

April 2022

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Eye Protection

Eye Protection

How many times have you said or heard -- "He should have worn his safety glasses." or "If I had been wearing my safety glasses, I wouldn't have injured my eye."? -- Too many times!

Eye protection begins with the ability to recognize those times that eye protection is needed, and then, to seriously commit to wear the protection whenever necessary. Anytime you're working where there is the potential for flying particles eye protection is required. When using a saw, drill, pouring concrete, chipping, blasting, or handling chemicals just to name a few. Dirt, dust, rust, rock, bits of concrete, etc. are all potential dangers in construction work.

Should a member of your crew get something in their eye seek proper medical attention right away. The longer it stays in the worse it gets. Only a professional should attempt to remove a foreign body from the eye. Cover the eye lightly with a clean pad and either wait for medical help to arrive or take the employee to a doctor.

Don't forget that eye protection is also needed when using chemicals. Make sure you're using chemical goggles and a splash shield. You may need to flush the eyes should they encounter the chemical. Emergency first aid procedures are discussed in the Safety Data Sheets for the chemical. Let's wrap up what we've learned. Eyesight is precious -- and -- irreplaceable. Don't take chances with your vision -- wear eye protection!

Fall Prevention - General Statistics Related to Slips, Trips, & Falls

Fall Prevention - General Statistics Related to Slips, Trips, & Falls

Accidents involving slips, trips, and falls are responsible for causing a great number of serious injuries in the workplace, as well as being the cause of many work-related fatalities. In fact, U.S. government statistics reveal the following facts of interest:

Nearly one out of every four non-fatal workplace injuries experienced by workers each year are the result of slips, trips, and falls.

Accidents involving slips, trips, and falls are always one of the leading causes of workplace fatalities each year, usually ranking behind only motor vehicle accidents.

Falls account for approximately 40% of all fatalities experienced by construction workers and are the second leading cause of serious injuries in the construction sector. However, the raw numbers of fall-related deaths and serious injuries that occur at non-construction workplaces outnumber those occurring at construction sites.

The types of falls at work vary, with approximately 80% reported being a fall from one level to a lower level, and the other 20% being a fall to the same level.

The workers compensation costs associated with fall-related injuries typically rank higher than the average costs associated with most other types of injuries.

Annually, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, also known as OSHA, consistently issues the greatest number of citations to companies for violations of their fall protection and prevention standards, as compared to other categories of standards.

Injuries and fatalities associated with slips, trips, and falls are not restricted to just the workplace; fall-related injuries and deaths frequently occur at peoples' homes and other locations not associated with the workplace.

Injuries and fatalities caused by slips, trips, and falls in the workplace are a widespread problem. And despite the variety of factors leading up to past incidents, did you know that all those accidents had one thing in common? Not one of those people went to work that day expecting to be injured or killed in a fall.

So, it is important that we all focus our attention and efforts towards trying to prevent these types of accidents. Therefore, our upcoming series of toolbox talks will focus on safety tips and regulations we can utilize to help avoid accidents, injuries, and fatalities associated with slips, trips, and falls in the workplace.

Hearing Protection

Hearing Protection

Just the Facts:

Noise is one of the most common occupational health hazards. Construction workers may be exposed to hazardous levels of noise daily. This exposure puts them at high risk for losing their hearing and the high frequencies are the first to go.

The noise exposure that construction workers are exposed to daily requires the consistent and conscientious use of hearing protection. Sometimes workers forget or don't think their work environment is loud enough to warrant wearing hearing protection.

The Dangers:

Many workers are overexposed to noise. In time, overexposure can damage your hearing. Hearing loss prevents you from hearing other hazards on the job. It can also cause problems in your personal life:

It interferes with how you hear normal speech

It prevents you from socializing

It can cause high blood pressure

It is permanent

Identify Controls:

Hearing loss on the worksite is preventable! Noise is measured in decibels (dB). For example, a quick-cut saw produces 115 decibels; a jackhammer, 110 decibels; a drill, 100 decibels. Sound Energy doubles every time noise increases 3 decibels. Think about that. When the noise level is 80 decibels and it goes up to 83, the noise is twice as loud. Equally, when sound energy is halved, there is a 3-decibel decrease.

