

Personal Safety 2 - Workplace Injuries

Personal Safety Part 2
- Preventing Injuries In
The Workplace

Common Workplace
Injuries

"Struck By" Injuries

Personal Safety Part 2 - Preventing Injuries In The Workplace



Learning Goals

By the end of this lesson you should be able to:

- Identify some of the most common causes of injury in the workplace
- explain how to prevent some of the most common accidents
- explain the importance of proper housekeeping and how it plays a role in accident prevention
- demonstrate the ability to identify hazards and take action to prevent accidents through proper housekeeping

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Safety First

Trips slips and falls and "struck by" injuries are among the most common of workplace injuries but they are often the easiest to prevent. Becoming aware of these hazards is essential for good workplace safety.



Preventing trips slips and falls involves quite a bit more than simply watching your step. When you consider that trips slips and falls account for more than 20% (1/5th) of all workplace injuries and, that the average worker who has been injured in a trip slip or fall is off work for more than 5 days it is obvious that we need to pay attention to preventing them.

There are several common underlying causes of slips trips and falls and these include:

- Slippery surfaces
- Outdoor seasonal conditions such as rain, snow and ice
- Spills of liquids or solid materials on walkways, floors and stairs
- Changes of level such as stairs, curbs and slopes
- Tools equipment or materials piled in or near walkways
- Cables or hoses stretched across walkways
- Unsuitable footwear
- Poor visibility or lighting

Almost all of these causes can be eliminated through good housekeeping and maintenance practices. As a worker you are responsible for making sure that you keep your work area tidy, reporting conditions which are unsafe and taking reasonable action to ensure your own and others safety. The message here is clear if you notice something is slippery report it (this includes ice snow or water around your building), if you spill something clean it up, and if you took something out put it away. Wear appropriate shoes with non slip soles and pay attention to where you are walking (this means not allowing yourself to be distracted by personal electronics and devices). Secure cables and hoses when not in use and keep walkways clear of trip hazards.



Trip Slip and Fall Hazards



Cables or hoses left on floors



Uneven pavement



Slippery surfaces



Spills



Curbs



Debris piled on stairs



Ice or snow



Tools left lying around

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Struck By Objects Injuries

Struck By Equipment Or Vehicles

"Struck By" Injuries



"Struck by" injuries occur when workers are struck by objects, tools equipment or vehicles. Struck by injuries are especially important for young workers to be aware of as they are 200% more likely to be injured in struck by accidents than their older co-workers. Whatever the reasons for this dramatic difference struck by injuries are preventable and young workers should be given extra training and be regularly reminded of the dangers of struck by injuries.

As mentioned above struck by injuries happen with tools, objects, equipment and vehicles. In this lesson we will look at all four of these areas and identify strategies for preventing and eliminating these dangers.

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Often tools related struck by injuries are self inflicted, meaning that the worker hits him/herself while working with the tool. A classic example of this kind of injury has been experienced by more than one carpenter when he/she misses the nail and hammers his or her thumb. You can also be injured by, or cause an injury to, a co-worker if you do not maintain adequate space from one another. This is no joke! Injuries of this sort can result in broken bones severe bruising, deep cuts, concussion, brain injury and a very unpleasant trip to the emergency room. These sorts of accidents can be avoided by keeping a few simple rules in mind.

When using striking tools like hammers, brick chisels, sledge hammers, picks, tampers or post pounders:

1. Always keep in mind where your hands, fingers, feet and toes are and keep them out of the way when using hand tools.
2. Always work in a controlled fashion and do not use excessive force (this could cause you to lose control)
3. Become familiar with your tools get to know the weight, balance and feel of the tool before trying to work like the pros
4. Check over your tools to make sure they are in good condition, handles are not cracked, grips are not slippery, heads are secure and hand protectors (on brick chisels) are in good shape
5. Do not raise tools over your head (you could lose control and hit yourself in the head)
6. Keep a firm grip on the tool to ensure it does not fly out of your hand
7. Never throw tools, they can bounce unpredictably and come back at you or hit a co-worker

When using digging and grading tools like shovels, spades, rakes and clam shovels:

1. Always make sure you leave adequate space between yourself and co-workers so that you will not bang into one another
2. Never work towards one another, especially when scraping sod with a spade

3. Maintain a stable footing and or use proper posture so that you keep control of the tool
4. Never leave rakes shovels or any other tool lying around in the grass. Tools must be stored in or underneath wheelbarrows or another location where they can not be tripped over or stepped on.

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Struck by equipment or vehicles injuries are the most likely to cause severe injury or death. The material presented in this section could not only prevent injury, it could save your life! These injuries occur when workers are hit or contacted by earth moving machinery like skid steer loaders, tractors, excavators, or cranes, trucks, and passenger vehicles.

