Lockout Tagout – Program Audit

The following assessment provides insight into the stage of program implementation for each element of your Lockout Tagout (LOTO) Program.

1. Review each element of the Program.
2. Compare the implementation of the Program Element against the definitions in the table and select the box in the column directly before the applicable definition.

* This document is meant to serve as a guide and may not be all inclusive to local and regional regulations. Review local and regional regulations to ensure proper compliance.

Hazard Recognition and Control – Program Audit

The following assessment provides insight into the stage of program implementation for each element of your Hazard Recognition and Control Program.

1. Review each element of the Program.
2. Compare the implementation of the Program Element against the definitions in the table and select the box in the column directly before the applicable definition.

* This document is meant to serve as a guide and may not be all inclusive to local and regional regulations. Review local and regional regulations to ensure proper compliance.

Hearing Conservation – Program Audit

The following assessment provides insight into the stage of program implementation for each element of your Hearing Conservation Program (HCP).

1. Review each element of the Program.
2. Compare the implementation of the Program Element against the definitions in the table and select the box in the column directly before the applicable definition.

* This document is meant to serve as a guide and may not be all inclusive to local and regional regulations. Review local and regional regulations to ensure proper compliance.

Fall Protection – Program Audit

The following assessment provides insight into the stage of program implementation for each element of your Fall Protection Program.

1. Review each element of the Program.
2. Compare the implementation of the Program Element against the definitions in the table and select the box in the column directly before the applicable definition.

* This document is meant to serve as a guide and may not be all inclusive to local and regional regulations. Review local and regional regulations to ensure proper compliance.

Employee Training – Program Audit

The following assessment provides insight into the stage of program implementation for each element of your Employee Training Program.

1. Review each element of the Program.
2. Compare the implementation of the Program Element against the definitions in the table and select the box in the column directly before the applicable definition.

* This document is meant to serve as a guide and may not be all inclusive to local and regional regulations. Review local and regional regulations to ensure proper compliance.

Harassment Leads to Suicide – Spanish

Los estudios muestran que el acoso en el lugar de trabajo (acoso sexual, intimidación y otras formas de acoso) puede tener efectos emocionales y físicos en una víctima y puede causar depresión, ansiedad y, en algunos casos, conducir a la autolesión e incluso al suicidio.

Carolyn Malkin cuenta la historia de su padre Wally Theodore, un impresor desplazado por la tecnología, que se convirtió en guardia armado de lo que ella llamó “camión de dinero”. Su padre también era representante del sindicato y ahí es donde empezaron los problemas.

Wally empezó a sufrir acoso después de no poder evitar el despido de un miembro del sindicato que fue sorprendido robando. El acoso

no se limitaba al horario de trabajo, recibía llamadas acosadoras por las noches y también le regañaban en otros lugares. En mayo de 1982, Wally se disparó a sí mismo en la cabeza con su pistola de la empresa. No pudo soportar más el acoso. Su hija Carolyn tenía sólo 13 años en ese momento.

El acoso en el trabajo no es algo que la mayoría de las víctimas puedan dejar en el trabajo. Los efectos del acoso van más allá de los 9 a 5 años y tienen el potencial de devastar vidas y familias mucho después de que el acoso cese.

Heavy Equipment Mechanics Electrocuted – Spanish

Dos mecánicos fueron electrocutados mientras reparaban un rascador de movimiento de tierra.

Fueron enviados a una obra en construcción donde un raspador estaba aparcado bajo una línea eléctrica de 12.000 voltios. Una víctima de 40 años se paró en el fondo del rascador mientras una grúa montada en un camión ayudaba a reemplazar el diferencial trasero. Desde el interior de la plataforma del rascador, una víctima de 18 años operaba un control conectado a la grúa por cable. La pluma tocaba la línea de energía, que enviaba corriente a través de las máquinas.

Un operador de equipos a 12 metros de distancia escuchó el arco eléctrico y vio a las víctimas en llamas. Agarró un extintor de incendios y corrió hacia ellas, pero las corrientes de tierra lo dejaron inconsciente temporalmente. La compañía eléctrica desenergizó las líneas aéreas para que los paramédicos pudieran llegar a los cuerpos.

Si la compañía hubiera inspeccionado el sitio con seguridad, se podrían haber tomado medidas preventivas, como:

- Colocar la grúa de manera que su brazo no pueda acercarse a menos de tres metros de la línea eléctrica.
- Poner un observador.
- Contactar con la compañía eléctrica para que desactive la energía o para que “mangue” (aísle) la línea.
- Mover el rascador.
- Instalar dispositivos de observación que permitan al operador ver la parte trasera de la grúa.

Hazardous Weather Safety Checklist – Spanish

No importa qué época del año sea, el clima puede tener un gran efecto en su seguridad tanto en el trabajo como fuera de él. Incluso si no trabaja en el exterior, ir y volver del trabajo con condiciones meteorológicas adversas puede ser peligroso.

Conducir cuando el clima es desfavorable puede ser muy peligroso. Durante una lluvia o una tormenta de nieve, por ejemplo, la visibilidad se reduce para todos los conductores, incluido usted, los peatones son más difíciles de detectar y es más probable que sus neumáticos patinen sobre la superficie resbaladiza de la carretera. Tener precaución al conducir con clima hostil es su mejor defensa. Las siguientes medidas de seguridad pueden ayudar:

- Reduzca la velocidad, por debajo del límite de velocidad, y mantenga un parachoques de seguridad entre su coche y los demás en la carretera.
- Familiarícese con los controles del tablero de mandos. Luego, si necesita atenuar las luces, ajuste la velocidad de los limpiaparabrisas o desempañe las ventanillas si puede hacerlo sin apartar la vista de la carretera.
- Evite frenar bruscamente. Maneje usando un ligero toque.
- Evite también conducir por charcos profundos o áreas

inundadas. Si es necesario, conduzca muy despacio y con cuidado. El agua puede hacerle varias cosas a su auto. Los charcos pueden hacer que sus neumáticos pierdan el contacto con la superficie de la carretera. El agua más profunda puede mojar los frenos e impedir que funcionen cuando sea necesario. Y si se salpica el compartimiento del motor, el agua puede detener el auto y dejarlo varado en el área inundada.

Caminar con clima adverso también puede ser difícil. Como mencionamos antes, la lluvia le hace más difícil de ver, así que tenga más cuidado alrededor de los vehículos.

- Asegúrese de que los conductores lo vean. Use ropa de color claro o reflectiva cuando camine con mal clima, o después de oscurecer.
- Use el calzado apropiado para ayudarle a mantener el equilibrio. La nieve, el hielo e incluso la lluvia pueden hacer que se caiga de forma inesperada en una acera, un cruce de peatones o una parada de autobús.

Si debe trabajar fuera durante el mal clima, tenga en cuenta también otros peligros:

- Los vientos fuertes pueden derribar escaleras o andamios, mientras que la lluvia, el hielo o la nieve pueden hacer que resbale y caiga. Evite trabajar en estas condiciones peligrosas.
- Tenga cuidado con los rayos que pueden provocar descargas eléctricas o electrocución.
- En caso de fuertes tormentas de lluvia, manténgase alejado de posibles fuentes de inundación, como ríos, pasos subterráneos y grandes alcantarillas.
- En algunas zonas, un granizo o una tormenta eléctrica puede ser el primer signo de un tornado que se aproxima. Escuche la radio para conocer los avisos meteorológicos. Haga exactamente lo que se le indique en la radio. Pero, asegúrese de encontrar cobertura dentro de un edificio sólido o un refugio para tormentas. Los vehículos o las casas móviles no son seguros porque pueden ser levantados y

destruidos por los vientos.

- El calor excesivo puede ser un peligro para su seguridad y su salud. En tiempo caluroso, reduzca la velocidad, vístase para las condiciones y beba muchos líquidos sin alcohol. El calor añadido puede hacer que se sienta irritable y distraído, así que tómese su tiempo y preste mucha atención a su trabajo.
- Las condiciones climáticas severas también pueden ser un riesgo para la seguridad cuando esté disfrutando de su deporte favorito como el golf, el béisbol o incluso la navegación.
- Cuando observe un rayo o piense que se avecina una tormenta eléctrica, salga del campo de béisbol, abandone el campo de golf y llegue a la orilla si está nadando o navegando.
- Desháguese de los bates de béisbol de metal y de los palos de golf. Aléjese de los altos mástiles metálicos de su velero. Todos son buenos conductores de electricidad.
- Si no puede entrar en un edificio lo suficientemente rápido, encuentre un lugar bajo y agáchese. Nunca se refugie bajo un árbol alto.

Ya sea que trabaje afuera, que vaya al trabajo o que se relaje en sus días libres, vigile el clima. Puede ser un amigo bienvenido pero también un adversario peligroso.

Good Enough Mindset Fatality Report

One of the examples of a fatality that was labeled a “freak accident” was the tragic death of Marty Dale Whitmire in Greenville, South Carolina, in April 2017. Whitmire was working on a paving operation when his truck clipped a live power line, which fell on him – a tragic, far-too-common – and completely preventable – cause of worker death.

Yesterday, Marty Whitmire's nephew, Melvin Whitmire, posted a comment on that post which I am reprinting below to give it more attention. I defy you to read it without boiling over, and crying at the same time:

April 11, 2017 is a day my family and I will NEVER forget. Marty was my like a brother to me. He was actually my Uncle (my father's baby brother) but because he was only 8 years older than me we were very close when I was a child and as I became an adult we grew to be best friends. He used to tell everyone that he and I were brothers.

Marty worked on my crew as a Pipefitter for 4+- years and the company we were working for layed him off in November of 2016. That's when he took the job at King Asphalt to keep busy until the layoff ended. He wasn't experienced and he was a flag man for the first 4 months he worked there. Towards the end of March 2017 he was "promoted" to the job the position that he was working when he was tragically killed, not accidentally either. This happened in my opinion (I have 22 years in Industrial Pipefitting an OSHA 30, and experience as Site Specific Safety Officer on a Federal Jobsite) due to Marty's absence of proper training on the machine and lack of training for the foreman in the job. The power lines were lower than required by national code, the pole was not up to national codes, the spotter was out that day and no one filled his position and SCDOT inspector was sitting in his truck onsite because the road being paved was a State Road. The road has more overhead lines crossing the road than the average road in that particular area that the incident occurred, and no one notified the power company about safeguarding the power lines before work began. COMPLACENCY killed my "brother"!!!! This could have been avoided if either the paving or power company or SCDOT would have fulfilled their obligations to provide a safe place to work.

Selecting Hand Tools – Spanish

Los Riesgos

Usar la herramienta equivocada o usar una herramienta incorrectamente puede causar lesiones ergonómicas debilitantes. El riesgo de lesiones aumenta cuando los trabajadores están expuestos con frecuencia a posturas incómodas, presión por contacto o agarre con pellizcos. Con el tiempo, la exposición a posturas incómodas o a presiones de contacto perjudiciales puede contribuir a una lesión.

Sé un mejor supervisor

Las herramientas manuales que se ajustan a las manos de un trabajador y al trabajo que realiza pueden reducir el riesgo de lesiones. **Aquí hay 11 consejos para la selección de herramientas manuales para compartir con sus empleados.**

- Para las herramientas de una sola mano utilizadas para tareas eléctricas: Seleccione una herramienta que se sienta cómoda con un diámetro de mango en el rango de 1 1/4 pulgadas a 2 pulgadas. Puede aumentar el diámetro agregando una funda al mango. El mango de potencia proporciona la máxima potencia de mano para tareas de alta fuerza. Todos los dedos se enrollan alrededor del mango.