Without hearing protection, your safe working limit for an 8-hour day with no other noise exposure is 85 decibels. This is comparable to the loudness of a room full of people.

Where possible, the noise hazard should be eliminated or at least lowered to safe levels using engineering controls. When this is not practical, hearing protection is required. All SCS employees have access to hearing protection devices – if you are in need of hearing protection, please let your manager know and we can provide them to you.

Ladders - Fall Hazards

LADDERS - FALL HAZARDS

Falls from ladders and stairs account for more than 24,000 injuries and 36 deaths each year.

Falls are the leading cause of death in construction. Since we utilize ladders almost daily it is extremely important that we focus on making this action as safe as possible.

Inspection: Inspect your ladder before each use. Look for -

- Broken or missing rungs or steps
- Broken or split side rails
- Grease, oil, or other hazards on rungs
- Splinters or sharp points
- Secure hardware and fittings
- Foot pads - are they in place and secure?
- Damage to wheels or pulleys on extension ladders.
- Anything else that just doesn't "look right"

Tips for ladder use:

Never overload your ladder – all ladders should be rated for the load.

Follow the “belly-button” rule – don’t over-extend yourself when on a ladder – reposition it for better reach.

Check the weather – watch for icy or muddy surfaces.

Check your shoes – if you walk through oil, grease, or mud wipe your feet before climbing the ladder.

Take time for proper set-up of your ladder. Set up only on firm, solid surfaces and secure the ladder when possible.

Protect your ladder from traffic. If you are working in an area exposed to foot or equipment traffic, it is recommended that you place cones or flagging around your work area to help avoid contact with traffic.

Maintain your ladder – it is an important tool and proper storage, and handling is a must

Towing Safety

TOWING SAFETY

Vehicles are involved in accidents every day and they can usually be prevented. Safety should always be your main concern when you're pulling a trailer. Because no matter how easy and comfortable the process, the fact is that your towing rig weighs more and doesn't dodge or stop as easily as other cars on the road. When a driver is pulling a trailer, they are even more likely to be involved in an accident. If you observe some simple safety rules and practices, you can greatly reduce the likelihood of accidents and handle many emergency driving situations like a pro. But, before you hit the highway, though, make sure you're familiar with driving your vehicle-trailer combination.

Allow plenty of stopping and following distance - You need to allow much more following distance when trailering. Basic physics dictates that even with the best brakes, it takes longer to stop a big heavy truck and trailer than a small car.

Be extra careful changing lanes - Changing lanes is a challenge, especially if traffic in the new lane is moving much faster or slower than you. You simply cannot accelerate quickly to match traffic, and no one likes to be cut off. Make sure you've got wide trailering mirrors installed to give you a clear view of the lane next your tow vehicle and the full length of your trailer. Unthinking drivers will often "park" next to your trailer and hang there for miles.

Be patient with slower vehicles - Passing a slower car should be a rare occurrence when you're towing. You must allow many times the distance normally required to pass another vehicle. Passing on a two-lane road should almost never happen - you should be passing only vehicles that cannot maintain at least 50% of the posted speed.

Be gracious with faster vehicles - The best way to get down the road safely is to be extra courteous to faster traffic. Use turnouts whenever possible, and when a passing lane comes along, don't speed up to race passing traffic, but rather slow down just a bit to help people get past you in an efficient manner. Your stress level will be reduced, and you'll contribute to a courteous culture on the road. Above all, be solid and predictable when someone is passing you. Avoid sudden acceleration, braking, or maneuvers.

Don't pull in where you can't see out - It's easy to get stuck with a trailer. You might pull into a small parking lot and must perform a complicated backup maneuver to get out. Better to park across the street or on the road where you can see your way through.

Remember, the weather and road conditions play a vital part in towing safety. Make sure you arrive at your project location safely!