This section is summed up with one overriding idea "STAY CLEAR STAY SAFE!" With that being said there are some rules you must follow in order to stay clear and safe. Objects such as loader or excavator buckets can weigh many hundreds of pounds and are driven by hydraulic cylinders which can exert many tons of force. These machines generally operate at relatively low speeds and are operated by skilled workers with many hours of experience with a great deal of precision. Do not be lulled into a false sense of security, these machines are heavy enough and powerful enough that even a very small error on the part of the operator or a mechanical failure could end your life in less than a second.

You can avoid struck by equipment injuries by:

1. maintaining a safe distance between yourself and any equipment
2. never putting your body between equipment and any other object or building
3. never walking under or positioning yourself beneath a raised bucket, implement or load
4. keeping your hands feet and body clear of pinch points
5. always making sure that you can be seen by the operator, if you can't see them they can't see you
6. maintaining good communication with the operator and making sure you know where the operator intends to move the machine at all times
7. waiting for the operator to stop and signal you that it is safe to enter the work area
8. wearing high visibility clothing such as a safety vest
9. never assuming that the operator knows you are nearby
10. never becoming too comfortable around equipment even if the operator is really good, everyone can make a mistake

You can avoid struck by vehicles injuries by:

1. wearing high visibility clothing such as a reflective vest whenever you are work near to a parking area or roadway

2. setting up traffic control if the work area is close to a roadway or parking area or requires being on a roadway for some or all of the work
3. using cones barricades or barriers to separate the work area from traffic
4. maintaining eye contact and or communication with the drivers of vehicles
5. maintaining visual contact with drivers who are backing up
6. never walking behind reversing vehicles
7. never positioning yourself between a trailer and reversing vehicle
8. never walking between a truck and trailer unless the vehicles are parked and trailer wheels are chocked
9. using flag persons to direct reversing vehicles

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Struck by objects injuries occur when workers are hit by tools debris or materials which are dropped, thrown, fall from heights, are improperly stacked or stored or are ejected from machinery. Most if not all of these injuries can be completely eliminated through proper housekeeping and due diligence on the part of workers. Remember, safety is the responsibility of every person in the work area.

On any job site workers may be required to carry with them a wide assortment of tools including hammers, utility knives, secateurs, two way radios, cordless drills and other tools. These items if dropped from even a moderate height can cause serious injury. A few simple rules and attention to detail on the part of workers working at heights can eliminate the possibility of these kinds of injuries.

You can eliminate hazards from dropped tools by making sure that:

1. All workers are wearing all appropriate PPE especially hard hats and safety boots
2. All hand tools are properly stowed in pouches and holsters and that belt clips are properly fastened
3. You never put tools down on surfaces or hang tools from structures above the work area
4. You conduct a regular inventory of your tools to make sure you have all of them on your person
5. Workers are not standing directly below where work is being carried out
6. If the tool is not in your hand it is in your pouch, pocket or holster
7. You never pass a tool to a co-worker by throwing it, always hand off tools in a safe and controlled fashion

All job sites will contain materials and tools which need to be stored until they are needed as well as shipping materials which need to be discarded or returned. These items can include building materials such as bricks, retaining wall stone, lumber, steel, skids, ladders, buckets and work platforms. Improper storage is a major cause of injuries in the workplace.

You can eliminate these hazards by making sure that:

1. Items such as bricks, blocks and stones are stacked on level surfaces and in such a manner as to ensure that the stack is stable (ie. bricks are stacked so that they overlap one

another on successive courses and are not piled so high as to become in danger of tipping over)

2. Lumber and steel is stacked flat and on level ground, never leaning up against a wall or other vertical surface
3. Shipping skids and crates are stacked flat and never higher than the skid is long or wide, and that skids are picked up or returned regularly so they do not obstruct the site.
4. All materials are stored in areas well away from high traffic areas where workers may brush up against or bang into them
5. Ladders, work platforms and buckets are put away when not in use and that ladders are never stored leaning against vertical surfaces

Any job site where power equipment such as lawn mowers, line trimmers, rototillers, stump grinders, soil conditioners, augers, chainsaws or other rotating tools has the potential to generate injuries caused by thrown debris or kick back. Kick back occurs when a rotating tool contacts a stationary object causing the tool to be suddenly thrown towards the operator or bystanders.

You can eliminate these hazards by making sure that:

1. You conduct a thorough survey of the work area and remove any debris (garbage, pieces of wood, metal, brick, concrete, etc.) prior to beginning any work with a tool
2. You scan the ground in front of and around the tool as you operate it for any debris or material which might have been missed during the site survey
3. You note and mark the location of any objects that can not be removed (large rocks, stumps, water shutoffs, irrigation heads) which could be contacted by rotating machine parts and maintain a safe distance from these objects while operating
4. You fully understand the operation and risks posed by any equipment you are operating by reading the manual and ensuring that you have received training in its operation from your supervisor
5. You have taken steps to ensure that no bystanders are in or enter the work area while you are operating equipment

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