- Para herramientas de una sola mano usadas para tareas de precisión: Seleccione una herramienta con un diámetro de mango de 1/4 de pulgada a 1/2 pulgada.
- Para herramientas de doble mango (tipo alicate) utilizadas para tareas de energía: Seleccione una herramienta con una amplitud de agarre que sea de al menos 2 pulgadas cuando esté completamente cerrada y no más de 3 1/2 pulgadas cuando esté completamente abierta. Cuando se requiera una fuerza continua, considere el uso de una pinza, un agarre o una

pinza de bloqueo.



Tensión de agarre abierto



Tensión de agarre cerrado

- Para herramientas de doble mango (tipo alicate) utilizadas para tareas de precisión: Seleccione una herramienta con una extensión de agarre que no sea menor de 1 pulgada cuando esté completamente cerrada y no más de 3 pulgadas cuando esté completamente abierta.
- Para herramientas de doble mango para pellizcar, agarrar o cortar: Seleccione una herramienta con mangos que tengan resortes para devolver los mangos a la posición abierta.
- Seleccione una herramienta sin bordes afilados o ranuras para los dedos en el mango.



NO



SI

- Seleccione una herramienta que esté revestida de material blando. Añadiendo un manguito al mango de la herramienta, se mejora la superficie pero también se aumenta el diámetro o la extensión del mango.
- Seleccione una herramienta con un ángulo que le permita trabajar con la muñeca recta. Los mangos curvados son mejores que los rectos cuando se aplica la fuerza horizontalmente (en la misma dirección que el antebrazo y la muñeca rectos). Los mangos rectos son mejores que los mangos curvados cuando se aplica la fuerza verticalmente.


NO


SI

- Seleccione una herramienta que pueda ser usada con su mano dominante o con cualquiera de las dos manos.
- Para tareas que requieren mucha fuerza: Seleccione una herramienta con un mango más largo que la parte más ancha de su mano – generalmente de 4 a 6 pulgadas. Evite la presión de contacto asegurándose de que el extremo del mango no presione los nervios y vasos sanguíneos de la palma de su mano. Si el mango es demasiado corto, el extremo presionará contra la palma de la mano y puede causar una lesión.
- Seleccione una herramienta que tenga una superficie antideslizante para un mejor agarre. Al agregar una funda a la herramienta se mejora la textura de la superficie del mango. Para evitar que la herramienta se deslice dentro de la funda, asegúrese de que la funda se ajuste bien durante el uso.

Véase la lista de control ergonómico para la selección de las herramientas manuales.

https://choosehandsafety.com/sites/default/files/docs/NIOSH_guide_to_selecting_hand_tools.pdf

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Six Ways You Can Die in a Confined Space – Spanish

Los espacios confinados son notorios por los peligros, a menudo

ocultos que no se pueden ver u oler. Demasiadas veces cuando se reconoce un peligro en un espacio confinado es demasiado tarde para que los que entran en el espacio se salven. Aquí hay seis situaciones peligrosas y mortales de espacios confinados.

1. Puede asfixiarse por la falta de oxígeno dentro del espacio. Otros químicos pueden desplazar el oxígeno y convertir la atmósfera en mortal en cuestión de segundos. Los niveles de oxígeno deben estar entre el 19,5% y el 23,5%. Todo lo que sea más bajo es una atmósfera con deficiencia de oxígeno. Todo lo que sea más alto es una atmósfera rica en oxígeno, lo que conlleva un mayor riesgo de incendio y explosión.



2. Puede envenenarse por respirar aire tóxico o contaminado dentro del espacio. Este aire puede provenir del trabajo realizado en el espacio o del escape de máquinas, equipos y otros trabajos realizados fuera del espacio.



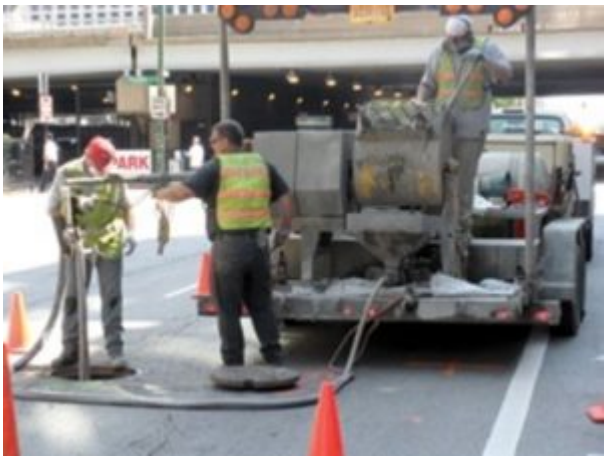
3. Puede morir por una explosión causada por la ignición de sustancias inflamables o combustibles. El trabajo caliente, las chispas y las altas temperaturas/presiones se encuentran a menudo dentro de espacios confinados.



4. Puede quedar atrapado dentro del espacio y no poder evacuar de un incendio u otra emergencia.



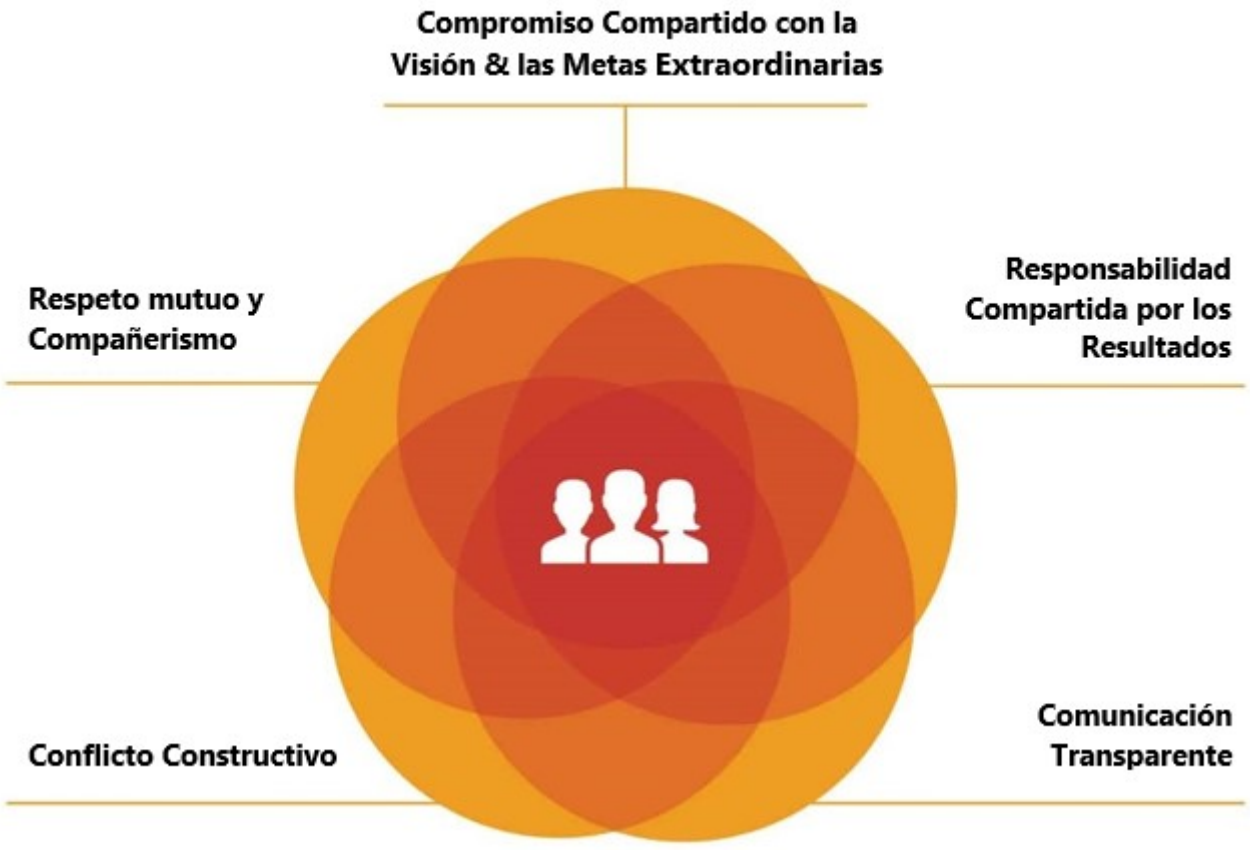
5. Puede ser golpeado y atropellado por un vehículo o equipo al entrar o salir del espacio. Esto es común en trabajos de carreteras y servicios públicos donde los espacios confinados están en o cerca de las carreteras y otras áreas de tráfico.



6. Puede ahogarse o asfixiarse si el espacio es engullido por agua, tierra u otros materiales.



Understanding the Leader’s Role in Creating High Performing Teams – Spanish



“No es las finanzas. No es una estrategia. No es la tecnología. Es

el trabajo en equipo lo que sigue siendo la última ventaja competitiva, tanto por ser tan poderoso como raro".

Así es como Patrick Lencioni comenzó su libro, "Cinco disfunciones de un equipo", en 2002. Diecisiete años más tarde, esta es una declaración todavía provocativa que merece más discusión.

En más de cuatro décadas de consultoría en Vantage Leadership, hemos encontrado que los equipos de alto rendimiento son realmente raros. Muchos equipos tienen un bajo rendimiento o son promedio, en el mejor de los casos, y aunque hay un sinnúmero de razones para ello, el papel del líder del equipo en la creación de equipos de alto rendimiento merece ser explorado.

La investigación preliminar de Vantage llevada a cabo en 50 equipos ejecutivos que han utilizado nuestra encuesta sobre equipos de alto rendimiento sugiere que el rendimiento del equipo está altamente correlacionado con el rendimiento del líder, de tal manera que cuando los líderes de los equipos son más efectivos, sus equipos son más efectivos.

La realidad de la mejora del equipo, sin embargo, no suele ser tan simple: decir que la mejora del equipo se produce sólo por el rendimiento del líder tienta a un error de atribución. Es más probable que la mejora provenga de una interacción de los dos en la que cada uno aprovecha la fuerza del otro.

Mientras que tanto el equipo como el líder del equipo se combinan para impulsar un alto rendimiento, la influencia del líder en el establecimiento del tono de las interacciones del equipo es tal que mantenemos un enfoque en el líder como el catalizador para la mejora.

De las cinco dimensiones de los equipos de alto rendimiento (ver modelo), el respeto mutuo y la camaradería es uno de los factores más críticos que contribuyen al éxito del líder, según nuestra investigación. Esencialmente, esta dimensión pregunta: ¿demuestra el líder del equipo respeto y genuinidad, y responsabiliza a las personas de un alto nivel de colaboración?

Los líderes de equipo que obtienen una alta puntuación en Respeto

Mutuo y Camaradería típicamente desarrollan el seguimiento mediante la construcción de la confianza, el respeto y la lealtad. Permiten y promueven tener conversaciones difíciles y debates desafiantes sobre asuntos de negocios, y dicen lo que pretenden y actúan de acuerdo con su palabra.

Estos líderes hacen que el conflicto sea productivo y esto impacta positivamente en el comportamiento y la colaboración del equipo. Tienen en cuenta las opiniones de los demás y sopesan cuidadosamente lo que dicen los demás.

Tal vez lo más importante es que no ejercen autoridad posicional – cuando un equipo y su líder están en su mejor momento, el líder se convierte en parte del equipo y las opiniones de todos son escuchadas.

En nuestra experiencia, esto no es común ya que puede ser difícil para los líderes renunciar al control y ver más allá de sí mismos de esta manera. No es sorprendente, entonces, que el Respeto Mutuo y la Camaradería sea también el área de desarrollo más comúnmente reportada para los líderes de equipos.

