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THUNDERSTORM AND LIGHTNING PREPAREDNESS

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Thunderstorm and Lightning Preparedness Toolbox Talk

Lightning, heavy rainfall and high winds accompany the nearly 100,000 thunderstorms that occur annually in the United States. These storms can result in injuries, loss of life and property damage.

Thunderstorms and lightning can be a significant issue for employees working outdoors. The risk of being struck by lightning increases when individuals are outdoors near isolated tall objects, in open spaces, and close to metal objects.

Proper thunderstorm and lightning safety precautions should be taken, such as:

- Check weather forecast at the beginning of the shift.
- Identify the safe shelter areas on site.
- Know what to do in case of an emergency.
- Know where the nearest medical treatment facility is located.

The best way to protect yourself from thunderstorms is to avoid the threat. If you are caught outside during a thunderstorm, take shelter in a substantial, permanent, enclosed structure that contains plumbing or wiring. If such a place is unavailable, then select an enclosed metal vehicle for a suitable shelter. Do not seek shelter in open areas, on high ground under tall, isolated objects, or near materials that can conduct electricity.

Make sure the place you choose for shelter is not prone to flooding during heavy rains. Go to a low-lying, open place, away from trees, poles and metal objects that is not susceptible to flooding when no other safe cover is available.

Points To Remember

- There are a variety of weather apps available to track severe weather.
- WeatherBug (an app available on any app store) allows you to click the “Spark” button, which will show you how close the nearest lightning strike has been to your location in the last 30 minutes.

REFUELING EQUIPMENT

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Refueling Equipment

When you or a station attendant fuel up your personal vehicle, you can be pretty sure the job will be done safely. Service station operations and equipment are designed with safety in mind.

But what happens when you fill up that front-end loader or portable generator on the job? Do you do it the safe way, so you won't get hurt?

RULES TO REMEMBER

Never smoke during refueling operations. And don't refuel near an open flame. Keep a CO2 or an ABC Dry Chemical extinguisher handy, just in case. If there's a chance of a vehicle rolling while being refueled, chock the wheels.

Before filling the fuel tank, shut off the engine. If the tank is near the engine or other hot areas, such as the manifold or muffler, let the engine cool before filling the tank.

When transferring fuel from a can, mobile tank, or fuel truck, keep the spout or nozzle in contact with the fuel tank. Few people know this, but as fuel is poured, it can generate static electricity. If a spark ignites the vapors, it's all over for you.

Don't spill the fuel because it might ignite when it encounters something hot. And don't make one of the most common mistakes - overfilling the tank. If the equipment is in the hot sun, the fuel will expand and eventually overflow. Leave enough space in the tank to compensate for expansion or tilting.

After refueling has been completed, be sure all fuel has been drained from the hose and that any spills are cleaned up immediately.

Lastly, if you are storing fuel for any length of time it needs to be kept in a metal safety can. The plastic gas cans can only be used to transport fuel from the gas station directly into your equipment.

PREVENTING SORE BACKS

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Preventing Sore Backs Toolbox Talk

The back is made up of four major parts. The spine, nerves, muscles, and the spinal cord. There are thirty-three bones in the spine and thirty-one pairs of nerves branching out from the spinal cord. All of them must work together. If they don't, you could end up with anything from a strain to a ruptured disk, fractured vertebrae, and/or a debilitating disease like arthritis.

Your back is the foundation and the structure upon which the rest of your body relies for balance and support. Used improperly, or unsafely, your back can suffer injuries that can literally change the way you live.

Care of your back is a lifelong endeavor that requires commitment, intelligence, and common sense. Remember that back care isn't just about lifting properly, it is also about proper diet, exercise, reducing stress, eliminating hazards where possible. Just as the health of your back can affect your lifestyle, your lifestyle and work habits can affect the health of your back.

Points to Remember:

1. Size up the load: Can you safely lift it alone, or do you need help from another employee?
2. Inspect the route you will use while carrying the load. Look for tripping hazards, be sure you have adequate room to maneuver, and check for proper lighting.
3. Keep your hands free of oil, grease, or other substances that prevent a firm grasp. Don't use damaged gloves.
4. Get a firm grasp on the load, and make sure you have a solid footing before beginning to lift.
5. Bend with your knees and keeping your back straight while lifting.
6. Keep lifted loads close to your body.
7. Keep fingers away from the edges of loads to avoid pinches, especially when carrying loads through doors or setting loads down.
8. Create and maintain easy access to piles and stacked materials.

INSPECTING FIRE EXTINGUISHERS

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Inspecting Fire Extinguishers

If employees use portable fire extinguishers to fight small fires, they must be installed in all areas of the workplace. To ensure each area is protected properly, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is the extinguisher readily accessible in the event of a fire?
- Is the extinguisher fully charged and working properly?

Portable fire extinguishers should be inspected monthly and annually. A monthly inspection can be a quick check of the equipment or a longer process. The annual inspection should be a thorough inspection done by a qualified person.

Things to check in a monthly inspection:

- Extinguishers are in their designated location and secured properly.
- Not obstructed for visibility and accessibility.
- Obvious physical damage, corrosion, leaks, ect.
- Legible operating instructions on extinguisher.
- Seals are not broken or missing.
- Pressure-gauge readings are in the green.

Upon arrival to a new site make sure you are aware of the closest fire extinguisher. IF the extinguisher fails a monthly inspection, remove it from the site. Contact your shop or supervisor for a replacement.



EXTREME HEAT

SCS CONSTRUCTION

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- Drink water early and often. The body loses water through perspiration, and you need to replace it frequently.
- Experts recommend that you avoid using **alcoholic beverages, coffee, tea, or other beverages with caffeine as a fluid replacement.** These types of drinks cause you to lose even more water and salt. ***The best defense is to drink plain water early and often.***

- Use fans to create air movement throughout your work area.

- When possible, take approved / frequent rest breaks. Immediately move to a cooler area if you feel dizzy or become nauseated. Report this to your foreman. Keep an eye on your work partner.

- Dress in light colors. Choose fabrics that let moisture and heat escape. Dress in layers so you can peel off outerwear as needed as the day progresses.

Watch for signs of heat stress in yourself and your fellow workers. Most of the time, a construction worker may not realize what is happening to them until heat sickness strikes. If signs of heat sickness do occur, help the victim to cool off by removing him to a cool place, fanning him, or soaking him with cloth that has been dipped in cool water. Give him sips of water to drink ONLY if he is conscious.

REMEMBER!! IF YOU SUSPECT HEAT STROKE DUE TO BRIGHT RED, HOT SKIN AND NO SWEAT, CALL FOR EMERGENCY MEDICAL HELP.