missing an accident.
- **Set personal goals** that support departmental and organizational safety goals.
- **Revise goals** when regulations change, when new technology changes the way you work, or when new equipment or procedures are introduced.
- **Talk safety to co-workers every day** to keep everyone thinking about workplace safety and health as a daily concern, not just something to talk about at safety meetings.
- **Share your experiences with co-workers**, especially new and younger employees. Your stories could help co-workers learn safe work practices and avoid mistakes.
- **Serve on safety teams.** Be an active participant in the improvement process, and volunteer for teams that strive to make work safer.

# The MSDS and Safety

## Important questions, important answers

Material safety data sheets (MSDSs) provide you with complete safety and health information about hazardous chemicals in the workplace. It is essential to consult the MSDS because it answers some very important questions. For example:

- Are there physical hazards associated with this chemical? Can it burn, explode, or react with other chemicals?
- What are the health hazards? Is it toxic? Will it cause irritation, burning, or any other damage to the skin or eyes on contact? Can it kill you?
- How does this chemical get into your system? Through your skin? Through inhalation?
- What type of personal protective equipment (PPE) is required?
- What are the safe handling procedures?
- What should you do in the event of a spill or leak?
- How should you dispose of this chemical?
- What are the signs and symptoms of overexposure?
- What emergency and first-aid procedures should you be prepared to use?
- What protective measures do you take when handling or storing the chemical?

If you still have any questions about this substance after reading the MSDS, or if there's any information in the MSDS that you don't understand, talk to your supervisor before you work with the chemical.

## news & notes

### **DON'T FALL FOR SLIPS AND TRIPS**

Slip, trip, and fall hazards are common on the job. They include:

- ⇒ Spills and wet floors
- ⇒ Inadequate lighting
- ⇒ Clutter
- ⇒ Open drawers
- ⇒ Flooring problems
- ⇒ Failure to keep work areas neat
- ⇒ Not watching where you're going
- ⇒ Running or walking too fast
- ⇒ Failure to use handrails on stairs
- ⇒ Lack of caution on stairs and ladders
- ⇒ Wearing inappropriate shoes

Take steps to eliminate these hazards in your work area, and step carefully in areas where hazards can't be eliminated.

### **HOW GERMY IS YOUR WORKSTATION?**

The average workstation has 400 times more germs than a toilet seat, according to office product manufacturer Grand & Toy. Office desk items like keyboards, computer mice, and telephones as well as tools and other workstation items can carry a lot of germs and bacteria.

Fortunately, you can take steps to reduce the risk of getting sick. For example, use disinfectant regularly to clean work surfaces and equipment. Use a hand sanitizer to clean your hands before eating or drinking.

#### **NOTE:**

If you do use a hand sanitizer, make sure it contains at least 60 percent ethanol (alcohol). A recent study reveals that sanitizers with lower concentrations of ethanol are ineffective.

# Don't Gamble with Safety

## It's too great a risk for you and others

Sometimes even the most conscientious among us yield to the temptation of taking risks. For example, someone might:

- ☒ Fail to get first aid because "it's only a scratch"
- ☒ Fail to wear safety glasses because "this will only take a minute"
- ☒ Carry too tall or heavy a load because "it's easier than making a second trip"
- ☒ Reach too close to a moving machine part because "it'll be OK just this once"
- ☒ Walk around a spill without cleaning it up or reporting it because "somebody else will take care of it"
- ☒ Push their luck by repeatedly taking a risky shortcut because "nothing bad has happened yet"

But this kind of unsafe behavior leads to accidents. As all gamblers eventually realize, sooner or later your luck turns. And when it does, that's when you:

- ✚ Develop an infection from that scratch you failed to treat
- ✚ Catch a flying particle in the eye because you didn't wear your safety glasses
- ✚ Injure your back by trying to handle too heavy a load
- ✚ Cause a co-worker to slip and fall because you didn't clean up the spill
- ✚ Suffer a severe injury because of that risky shortcut you've been taking

If you want to gamble, buy a lottery ticket or go to a casino. Gambling with safety on the job won't make you rich, it'll just get you hurt.

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## Safety Road Map

### What's your safety destination?

Our safety goal is a workplace in which everyone thinks safety in everything they do. Help us reach our destination by realizing these safety truths:

- ☞ Your safety is important.
- ☞ Your co-workers' safety is important.
- ☞ Both your own and your co-workers' safety is your responsibility because what you do affects everyone around you.
- ☞ Safety in your work space is your responsibility because you know your job better than anyone.

Focus on our safety destination by performing safe acts every day, such as:

- ☞ Attending safety meetings, paying attention, and asking questions
- ☞ Attending safety training sessions and applying what you learn to your job
- ☞ Using personal protective equipment (PPE) when required and inspecting it before each use
- ☞ Performing hazard assessments for every job you perform
- ☞ Following established work procedures
- ☞ Operating equipment safely
- ☞ Reporting safety problems to your supervisor right away

Put yourself in the driver's seat, and remember that each one of us is responsible for driving our organization on the road to safety.