Llevándolo un paso más allá, nuestra investigación indica que la participación en la Comunicación Transparente es el área de desarrollo más comúnmente reportada para los miembros de los equipos. Esto podría reforzar la afirmación de que si el líder del equipo no establece un ambiente de confianza, respeto mutuo y camaradería en el que los miembros se sientan cómodos siendo sinceros y abiertos con los demás, todo el equipo se verá afectado.

Lo que hacen los mejores equipos

Hemos encontrado que los mejores equipos están siendo continuamente entrenados – por el líder y por cada uno de ellos. El líder involucra al equipo, lo inspira a la acción y lo hace responsable de evolucionar, aprender y crecer. La puntuación alta en Respeto Mutuo y Camaradería permite que este entrenamiento ocurra en un ambiente seguro.

En “Equipos de Liderazgo Superior”: What it Takes to Make them

Great” (2008), Wageman y otros estudiaron 120 equipos ejecutivos y descubrieron que cada director general de una muestra tenía un fuerte enfoque externo, atendiendo a asuntos del entorno más amplio. Sin embargo, los líderes de los equipos destacados tenían un enfoque interno igualmente fuerte sobre cómo el equipo se entrena y desarrolla a sí mismo.

En resumen, uno de los elementos más críticos de la construcción de un equipo de alto rendimiento es la interacción entre el líder y los miembros del equipo, de tal manera que el líder se convierte en un facilitador del desarrollo del equipo y no en el único impulsor del equipo que trabaja en conjunto a un nivel más alto.

Jacqueline Ackerman

Formación profesional y entrenamiento

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/understanding-team-leaders-role-creating-high-teams-ackerman/

Hand Protection – Spanish

En esta sección se abordan los peligros y el equipo de protección personal específicos de las manos y los dedos.

General

La protección de las manos se refiere a los EPP específicos para la región del codo y la parte inferior (por ejemplo, guantes, cubiertas para los brazos, protectores para los dedos, etc.). De acuerdo con las regulaciones de la OSHA, un empleador es responsable de seleccionar y ordenar el uso de la protección de manos adecuada para sus empleados. Los empleadores deben evaluar el área de trabajo para determinar los posibles peligros y riesgos de lesiones en las manos. Si se encuentra un peligro, los empleadores también deben exigir la protección de las manos.

También se anima a proporcionar un nivel adicional de protección mayor del necesario.

Peligros que justifican la protección de las manos

- El contacto con sustancias nocivas
- Cortes graves
- Abrasiones graves
- Pinchazos
- Quemaduras químicas
- Quemaduras térmicas
- Las temperaturas extremas

Tipos de protección

- Tejido o tejido recubierto
- Cuero, lona o malla metálica
- Resistente a los químicos
- Goma aislante

Program Evaluation and Improvement – Leading and Lagging Indicators – Spanish

Usted debe evaluar su programa de seguridad de manera regular – por lo menos anualmente – para determinar lo que funciona y lo que no, y si el programa está en camino de cumplir sus objetivos. Rastrear y analizar los indicadores adelantados y atrasados es una manera efectiva de monitorear el desempeño y el progreso de su programa de seguridad.

Indicadores adelantados y atrasados

En su artículo de 2014, Kyle W. Morrison dio un ejemplo perfecto de indicadores adelantados y atrasados. “Los indicadores

adelantados son medidas previas al incidente, en oposición a los indicadores atrasados, que son medidas recogidas después de que ocurra un incidente. Por ejemplo, un neumático pinchado es un indicador de retardo porque el reventón ya ha ocurrido, pero una inspección que observa la mala calidad del neumático y evita que se produzca un reventón es un indicador líder".

Para decirlo de otra manera:

- Los indicadores adelantados son las mediciones previas al incidente; y
- Los indicadores de atrasados miden el rendimiento basado en las cifras o estadísticas de incidentes y lesiones del pasado.

Los indicadores de atrasados le dicen cuántas personas resultaron heridas, cómo se lesionaron y qué tan graves fueron las heridas. Algunos ejemplos de indicadores de retardo incluyen:

1. Registros de lesiones
2. Frecuencia y gravedad de las lesiones
3. Días fuera del trabajo/días de trabajo perdidos
4. Costos de la compensación de los trabajadores
5. Los costos de la prima de seguro
6. Costos de los daños a los bienes y al equipo
7. Liberación de químicos

Los indicadores de retardo no le dicen qué tan bien le va a su organización en la prevención de incidentes y lesiones. Ahí es donde entran los indicadores adelantados.

Los indicadores principales son todos sobre el rendimiento futuro y la mejora continua. Los indicadores adelantados le ayudan a ver qué tan bien le va a su organización midiendo las actividades dirigidas a prevenir lesiones. Algunos indicadores principales populares son:

1. Entrenamiento
2. Charlas de caja de herramientas/reuniones de seguridad
3. Inspecciones y auditorías
4. Evaluación de los peligros

5. Presentación de informes sobre peligros y casi peligros (observaciones)
6. Mantenimiento de equipos y máquinas
7. Participación en el comité de seguridad

Los indicadores adelantados y atrasados pueden ser cuantitativos o cualitativos.

- El número de peligros y casi peligros notificados sería un indicador cuantitativo.
- Un solo trabajador que exprese una opinión favorable sobre la participación en el programa sería un indicador cualitativo.

Siempre que sea posible, seleccione indicadores que sean medibles (cuantitativos). Los indicadores cuantitativos le ayudarán a determinar mejor si ha alcanzado los objetivos de su programa.

Mejorar y corregir

Cuando se identifica un problema en su programa de seguridad y salud, usted (el empleador), en coordinación con los supervisores, los gerentes y los trabajadores, debe tomar medidas rápidas para corregir el problema y evitar que vuelva a ocurrir.

Cómo lograrlo

- Si descubre deficiencias en el programa, determine cómo corregir el problema. Obtenga información de sus gerentes y empleados e investigue lo que otros en su industria han hecho o están haciendo.
- Busque continuamente el aporte de los gerentes, trabajadores, supervisores y otras partes interesadas en las mejoras del programa.
- Determine si los cambios en los equipos, instalaciones, materiales, personal clave o prácticas de trabajo desencadenan alguna necesidad de cambios en el programa.
- Determine si sus indicadores y objetivos de rendimiento siguen siendo relevantes y, si no lo son, cómo cambiarlos para que cuenten con una visión más precisa y produzcan mejoras en general.

Alcance y tiempo

El alcance y la frecuencia de las evaluaciones del programa dependerán del alcance, la complejidad y la madurez del programa y de los tipos de peligros que debe controlar. Las evaluaciones del programa deben realizarse periódicamente (y al menos anualmente), pero también pueden ser desencadenadas por un cambio en el proceso o el equipo, o un incidente como una lesión grave, un daño significativo a la propiedad o un aumento de las quejas relacionadas con la seguridad.

That Feels Better: Ergonomics for Your Temporary Home Office

Due to COVID-19, your living rooms, bedrooms and dining tables have all been your everyday workstations for almost an entire year. While you're getting the work done, you might find your workstation a literal pain in the neck – and back!

Watch this webinar to learn how to make your home office ergonomic so you can work comfortably and prevent injury.

In this webinar, you'll learn

- Tips to create an ergonomic at-home workstation
- Risk factors and solutions to prevent injury
- How to make adjustments for comfort in any room
- Receive a workstation checklist to keep you feeling good

About your presenter

Brian Piñon, CSP, ARM

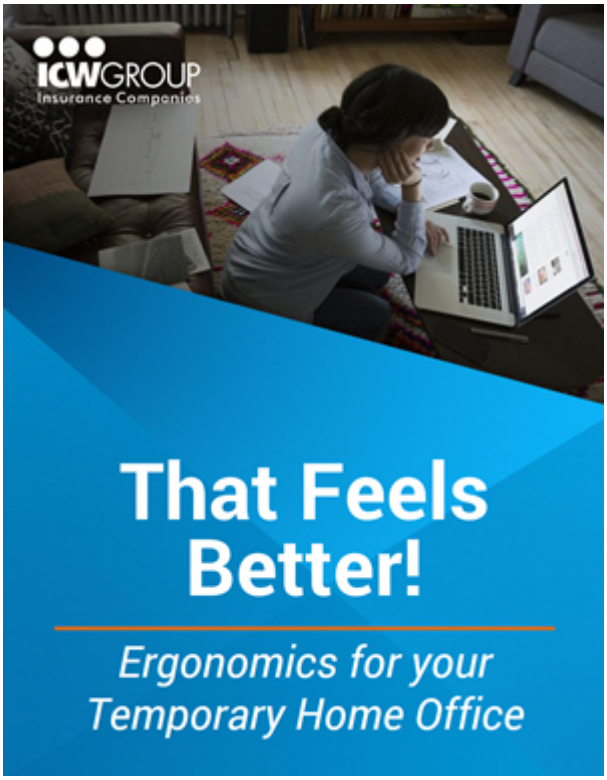
Brian Piñon is a Senior Risk Management Consultant for ICW Group Insurance Companies who specializes in Workers' Compensation. Mr.

Piñon is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP), holds an Associates in Risk Management designation (ARM) from the Insurance Institute of America, and is a graduate of the University of California, Davis.

Connect with Brian on LinkedIn

Download these helpful ergonomic resources for your home office

That Feels Better Presentation



View the “That Feels Better” webinar slides in PDF format

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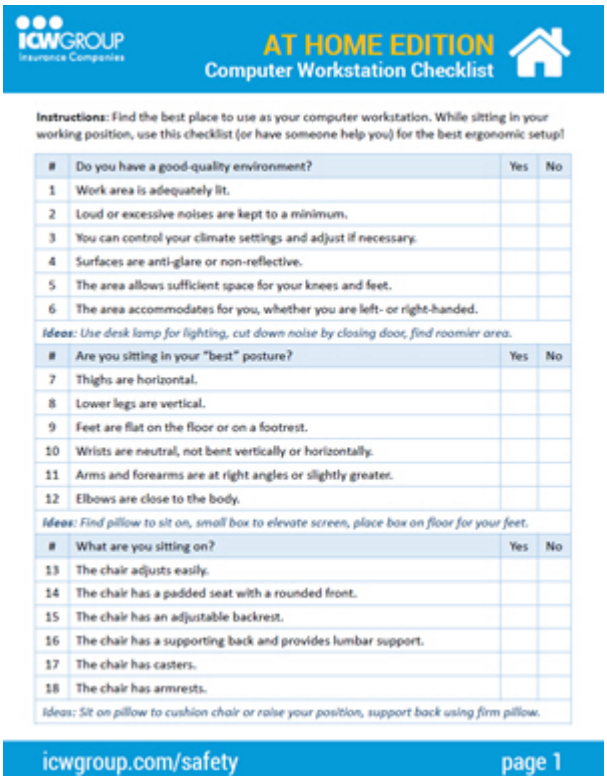
Computer Workstation Checklist: At Home Edition



AT HOME EDITION
Computer Workstation Checklist

Instructions: Find the best place to use as your computer workstation. While sitting in your working position, use this checklist (or have someone help you) for the best ergonomic setup!

