Keep a Lookout for Eye Injuries

What’s at Stake?

Every day thousands of workers are exposed to sight altering and life altering eye injuries. Of those workers exposed, over 2,000 end up needing medical treatment each day because of a job-related eye injury.

What’s the Danger?

- The dangers to your eyes and vision at work are easy to see:
- Flying particles, such as dust, wood chips or metal shavings, can strike or scrape the eye.
- Nails, staples or slivers of wood or metal can easily penetrate the eyeball and cause immediate loss of sight.
- Large objects striking the eye and face can cause blunt force trauma to the eyeball or eye socket.
- Chemicals, thermal exposure, and even sun exposure can damage eyes and cause blindness.
- Infectious diseases can be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eye as a result of direct exposure to blood and other body fluids.

How to Protect Yourself

Here are some easy ways to protect your peepers:

- First, look for hazards around you and not just those related to the work you’re doing.
    - For example, look at the hazards posed by nearby workers, machinery and any overhead work.
- Then, select and wear the right type of protective equipment for the job. It makes a difference.
    - Wearing the right type of eye protection and wearing it consistently can prevent 90% of eye injuries!
    - Sadly, the majority of injured workers were not

wearing eye protection at the time of injury.

- Next, always inspect PPE before use.
    - You want it to be in good condition and snugly and well.
    - Don’t forget to clean eyewear often. Dirty eyewear makes it hard to see and is dangerous.
- Remember these safe work practices:
    - Don’t rub eyes with dirty hands or clothing.
    - Brush, shake, or vacuum dust and debris from hardhats, hair, forehead, or the top of the eye protection before removing it; and
    - Know where emergency eye wash stations or portable eye wash bottles are located.
    - Immediately flush your eyes with clean water and follow up with medical attention right away for chemical exposure or if a foreign object gets stuck in your eye.

Final Word

Don’t turn a blind eye to protecting your sight. Follow safe work practices and wear the right PPE each and every time your eyes and vision are at risk.