#	Do you have a good-quality environment?	Yes	No
1	Work area is adequately lit.		
2	Loud or excessive noises are kept to a minimum.		
3	You can control your climate settings and adjust if necessary.		
4	Surfaces are anti-glare or non-reflective.		
5	The area allows sufficient space for your knees and feet.		
6	The area accommodates for you, whether you are left- or right-handed.		
Ideas: Use desk lamp for lighting, cut down noise by closing door, find roomier area.			
#	Are you sitting in your "best" posture?	Yes	No
7	Thighs are horizontal.		
8	Lower legs are vertical.		
9	Feet are flat on the floor or on a footrest.		
10	Wrists are neutral, not bent vertically or horizontally.		
11	Arms and forearms are at right angles or slightly greater.		
12	Elbows are close to the body.		
Ideas: Find pillow to sit on, small box to elevate screen, place box on floor for your feet.			
#	What are you sitting on?	Yes	No
13	The chair adjusts easily.		
14	The chair has a padded seat with a rounded front.		
15	The chair has an adjustable backrest.		
16	The chair has a supporting back and provides lumbar support.		
17	The chair has casters.		
18	The chair has armrests.		
Ideas: Sit on pillow to cushion chair or raise your position, support back using firm pillow.			

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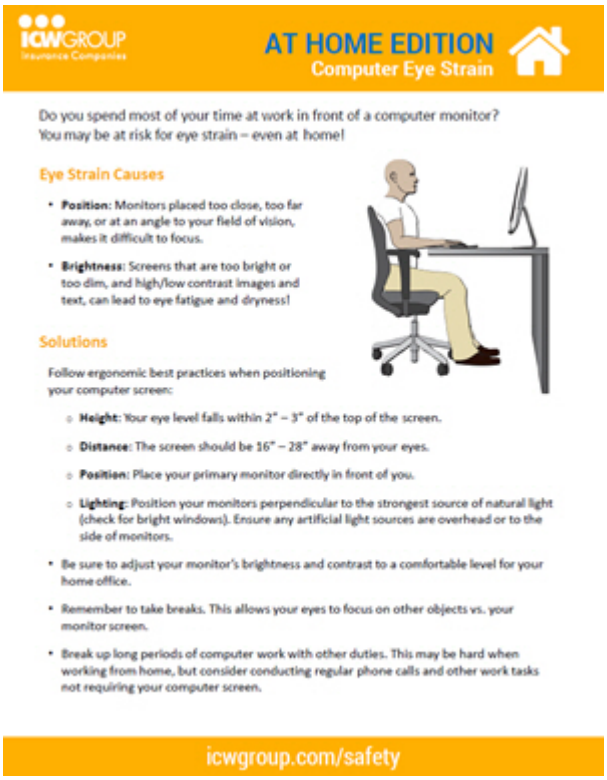
Use this checklist at home for your best ergonomic setup.

[Download PDF]

Computer Eye Strain: At Home Edition



AT HOME EDITION
Computer Eye Strain

Do you spend most of your time at work in front of a computer monitor? You may be at risk for eye strain – even at home!

Eye Strain Causes

- **Position:** Monitors placed too close, too far away, or at an angle to your field of vision, makes it difficult to focus.
- **Brightness:** Screens that are too bright or too dim, and high/low contrast images and text, can lead to eye fatigue and dryness!

Solutions

Follow ergonomic best practices when positioning your computer screen:

- **Height:** Your eye level falls within 2" – 3" of the top of the screen.
- **Distance:** The screen should be 16" – 28" away from your eyes.
- **Position:** Place your primary monitor directly in front of you.
- **Lighting:** Position your monitors perpendicular to the strongest source of natural light (check for bright windows). Ensure any artificial light sources are overhead or to the side of monitors.

- Be sure to adjust your monitor's brightness and contrast to a comfortable level for your home office.
- Remember to take breaks. This allows your eyes to focus on other objects vs. your monitor screen.
- Break up long periods of computer work with other duties. This may be hard when working from home, but consider conducting regular phone calls and other work tasks not requiring your computer screen.

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Tips to avoid computer-related eye strain when working from home.

[Download PDF]

Stretching: At Home Edition



ICW GROUP Insurance Companies

AT HOME EDITION
Stretching

Do you spend most of your time at work in front of a computer, sitting?
At home especially, we forget to get up and stretch!

Why stretch?

- Stretching is useful for both injury prevention and injury treatment.
- If done properly, stretching increases flexibility, this can directly translate into reduced risk of injury. A muscle/tendon group with a greater range of motion will be less likely to experience tears when used actively.
- Stretching is thought to improve recovery and may enhance athletic performance.
- Stretching improves your balance, coordination, and circulation. This increases blood flow to your muscles often speeding the recovery process after muscle injuries.
- Flexible muscles can improve your daily performance in tasks such as lifting and bending.
- Stretching promotes better posture. Frequent stretching keeps your muscles from getting tight, allowing you to maintain proper posture and minimize aches and pains.
- Stretching can relieve stress by relaxing the tense muscles that often accompany stress.
- Stretching before work tasks helps you focus on working safely.

Stretching safely:

- Stretching should be a key part of your exercise program.
- Stretching before physical activity will prepare your body.
- Stretching after your work promotes better range of motion of your joints.

When stretching:

- Follow the instructions of your medical care provider!
- Stay within your comfort range! Expect to feel some tension when stretching. If you feel pain, you've gone too far.
- Move slowly and support your body.
- Hold each stretch for 10-15 seconds.
- Breathe freely as you hold each stretch; try not to hold your breath.

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Stretching ideas for working at home, with photo images.

Download PDF

Take an Ergo Stretch Break: At Home Edition



ICW GROUP Insurance Companies

AT HOME EDITION
Take an Ergo Stretch Break!

Note: If you have had any recent health problems, injury, or surgery, or if any of these actions cause you any pain, consult a health professional before starting this program.

Finger and Wrist Flexor Stretch

1. Straighten your elbow with palm up.
2. Point your fingers toward floor.
3. Use your other hand to gently pull down in your palm and fingers.
4. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

Finger and Wrist Extensor Stretch

1. Straighten your elbow with palm down.
2. Bend your wrist down and make a gentle fist.
3. If you feel discomfort in the back of your hand, then relax your fingers.
4. Gently pull down on the back of your hand.
5. Rotate your arm so that your hand is pointing away.
6. Hold for 10 - 15 seconds. You should feel a mild pulling sensation. If you experience discomfort, then perform the stretch more gently or go back to the previous step.

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Illustrated instructions for stretching hands, wrists, hamstrings, back, and neck.

Download PDF

Winter Driving Safety Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Driving safely in winter weather can be a challenge for even the most experienced driver. It's easy to forget after months of mild conditions that snow and ice demand careful driving and special preparation for your vehicle. 17 percent of all vehicle crashes occur during winter conditions.

Winter is the perfect time to build crackling fires, hit the slopes, and snuggle up with a nice cup of cocoa. It also creates some of the most treacherous road conditions.

Snow and ice make even the most routine drive dangerous. Before winter weather arrives, make sure your vehicle is in good condition, keep in mind how you and your vehicle may be affected by the elements and be prepared for emergency situations.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

People are killed and are injured each year by auto accidents that occur on snowy, icy, or slushy roads.

Roadways in Northern climes are subject to snow and other winter conditions.

Safe winter driving requires an abundance of caution, with defensive driving techniques employed and extra vigilance behind the wheel. Common sense practices – like never using a phone while driving and always wearing a seatbelt – are all the more important, while speeding and aggressive driving are especially dangerous.

Being an alert, defensive driver while on the road is critical for

winter driving safety, but so too are the ways in which you prepare and care for your vehicle during the colder months. Depending on where you live and the types of roads on which you drive, winter driving may call for everything from different tires to different wiper blades to different fluids in the engine.

DRIVING DANGERS

Loss of Traction

Snow makes roads extremely slick and slippery, so when you're driving in the snow it's easy to lose control of your vehicle when it loses traction. This means your wheels can slide out of control and you're at high risk of getting into an accident or collision.

Limited Visibility

Gray days and snowfall can make for seriously limited visibility when driving in the snow. This makes it difficult for you to navigate your surroundings and see what drivers around you are doing, putting you at a higher probability of getting into an accident.

Vehicle Malfunction

Cold weather can take a serious toll on your car, messing with the fluids under the hood as well as the durability of your car's tires. You could wind up with a fluid freeze or a blowout if you're not careful.

Rust

Snowy roads get salted to help melt the snow and ice and give you better traction. However, as you drive on salted roads the salt gets flung up onto your vehicle, and this can eat the paint and cause rust.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Severe weather can be both frightening and dangerous for travelers. Winter storms, bad weather and sloppy road conditions

are a factors in crashes and fatalities every winter.

COLD WEATHER DRIVING TIPS

- Keep a bundle of cold-weather gear in your car, such as extra food and water, warm clothing, a flashlight, a glass scraper, blankets, medications, and more.
- Make certain your tires are properly inflated and have plenty of tread.
- Keep at least half a tank of fuel in your vehicle at all times.

TIPS FOR DRIVING IN THE SNOW

- **Stay home**. Only go out if necessary. Even if you can drive well in bad weather, it's better to avoid taking unnecessary risks by venturing out.
- **Drive slowly**. Always adjust your speed down to account for lower traction when driving on snow or ice.
- **Accelerate and decelerate slowly**. Apply the gas slowly to regain traction and avoid skids. Don't try to get moving in a hurry and take time to slow down for a stoplight. Remember: It takes longer to slow down on icy roads.
- **Increase your following distance** to five to six seconds. This increased margin of safety will provide the longer distance needed if you have to stop.
- **Know your brakes**. Whether you have antilock brakes or not, keep the heel of your foot on the floor and use the ball of your foot to apply firm, steady pressure on the brake pedal.
- **Don't stop if you can avoid it**. There's a big difference in the amount of inertia it takes to start moving from a full stop versus how much it takes to get moving while still rolling. If you can slow down enough to keep rolling until a traffic light changes, do it.
- **Don't power up hills**. Applying extra gas on snow-covered roads will just make your wheels spin. Try to get a little inertia going before you reach the hill and let that inertia carry you to the top. As you reach the crest of the hill, reduce your speed and proceed downhill slowly.
- **Don't stop going up a hill**. There's nothing worse than

trying to get moving up a hill on an icy road. Get some inertia going on a flat roadway before you take on the hill.

TIPS FOR LONG-DISTANCE WINTER TRIPS

- **Be Prepared**: Have your vehicle checked by a AAA Approved Auto Repair facility before hitting the road.
- **Check the Weather:** Check the weather along your route and when possible, delay your trip if bad weather is expected.
- **Stay Connected:** Before hitting the road, notify others and let them know your route, destination and estimated time of arrival.
- **IF YOU GET STUCK IN THE SNOW:**
- **Stay with your vehicle**: Your vehicle provides temporary shelter and makes it easier for rescuers to locate you. Do not try to walk in a severe storm. It is easy to lose sight of your vehicle in blowing snow and become lost.
- **Don’t over exert yourself:** When digging out your vehicle, listen to your body and stop if you become tired.
- **Be Visible:** Tie a brightly colored cloth to the antenna of your vehicle or place a cloth at the top of a rolled up window to signal distress. At night, keep the dome light on if possible. It only uses a small amount of electricity and will make it easier for rescuers to find you.
- **Clear the Exhaust Pipe:** Make sure the exhaust pipe is not clogged with snow, ice or mud. A blocked exhaust pipe can cause deadly carbon monoxide gas to leak into the passenger compartment of the vehicle while the engine is running.
- **Stay Warm:** Use whatever is available to insulate your body from the cold. This could include floor mats, newspapers or paper maps. Pre-pack blankets and heavy clothing to use in case of an emergency.
- **Conserve Fuel:** If possible, only run the engine and heater long enough to remove the chill. This will help to conserve fuel.

FINAL WORD

Winter driving demands special care; safe driving is a year-round habit. You and everyone in your vehicle should be wearing seat belts for every ride. Children should be in age- and size-appropriate child seats. Never drive after drinking. Never drive when distracted by an electronic device or anything else. Those are the essentials for safe driving, whatever the weather.

Working at Elevations Safety Talk

WHAT’S AT STAKE?

Humans experience adverse physical effects at altitudes above 1,500 meters. Since air pressure is low at high altitudes, oxygen is scarce and lungs require more effort to deliver oxygen into the bloodstream. Although the majority of major construction projects take place at altitudes where humans don’t need to acclimate, developments in parts of Bolivia, Peru, Tibet, and Ethiopia (to name a few) in the last 50 years exhibit signs of a future where we continue to push the limit and build skyward.

There are dangers that pose a threat to the wellbeing of your workers. Working at high altitudes is challenging and dangerous, but with OSHA on your side to guide you through the legal processes of fulfilling such a unique contract, you can rest assured that every precautionary stopgap is utilized to keep workers safe and your job site OSHA compliant.

WHAT’S THE DANGER?

Working at Heights

Working at heights means that an individual is working in a place that requires necessary precautions to prevent them from falling at a distance, resulting in serious injury. Working at heights is one of the most prominent causes of major work related injuries and fatalities. Falls from ladders, scaffolding, and lifts onto debris can cause serious injury even when the height is perceived to not be dangerous. Employers need to ensure that they take all measures necessary to lower the risk of their workers falling from a height using preemptive hazard recognition to constant site assessment.

Falls

Fall prevention should not be taken lightly. In 2016, 11,495 lost-time injury (LTI) claims were made in Ontario alone. That is 31 workers a day suffering from serious injury due to falls. Nine resulted in fatalities, while 70% of those falls were same level falls (ground level). Workers should try to avoid working at height if at all possible. If they can’t, they should ensure that they use the right equipment and safety procedures for their specific task, ensuring their personal workspace is safe for themselves and others around the site. Remember to secure all items when at height, as falling tools is as big a hazard as falling people!

Relevant OSHA Regulations

According to OSHA’s guidelines for respiratory protection as outlined in statute 1910.134, “air breathed by employees must have an oxygen content of at least 19.5 percent.” Oxygen content below the approved levels can result in physiological problems or render an employee unable to cope with other workplace hazards. Although OSHA recognizes the marked differences in an employee who is acclimated to low oxygen and an employee who is not, the definition of oxygen-deficient conditions are consistent across

all employee needs. As such, the OSHA Respiratory Protection Standard insists that employees working at high altitudes are provided with a supplied-air respirator that delivers the approved 19.5 percent oxygen by their employer.

Altitude Sickness / Other Health Concerns

Altitude sickness usually occurs when a person makes a rapid ascent to an altitude of more than 8,000 feet. Altitude sickness can be classified as acute mountain sickness (AMS), high-altitude pulmonary edema (HAPE), and high-altitude cerebral edema (HACE). The symptoms of altitude sickness can be classified into two categories:

- **Early symptoms:** headaches, fatigue, and insomnia
- **Later symptoms:** shortness of breath, extreme fatigue, respiratory failure, cerebral edema, coma, and death

People with symptoms of AMS usually don't require medical care, but if symptoms progress, they should consider consulting an emergency medicine physician, hyperbaric chamber expert, neurologist, or critical care specialist. If you believe you have symptoms of AMS, it's imperative to return to a lower altitude immediately to offset the development of further symptoms. Remember that acclimation takes time, and it's important to listen to your body when working at high altitudes.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

OVERHEAD PLATFORMS/ELEVATED WORK STATIONS/HOLES IN FLOOR AND WALLS

Falls are among the most common causes of serious work related injuries and deaths. Employers must set up the work place to prevent employees from falling off of **overhead platforms, elevated work stations or into holes in the floor and walls.**

Reduce Falls

Employers must set up the work place to prevent employees from falling off of overhead platforms, elevated work stations or into holes in the floor and walls. OSHA requires that fall protection

be provided at elevations of four feet in general industry workplaces, five feet in shipyards, six feet in the construction industry and eight feet in longshoring operations. In addition, OSHA requires that fall protection be provided when working over dangerous equipment and machinery, regardless of the fall distance.

To prevent employees from being injured from falls, employers must:

- Guard every floor hole into which a worker can accidentally walk (using a railing and toe-board or a floor hole cover).
- Provide a guard rail and toe-board around every elevated open sided platform, floor or runway.
- Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment (such as a vat of acid or a conveyor belt) employers must provide guardrails and toe-boards to prevent workers from falling and getting injured.
- Other means of fall protection that may be required on certain jobs include safety harness and line, safety nets, stair railings and hand rails.

OSHA requires employers to:

- Provide working conditions that are free of known dangers.
- Keep floors in work areas in a clean and, so far as possible, a dry condition.
- Select and provide required personal protective equipment at no cost to workers.
- Train workers about job hazards in a language that they can understand.

THE DO’S & DON’TS OF WORKING AT HEIGHTS

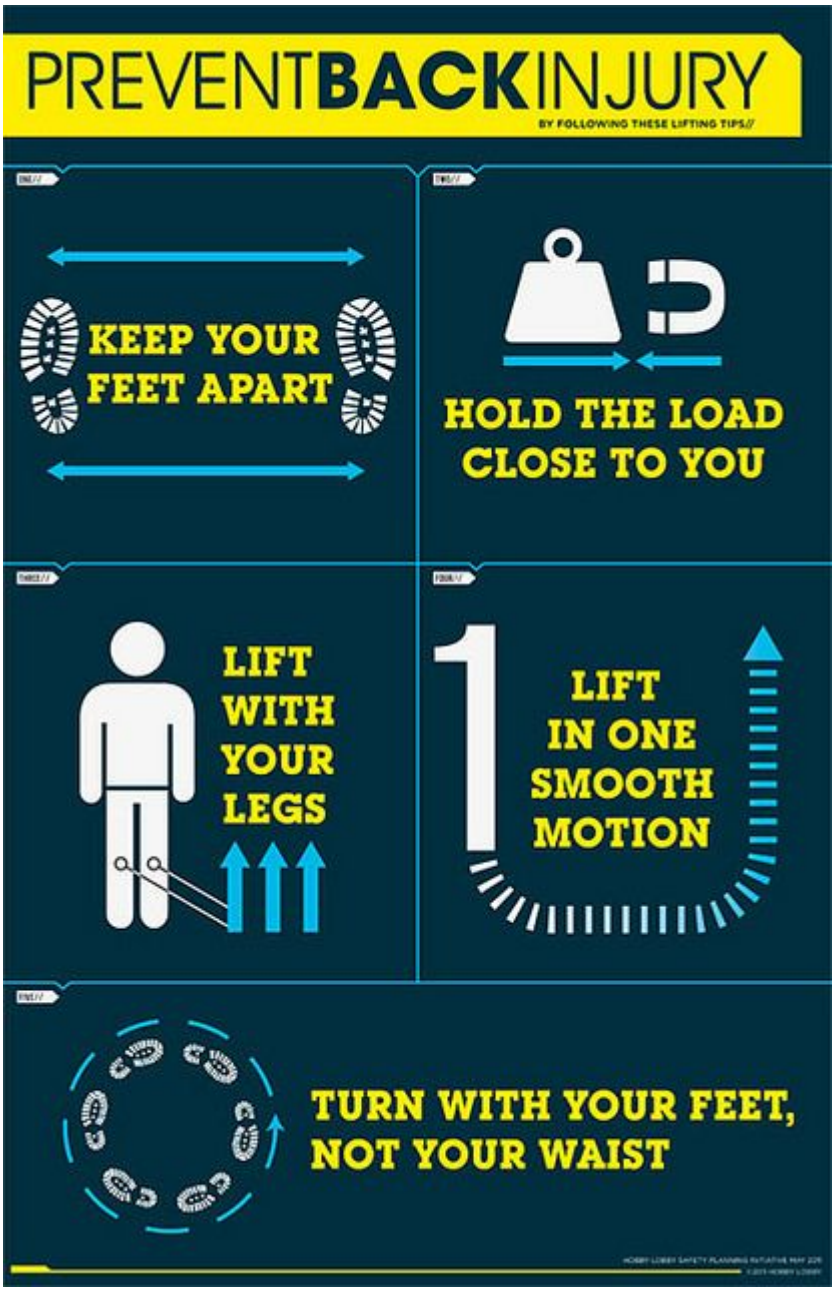
- **DO** as much work as you can while you are on the ground.
- **DO** make sure that the employees can safely move to and from the area where they are working at height.
- **DO** ensure that the equipment that you’re using for the job is strong, stable and suitable enough to get the job done. Inspect and maintain them regularly.

- **DO** be careful when you are working near to a fragile surface.
- **DO** ensure that you are protected from falling objects.
- **DO** make preparations for emergency evacuations and rescues.
- **DON’T** overload the ladders that they are working on, with equipment or materials.
- **DON’T** try to reach too far when you’re on a ladder or stepladder.
- **DON’T** use ladders or stepladders to do work that entail heavy or strenuous tasks. Only use them to do work that’s quick and light.
- **DON’T** allow incompetent workers do any work at height.
- **DON’T** lean or place the ladder on or fragile upper surfaces.
- **DON’T** stay quiet when you feel someone is compromising their own safety or the safety of others

FINAL WORD

Injuries from falls are one of the most common and severe workplace accidents. Employees must understand how to identify fall hazards and the ways they can protect themselves.

Back Safety Infographic



Concrete-Masonry Infographic

IF YOU'RE NOT BUILDING WITH CONCRETE MASONRY. YOU'RE PLAYING WITH FIRE.

When hundreds of lives rely on what you build, start with fireproof concrete block.

Elderly community facilities depend on a balanced design.

DETECTION

Smoke detectors quickly alert residents of a fire in the building.



SUPPRESSION

Sprinkler systems help control fire until firefighters arrive.





COMPARTMENTATION

Concrete masonry contains the fire and significantly reduces damage. Even if smoke detectors or sprinklers never activate, concrete masonry simply can't fail. Unlike wood, it will never burn and will maintain structural integrity.



CONCRETE MASONRY SAVES MORE THAN LIVES. IT SAVES ON LONG-TERM COSTS.

Upgrading to concrete based materials is usually less than 5% of overall initial construction costs—and could be less expensive for certain building layouts.

Concrete masonry is resistant to damage from water, fire, vandalism and mold growth—keeping long-term costs lower.

There's nothing safer than concrete masonry.
Learn more at www.NCMA.org.

NATIONAL CONCRETE MASONRY ASSOCIATION

Means of Egress Toolbox Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

MEANS OF EGRESS DEFINITION:

A continuous and clear path from any occupied portion of a building to a public way, such as an outdoor sidewalk. A means of egress consists of three parts:

1. **The exit access –** path within the building that leads to an exit
2. **The exit –** doors to the outside, enclosed exit stairways, and horizontal exits
3. **The exit discharge –** the route from the exit to the public way

Part 1: The Exit Access

When the IBC talks about "accessible," it means that somebody in a wheelchair can use whatever *thing* they are referring to. Therefore, an "accessible space" means that a person in a wheelchair can enter and exit that space via an "accessible means of egress" (i.e. walkway, ramp, or elevator).

Accessible spaces must have two accessible means of egress, and they are typically required to be no less than 36″ wide.

For Non-accessible spaces, which are floors above or below the ground floor, the accessible pathway must lead to an exit stairway, elevator, or horizontal exit. These areas serve as an Area of Refuge where emergency responders will come to help people in wheelchairs.

Part 2: The Exit

The exit consists of an elevator with standby power or exit stairway and the exit door on the ground floor.

Part 3: The Exit Discharge

The exit discharge consists of either an accessible route, such as an ADA ramp or walkway, or a stair and platform with a refuge area.

Another commonly confused word is “egress.”

Egress is another word for “exit”, and is used in building code to refer to the means by which somebody can exit a building. For example, a fire escape is defined as a “means of egress” because that’s how somebody can get out of a building if there was an emergency. Most states and townships have building code that requires means of egress on each floor.

WHAT’S THE DANGER?

Slips, Trips and Falls

All roadways, paths, stairs, steps, etc. must be maintained in good condition and must not subject employees to risks to their health or safety. They must be free from **slipping and tripping** hazards and suitable arrangements must be in place to prevent falls.

The most likely injury at places of access and egress to the site are those associated with **slips and trips**. The principal control is the provision and maintenance of suitable surfaces. For an entrance into an existing building undergoing refurbishment, barrier matting can prevent floors from getting wet and slippery. In wet conditions staff must either wipe their feet or the mat will need to be large enough to take approximately seven or eight paces to traverse. Every effort should be made to prevent movement of the matting so careful selection is essential.

HEIGHT

In the context of access and egress, **Principal Hazards** from working at height include:

- items dropped or falling from buildings and scaffolds at the boundaries and entrances to a site
- the placement of ladders and scaffolding blocking or

impeding access.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

General Safety Regime

Interior: Buildings/Structures

Recommendations

The condition of all walkways, roadways, staircases, steps, etc. be checked regularly, with suitable records kept. Such checks should form part of the active monitoring regime of the occupier of the premises. Checks should include visual examination of the ground for defects, wear and slipping and tripping hazards as well as checks on the operation and adequacy of the lighting and the condition of handrails, warning notices, etc. All defects must be report and effective repairs undertaken by a competent person.

Poor access/egress may lead to workplace accidents – Floors

About a third of all workplace accidents arise from slips, trips and falls. Many of these accidents are due to poor housekeeping, but others arise from poor conditions, such as defects in the floor, poor lighting and spillages. The **Workplace, (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations 1992,** require that every floor in a workplace shall be of a construction such that the floor is suitable for the purpose for which it is used. They must also be of sound construction and should have adequate strength and stability taking account of the loads placed on them and the traffic passing over them.

Main Entrances

The main routes into and out of the premises may take many forms, such as: ordinary swing doors, powered revolving doors, push revolving doors, automatic opening doors, etc. Where revolving or automatic doors are provided, alternatives means of access and egress should also be considered.

Doors

Doors and gates must be suitably constructed, and where necessary fitted with appropriate safety devices. In particular, sliding doors and gates must be fitted with devices to prevent them from leaving their tracks, upward opening doors and gates must be fitted with devices to prevent them from falling back, powered doors and gates must have suitable and effective means to prevent trapping type injuries and must be able to be operated manually unless they open automatically during a power failure, and doors and gates which are capable of being opened from either direction (swing doors, etc) must provide a clear view of both sides when closed.

Staircases, Landings and Corridors

Staircases should be in good condition, ideally with handrails on both sides of the staircase. The staircases, landings and corridors should be well lit, free from obstructions and slipping and tripping hazards.

Where there are holes in the floor, suitable arrangements must be made taken against accidents (to prevent people from being injured as a consequence of the holes) until such time as they can be made good.

Ramped Pedestrian Access

Ramped pedestrian access (especially when provided for disabled persons) should provide safe and secure access and egress.

Lifts and Lift Motor Rooms

Passenger lifts should be tested and inspected by a competent person at least once every six months although this frequency may be reduced to once in every twelve months for goods lifts that are not used to transport people.

Suitable arrangements should be made for the servicing and maintenance of lifts and for the rescue of people trapped due to lift failure. Lifts should be fitted with a suitable means of raising the alarm. Lift motor rooms should be clearly identified and should be kept locked and should only be accessed by competent

persons (such as lift engineers).

Fixed Vertical Ladders, Etc

Fixed vertical ladders are not usually acceptable as a means of access to a work area, although there are several obvious exceptions.

Fixed ladders should not be provided as a means of access in circumstances where it would be practical to install a staircase. Access between floors should not normally be by way of ladders (or steep stairs), although these may be used where a conventional staircase cannot be accommodated. It should be noted that stairs are much safer than ladders; especially when loads are to be carried.

External Areas and Building Façade

The external areas of the premises should be inspected regularly, including checks on the condition of the building façade and all structure attached to the building, such as lights, aerials, CCTV cameras, flagpoles, etc. Similarly, checks should be carried out for all external areas, including car parking areas, roads and footpaths, fencing, lighting, etc. Any defects should be addressed and made safe.

Fire Escape Routes

Fire escape routes must be kept clear and in a good state of repair. In some instances, these may include external metal staircases and even over the roof escape routes that pass into or through other premises.

Active monitoring of premises

It is recommended that the premises are monitored regularly to ensure that all access routes and equipment are in good condition and are free from obstructions and tripping hazards.

FINAL WORD

“Means of Egress” under OSHA data nomenclature is changing to conform to plain understandable English. By so doing, employers, employees and others will better under the obligations of employers and safety and health protections for employees. “Means of egress” will be changed to Exit Routes.

Office Safety Toolbox Talk

WHAT’S AT STAKE?

Office safety is a duty and moral responsibility of every company. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) states office safety as an obligation and that employers must provide a workplace free from serious hazards. Ensuring office health and safety promotes the wellness of both employees and employers and avoids the likelihood of accidents that may result in property damage, injuries or, worse, loss of life.

WHAT’S THE DANGER?

FIVE OF THE COMMON OFFICE HAZARDS:

1. **Slips, Trips and Falls**

Universal slip, trip and fall culprits include unattended spills, wet floors, exposed cords, unstable work surfaces, uneven floors, loose rugs and cluttered areas.

2. **Ergonomic Injuries**

Office workers spend many hours a day seated at a desk, working on a computer, resulting in ergonomic strains and other injuries related to posture and repetitive movement. These types of hazards can be difficult to detect.

3. **Eye Strain**

Spending a large portion of your workday at the computer can cause eyestrain, according to the Mayo Clinic. Eyes may become dry and irritated, and workers may begin having trouble focusing. Light levels should be suitable for the work task—for instance, manual detail work may require higher levels of lighting, but staring at a computer monitor does not, the NSC said.

4. **Fire Safety**

According to the latest available data, fire departments responded to approximately 17,500 office fires in 2012, which resulted in $643 million in property damage, according to the National Fire Protection Association.

5. **Indoor Air Quality**

The prevalence of poor indoor air quality has contributed to a rise in occupational asthma and other respiratory disorders, chemical sensitivity and allergies, according to the NSC. Some of the reasons for poor air quality are inadequate ventilation systems; office overcrowding; the presence of cleaning chemicals and pesticides; water damage and mold growth; cubicle design that blocks off air flow to work areas; too much or too little humidity; and poor housekeeping, which leads to dirty work environments.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

EVALUATE THE OFFICE FOR POTENTIAL HAZARDS

1. Ergonomics

Take a moment to pause and consider how you’re sitting. Is your back straight? Are your shoulders hunched over? Can your feet

reach the floor? Is your computer monitor or mobile device screen too close or too far away? These inconveniences may seem small on a day-to-day basis, but if you sit hunched over or strain to see your monitor every day for ten years, you could cause serious damage to your body. This can lead to pain, numbness, tingling and even musculoskeletal disorders, or MSDs. MSDs include carpal tunnel, leg numbness, and chronic pain in the neck, back or shoulders.

To avoid MSDs, you should train your employees to set up their workplaces to provide neutral body positioning. To achieve neutral body positioning, adjust your chair and desk so that you hands, wrists and forearms are straight and parallel to the floor. Then, keep your head level and balanced, your shoulders relaxed and your elbows close to your body. Your knees should be at the same height as your hips and should be parallel to the floor. Your feet should be fully supported by the floor or by a footrest.

2. Physical Layout

A poor office layout can distract employees, decrease productivity and morale, and put employees at risk for trips, falls, bumps and other injuries. Desks should be placed at least three feet apart, and office equipment like computers and printers shouldn’t be placed on the edge of desks. Employees shouldn’t sit beneath an uncovered vent that dumps hot or cold air on them. Filing cabinets should be closed when not in use, and cords should be neatly organized where they don’t present tripping hazards and aren’t rolled over by desk chairs.

3. Lighting

Too much lighting can cause glare on computer screens, which can cause eye fatigue and strain. Employees should never sit with their backs to a window. Too-bright offices can be made dimmer by removing one of the rods in overhead fluorescent lighting. Too-dark offices can be made brighter with task lamps.

4. Air Quality

Poor air quality, caused by construction elsewhere in the

building, mold and mildew, or unpleasant odors, can cause respiratory illness, dizziness, and more. You should keep all common areas, especially kitchens, clean and free from spoiled food. If you suspect that your office has mold or mildew problems, you can call a professional to measure the mold levels in each room.

5. Noise Levels

High noise levels can trigger headaches or migraines and distract your employees from their work. This is particularly common in open office environments. To combat this, you can move desks farther apart, turn down the ringers on all phones, require employees to use headphones when listening to audio at their computers, and move noisy office machines away from desks.

6. Storage

When storing boxes of files, papers or other flammable materials, you should be sure to never store them near an ignition source, like a water heater. Stack the heaviest objects or boxes on the bottom and the lightest objects on top. Consider securing storage racks to the wall with a wall anchor so they don’t tip over, and never store objects in walkways where they could present a tripping hazard.

7. Electrical Equipment

About 6,000 office fires are reporting every year in the United States. Many of these are caused by malfunctioning or improperly used electrical equipment. Office fires are particularly dangerous because most office equipment, like chairs and machinery, give off toxic fumes as they burn. Inspect all electrical equipment, like monitors, fax machines, and space heaters, for damaged cords and plugs. Make sure that your employees are not overloading electrical outlets with multiple power strips or plugging multiple extension cords into each other. Train your new and existing employees over what types of electrical equipment are and are not allowed in your workplace.

TOP SEVEN SAFETY TIPS FOR OFFICE WORKERS TO PREVENT WORKPLACE

INJURIES

1. Make sure your desk setup is ergonomic

To maintain a neutral posture, your head should be centered over your neck and shoulders, wrists flat and elbows resting comfortably at your side. If your feet won't touch the ground unless you lean forward, use a footrest.

2. Take regular breaks to get up and move around

Sitting all day puts office workers at risk for numerous health problems. Our warm up and stretching guide gives you easy exercises you can do at work.

3. When it's slippery due to ice and snow, walk like a penguin when entering and leaving your office

Winter slips and falls in parking lots are extremely common. To avoid them, walk like a penguin by walking flat footed taking short, slow steps. It's also important to wear sensible footwear and carry only what you can handle.

4. Use a headset for prolonged or frequent phone use

Cradling the phone between your shoulder and ear can cause neck and back pain.

5. Keep your workplace tidy

Clean up spills immediately, keep aisles free of clutter, and tie up or secure cords so they don't pose a trip hazard.

6. Don't let electrical cords create a fire risk

Avoid running electrical cords under carpet or through windows and doorways. Also, don't fasten them with unapproved devices, such as staples.

7. Know your office emergency procedures

Make sure you know what to do in the event of a fire, storm, violent intruder, medical problem or other emergency.

FINAL WORD

Because of the general perception that construction or oilrig work is much more dangerous than office environment work, much more education is needed to dispel that perception. Along with fractures, dislocations, strains, sprains and contusions, in recent years illness has increased among the office worker population.

Pneumatic Tools Safety Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Pneumatic tools are powered by compressed air and include chippers, drills, hammers, and sanders.

Pneumatic Tools and Air compressors include:

- Drills
- Grinders
- Impact wrenches
- Nailers
- Riveters
- Sanders
- Saws
- Screwdrivers
- Staplers

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Workers can be injured by pneumatic power tools when:

- **Attachments or fasteners are not secured properly and fly**

off the tool. To control this hazard, make sure your pneumatic impact tools to have safety clips or retainers that prevent dies and tools from being accidentally expelled from the barrel.

- **The operator misses the intended surface, and a nail or staple strikes a bystander.** To prevent this from happening, make sure all handheld pneumatically powered tools used for driving nails, staples, and similar fasteners that operate at 100 psig (pound-force per square-inch gauge) or more line pressure are equipped with a safety device that prevents the tool from operating unless the muzzle is in contact with a surface.
- **Hoses are accidentally disconnected from the tools.** An unconnected high-pressure hose is a flogging hazard to workers in the area. To prevent this, make sure that all hose connections on pneumatic power tools, including the one at the tool, are secured by a positive locking device to prevent accidental disconnection. Alternately, a ball check device or equivalent can be provided at the air source.
- **Hoses fail.** As when pressurized hoses become disconnected, a hose that fails can whip around wildly, creating a hazard. To prevent damage to hoses, make sure that the manufacturer’s safe operating pressures for hoses, pipes, valves, filters, and other fittings are not exceeded. Also, make sure that hoses with greater than a half-inch inside diameter have a safety device to reduce pressure in case of hose failure. Hoses must not be used to lift or lower tools.
- **Tools are accidentally activated.** Workers may trip on air hoses or in some other fashion accidentally activate pneumatic tools. For this reason, pneumatic nailers and staplers must be disconnected from their air supply at the tool when not in use or unattended.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

There are six important characteristics of Pneumatic Tools that dictate measures to prevent injuries with use of these power tools.

1. **Air pressure**

Electrical tools are powered from a source that provides a well-regulated standard current. However, with air powered tools, air may be delivered at varying pressures and flows. If the pressure/flow exceeds the manufacturer’s rating, the tool itself could over-speed, delivering too much torque or other excessive force. This is hazardous due to the increased possibility of tool or workpiece breakage. Inadequate pressure or flow could also result in an underperforming tool. This may prompt you to apply excessive force in your work, possibly causing tool breakage and injury. Adjust your air pressure to the manufacturer’s rating. Make sure hoses are of the correct inside diameter and are not kinked or crushed. Your compressor and receiver must have enough capacity to deliver air in an amount sufficient to properly operate all attached tools.

2. **Noise Levels**

Pneumatic tools discharge exhaust air at the tool itself or nearby. Frequently, this air is not muffled and therefore pneumatic tools can be much noisier than electric tools. As prolonged exposure to loud noise can damage your hearing, precautions should be taken. Either effective mufflers can be installed on the exhaust, or hearing protection should be worn.

3. **Oil & Air Quality**

The discharge of air can cause concerns. The air feeding the tool may contain oil or antifreeze, discharging contaminated air into the environment around you. Special precautions may be needed in confined or poorly ventilated spaces. If oil-contaminated air discharges near where you grip the tool, your hands may become oily, resulting in a dangerous loss of grip. It helps to frequently wipe both your hands and the tool and to be sure you are not over oiling the tool. To eliminate the hazard, find a replacement tool with a better design.

4. **Air Temperature**

If the air discharges on your hand, you can feel that it is cold.

Under certain conditions, the temperature could be low enough to cause frostbite, stiffen your fingers, or even make you more susceptible to certain types of cumulative trauma injuries. Again, this may indicate poor tool design. Gloves may help if they can be worn without creating the additional hazard of becoming caught up in any rotating or reciprocating parts.

5. **Shock Potential**

Air powered tools are not grounded or double insulated so if you contact a live wire while working with a pneumatic tool, you can be shocked. Make certain all electric power in the immediate work area is isolated.

6. **Whipping Hose Danger**

If an electric cord were to break, there is generally not much danger unless you come in contact with the conductors. However, a severed air hose can whip around violently until the air is shut off. You may be injured by the whipping hose or while scrambling to get out of its way. Protect the hose from physical damage. When using quick disconnect type fittings, install the male end of the tool.

USE PNEUMATIC TOOLS SAFELY

- Review the manufacturer’s instruction before using a tool.
- Wear safety glasses or goggles, or a face shield (with safety glasses or goggles), and, where necessary, safety shoes or boots and hearing protection.
- Post warning signs where pneumatic tools are used. Set up screens or shields in areas where nearby workers may be exposed to flying fragments, chips, dust, and excessive noise.
- Ensure that the compressed air supplied to the tool is clean and dry. Dust, moisture, and corrosive fumes can damage a tool. An in-line regulator filter and lubricator increases tool life.
- Keep tools clean and lubricated, and maintain them according to the manufacturers’ instructions.
- Use only the attachments that the manufacturer recommends

for the tools you are using.
- Be careful to prevent hands, feet, or body from injury in case the machine slips or the tool breaks.
- Reduce physical fatigue by supporting heavy tools with a counter-balance wherever possible.

HANDLE AIR HOSES PROPERLY

- Use the proper hose and fittings of the correct diameter.
- Use hoses specifically designed to resist abrasion, cutting, crushing and failure from continuous flexing.
- Choose air-supply hoses that have a minimum working pressure rating of 1035 kPa (150 psig) or 150% of the maximum pressure produced in the system, whichever is higher.
- Check hoses regularly for cuts, bulges and abrasions. Tag and replace, if defective.
- Blow out the air line before connecting a tool. Hold hose firmly and blow away from yourself and others.
- Make sure that hose connections fit properly and are equipped with a mechanical means of securing the connection (e.g., chain, wire, or positive locking device).
- Install quick disconnects of a pressure-release type rather than a disengagement type. Attach the male end of the connector to the tool, NOT the hose.
- Do not operate the tool at a pressure above the manufacturer’s rating.
- Turn off the air pressure to hose when not in use or when changing power tools.
- Do not carry a pneumatic tool by its hose.
- Avoid creating trip hazards caused by hoses laid across walkways or curled underfoot.
- Do not use compressed air to blow debris or to clean dirt from clothes.

FINAL WORD

Pneumatic tools offer great versatility and the capability to get a job done quickly and efficiently. As with any energized equipment there is the potential for harm to people or property.

Poison Ivy Toolbox Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Poison ivy sap is present in nearly every part of the plant, including the leaves, stems, and roots.

The sap contains an oil called urushiol, which is a pale yellow, sticky, oily substance that is also present in poison oak and poison sumac.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Poison ivy rash is caused by an allergic reaction to an oily resin called urushiol (u-ROO-she-ol). This oily resin is in the leaves, stems and roots of poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac.

The rash usually appears within 3 days of the exposure to the oil, but the time frame can vary significantly. The more sensitive a person is to poison ivy, the faster the rash may appear.

Signs of a reaction

- intense itching
- red skin or red streaks
- red bumps, which are called papules
- swelling
- blisters, often developing in lines and oozing
- crusting skin

The rash is not contagious, and it does not spread to other areas of the body. If it appears to be spreading, this will be due to a delayed reaction or further contact with objects that remain contaminated.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

First comes the itching, then a red rash, and then blisters. These symptoms of poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac can emerge any time from a few hours to several days after exposure to the plant oil found in the sap of these poisonous plants. The culprit: the urushiol oil. **Here are some tips to avoid it.**

Recognize Poison Ivy, Poison Oak, and Poison Sumac

- **Poison Ivy:** Found throughout the United States except Alaska, Hawaii, and parts of the West Coast. Can grow as a vine or small shrub trailing along the ground or climbing on low plants, trees and poles. Each leaf has three glossy leaflets, with smooth or toothed edges. Leaves are reddish in spring, green in summer, and yellow, orange, or red in fall. May have greenish-white flowers and whitish-yellow berries.
- **Poison Oak:** Grows as a low shrub in the Eastern and Southern United States, and in tall clumps or long vines on the Pacific Coast. Fuzzy green leaves in clusters of three are lobed or deeply toothed with rounded tips. May have yellow-white berries.
- **Poison Sumac:** Grows as a tall shrub or small tree in bogs or swamps in the Northeast, Midwest, and parts of the Southeast. Each leaf has clusters of seven to 13 smooth-edged leaflets. Leaves are orange in spring, green in summer, and yellow, orange, or red in fall. May have yellow-greenish flowers and whitish-green fruits hang in loose clusters.

Poison Plant Rashes Not Contagious

Poison ivy and other poison plant rashes can’t be spread from person to person. But it is possible to pick up the rash from plant oil that may have stuck to clothing, pets, garden tools, and other items that have come in contact with these plants. The plant oil lingers (sometimes for years) on virtually any surface until it’s washed off with water or rubbing alcohol.

Plant Oil Touches Skin

The rash will occur only where the plant oil has touched the skin, so a person with poison ivy can’t spread it on the body by scratching. It may seem like the rash is spreading if it appears over time instead of all at once. But this is either because the plant oil is absorbed at different rates on different parts of the body or because of repeated exposure to contaminated objects or plant oil trapped under the fingernails. Even if blisters break, the fluid in the blisters is not plant oil and cannot further spread the rash.

TIPS FOR TREATMENT

Don’t scratch the blisters. Bacteria from under your fingernails can get into them and cause an infection. The rash, blisters, and itch normally disappear in several weeks without any treatment.

You can relieve the itch by:

- Using wet compresses or soaking in cool water.
- Applying over-the-counter (OTC) topical corticosteroid preparations or taking prescription oral corticosteroids.
- Applying topical OTC skin protectants, such as zinc acetate, zinc carbonate, zinc oxide, and calamine dry the oozing and weeping of poison ivy, poison oak, and poison sumac. Protectants such as baking soda or colloidal oatmeal relieve minor irritation and itching. Aluminum acetate is an astringent that relieves rash.

GET MEDICAL HELP IF:

- You have a temperature over 100 degrees Fahrenheit.
- There is pus, soft yellow scabs, or tenderness on the rash.
- The itching gets worse or keeps you awake at night.
- The rash spreads to your eyes, mouth, genital area, or covers more than one-fourth of your skin area.
- The rash is not improving within a few weeks.
- The rash is widespread and severe.
- You have difficulty breathing.

It’s an oil in these plants that causes the rash. By taking some precautions, you may be able to prevent the oil from getting on your skin. Here’s what you can do:

Protect your skin when outdoors: Poison ivy and oak grow in all states, except Alaska and Hawaii. Poison sumac is found in many states. When you’ll be in a wooded area or place known to have poisonous plants, you can:

- **Cover up with clothing:** Wear long sleeves, pants, socks, and boots. If you’ll be working with plants, wear gloves.
- **Apply an ivy blocker to your skin:** If you know you’ll be in an area with lots of underbrush, this can give you an extra layer of protection. It’s meant to be used along with long pants, gloves, and other clothing. You’ll find these non-prescription products online and in stores.

Wash everything after being outside: After being outdoors in a woody area or a place where poisonous plants may grow, you want to make sure you wash off any oil. To do this, put on a pair of disposable gloves and:

- **Machine-wash the clothing you wore.** This includes hats and gloves. Wash everything in hot water and detergent as soon as you get home. The disposable gloves help you avoid getting oil on your skin. Be sure to wear the gloves while taking off your clothes and putting them in the wash machine.
- **Clean all tools and other equipment by wiping them down with rubbing alcohol or washing them with soap and lots of water.** The oil can remain on a surface for months or years until it’s washed off.
- **Bathe pets.** The oil from these plants can stick to their fur.

Take a shower. You’ll want to take a lukewarm shower and wash gently. Be sure to wash under your nails and rinse well.

FINAL WORD

Education is key in dealing with poison ivy. Central is to expose two significant misconceptions. The first is poison ivy rash is not spread by weeping blisters and, secondly, poison ivy cannot be spread from person to person (ie) not contagious.

Safety Signage Toolbox Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Safety signs are one of the main means of communicating health and safety information to employees, contractors, service users and members of the public.

Safety signs should be easy to understand and should also be easy to see and read.

Signs and signals should include:

- fire alarms
- illuminated signs
- hazard signs on chemicals
- fire signage/escape routes
- prohibition notices
- warning signs
- hazard signs

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

SAFETY SIGN COLOURS

Red signs are for prohibition, danger or for alarm. They are round

shaped with a black pictogram on a white background and the red edging should be at least 35% of the surface area of the sign.

Yellow or Amber are warning signs used for caution or for taking precautions. They will be triangular in shape with a black pictogram on a yellow background with black edges. The yellow part should be at least 50% of the area of the sign.

Blue signs are for instruction or for information, for example, wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). They are a round shape with a white pictogram on a blue background. The blue part of the sign should be at least 50% of the area of the sign.

Green signs are for emergency escape routes or first aid. They are rectangular in shape with a white pictogram on a green background. The green part of the sign should be at least 50% of the sign.

Red (fire-fighting signs) give instructions for and the location of firefighting equipment. They are rectangular in shape with a white pictogram on a red background. The red part of the sign should be at least 50% of the sign.

Safety signs also encompass **NOTICE** signs as well as Safety Instruction signs and keep your workers well-informed. These types of signs will alert workers of where first aid kits are, the locations of emergency eyewash stations, and otherwise give information in a clear and concise manner. ANSI has included these signs to their Z535 standard.

While many signs are mandatory signs to have in the workplace, adding other types of informational signs can greatly contribute to worker’s safety. Other types of signs that should be considered include:

- **Traffic control signs:** If a facility has vehicle and pedestrian traffic, stop signs, yield signs, and other types of traffic control signs will keep forklifts and pedestrians safe.
- **Prohibition Signs:** Remind people not to smoke, not to enter certain areas, not to use their cell phone, etc. with prohibition signs.

- **Security signs:** These signs help to protect people and property by keeping people out of certain locations.
- **Office Signs:** Every facility, even a typical office, has a need for safety signs. Signs used for office purposes often provide directions or instructions regarding tasks.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Employers have a duty to use signs to warn workers, contractors and visitors about hazards. Additionally, safety signs reinforce training, meet safety compliance regulations and provide visitors with legally adequate warning, protecting your company from liability.

One of the easiest ways to warn everyone of **hazards** is to follow **safety sign and marking requirements.**

Here is an overview of some key steps in meeting requirements set by OSHA and updated regulations:

Assessment

It’s important to properly assess how well signs are used at your worksite. Walk through the workplace and note all hazards as well as the location of existing safety posters, signs, tags and markings.

Design

Before deciding on your signs, you need to look through the regulations concerning the specific shape, color and design of safety signs and note all the information you require to be compliant.

- Red is for danger tags that are to be used in major hazard situations where an immediate hazard presents a threat of death or serious injury.
- Orange is for warning tags that signify a hazardous situation that, if not avoided, could result in serious injury or death.
- Yellow is for caution tags that are to be used in minor

hazard situations where a potential hazard or unsafe practice presents a lesser threat of an injury.
- Fluorescent orange or red-orange is for biological hazards.

You also need to make sure you understand the difference between different types of signs in order to use them efficiently and correctly. For example:

- Notice signs provide information about equipment, areas, maintenance, instructions, and directions unrelated to personal injuries.
- General safety signs share information relating to first aid, medical equipment, sanitation and other topics. For example, they can mark emergency exits or eye-wash stations.
- Blue non-hazard signs can cover anything from directions and procedures to marking washrooms. They don’t communicate hazards and are purely information-centered.

Wording

Your safety signs should use their message (and symbols) to clearly state the nature of the hazard, the consequence of interacting with it, and instructions on how to avoid it.

Don’t forget the size of the letters on your sign. Are they large enough to be read from a safe reading distance? Or in unfavorable conditions? Make sure you signs follow the guidelines regarding the correct size of the letters depending on the circumstances.

Signage Materials

Signs should be made of the right material for your workplace, hazard area and the environmental conditions. Consider these factors:

- What are the environmental conditions in the area where you want to place the sign? Is it indoor or outdoor? What is the temperature?
- What is the sign’s fade resistance? Will it fade quicker due to certain factors?
- What are the lighting conditions? Consider whether your

signs have to be seen in the dark or under emergency lighting. Are fluorescent or photo luminescent signs a better option?

- Will the signs be regularly cleaned? Are housekeeping solutions going to damage the sign? Will the sign be affected by washdown conditions?

Placement

When affixing and placing the signs in their relevant areas, keep in mind that the signal word **(WARNING, CAUTION, DANGER)** must be readable from at least five feet away (1.52 m). This is because a person reading the sign must enough have time to follow the sign's instructions safely.

Signs should be placed so that they are easily noticeable and clearly visible. They mustn't be obstructed from view or create a hazard themselves (such as a warning sign that prevents the reader from seeing the hazard it's warning against).

Training

Provide training to all employees on the meaning of the signs and tags used in the workplace.

Employees must recognize which signs indicate immediate danger, know the difference between danger and caution signs, and always take proper precautions. Signs might seem clear and understandable, but it's not enough to put them up and expect everyone to comply. Education and training are a huge part of safety, and if you want to ensure a safe work environment for your workers then training cannot be ignored.

FINAL WORD

Signage might appear to be a minor aspect of safety, but it helps warn workers of hazards so don't ignore it, do your research and invest in appropriate and OSHA-compliant signs. You'll be protecting your workers as well as your company.

Snow Removal Safety Talk

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

People who live in Northern climates are used to dealing with the fun and frivolity of snow through sports and outdoor recreational fun. People become acclimated to snow removal whether it is in front of an office building, on a roof, or, on a driveaway.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) urges employers, workers, and general public to be aware of the hazards involved when removing snow from rooftops, in and around commercial/business, public spaces and private property.

Workers who perform these activities (for example, building maintenance workers) may have little experience or training on the **Hazards** of such operations or work.

Significant Hazards

Workers removing snow face other significant hazards in addition to falls from roofs, including:

- Amputations, eye injuries, and other injuries associated with the use of snowblowers and other mechanized equipment.
- Falls from roof – top snow removal operations resulting in fatalities.
- Collapses or tip-overs when using aerial lifts.
- Entrapment and suffocation under falling snow drifts or snow piles.

AVOID OTHER HAZARDS

Exposure to Cold

Exposure to cold can cause injury and illness in workers removing snow. Cold exposure can cause frostbite (freezing in the deep layers of skin and tissue) and hypothermia (drop of body temperature to less than 95˚F).

Physical exertion

Physical exertion during snow removal can also cause injuries and illnesses. Snow removal can be strenuous, particularly because cold weather can be taxing on the body, and can create the potential for exhaustion, dehydration, back injuries, or heart attacks, and can increase the risk of falls.

AVOID ELECTRICAL HAZARDS

Workers may face electrical hazards such as electrocution and electric shock from power lines or snow removal equipment.

- Use extreme caution when working near power lines. Always treat power lines, wires and other conductors as energized, even if they are down or appear to be insulated.
- Maintain a distance of at least 10 feet from any power line, as required by 1910.333(c)(3).
- Make sure that all electrically powered equipment is grounded (third prong on a three-prong plug is not missing) and includes a ground-fault circuit interrupter (GFCI) in the circuit.
- When using snow rakes, use extendable, nonconductive poles and designate workers as monitors to maintain 10 feet from snow rakes to overhead power lines.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

ICE PREVENTION / REMOVAL TIPS

- Purchase a good shovel. Lightweight plastic or aluminum coating with nonstick finishes will make your job a lot easier. You may be tempted to get a shovel with a large blade – however, that means you'll be pushing more weight and tire out quicker. A pusher is a great tool for

lightweight, fluffy snow removal. You'll want to grab these and have them handy before storms hit.

- Use a melter (magnesium chloride garden sprayer within a few hours before the storm hits. It can help melt snow of 2 inches or less, and keep ice from bonding to the surfaces of your plants.
- Although rock salt is affordable and does work with temperatures above 12 degrees F, it's really hard on grass & shrubs, and can start eating away at concrete. If you're willing to spend a little more, consider a magnesium chloride or calcium chloride salt that are still not good for plants, but cause much less damage.
- Sand or kitty litter will help make walkways easier to maneuver through, and prevent slipping.
- Place a drop cloth or tarp over walkways or steps. This will not only protect the ground and steps, but it will create a simple and quick way to remove the snow and prevent ice from forming!

Removal Tips

- If you have shrubs covered in snow or ice, leave them alone. Don't try to remove the snow and ice – let it melt off naturally. Shaking it off could injure the plants.
- If possible, make sure you are shoveling – even when it's still snowing. The more the snow accumulates, the harder time you'll have cleaning it out of the way. If the sun is shining, shovel down so that the concrete is exposed to the sun, to help prevent ice from forming.
- Door locks, steps, windows and walkways can accumulate ice during a storm. To get rid of the ice safely, pour lukewarm water over the area, then remove the runoff right away. Repeat this until the ice is gone. Don't use hot water, as the temperature difference can cause windows to crack, metal to warp and even eventually crack concrete!
- A leaf blower can double as a snow blower for light snow accumulation on your plants, patio, vehicles and walkway.
- Use the kids! Instead of making snow removal from your driveway and walkways a chore, make it into a game! Have a

snowball fight or snowman building contest, where all snow for the activities must come from the walkway and driveway!

Body Strain

Snow removal can be strenuous and can create the potential for exhaustion, dehydration, back injuries or heart attacks. Tips to minimize overexertion for workers include:

- Moving small amounts of snow at a time, especially if snow is wet and heavy.
- Using proper lifting form—keeping the back straight and lifting with the legs.
- Taking frequent breaks and drinking fluids, however, avoiding caffeine or alcohol.

PROTECT PEOPLE ON THE GROUND

Workers standing on the ground must also be protected during snow removal operations.

Employers should mark a safe work zone—keeping people back 10 feet from the point where snow is expected to be blown or fall—and require eye and head protection, especially when removing ice.

Snow removal can be dangerous business, particularly when removing snow and ice from rooftops and other elevated structures.

OSHA’s General Duty Clause imposes a duty on employers to protect workers from recognized serious hazards in the workplace, including snow removal from roof and other elevated structures.

THE DUTY OF CARE:

Before the work begins, employers should:

- Plan ahead for safe snow removal from roofs.
- Check the worksite for any hazards.
- Limit when and where workers will be required to go on the roof to remove snow.
- Use snow removal procedures that lower the risk of roof or structure collapse.

- Whenever possible, use engineering controls to clear ice and snow without getting on the roof (use aerial lifts and/or ladders to apply de-icing materials, use snow rakes or drag lines from ground). Engineering controls protect workers from fall hazards covered by snow and ice.
- Require all employees to follow manufacture instructions for using mechanical equipment safely.

Employers must also:

- Train workers to identify fall and electrical hazards.
- Train workers on appropriate protective equipment, fall prevention, and electrical standards.
- Provide fall protection equipment that is in good working order.
- Train workers to use ladders, aerial lifts and protective equipment per manufacture guidelines.
- Have a plan for rescuing a worker caught by a fall protection system.

FINAL WORD

When conversation swirl around dangerous jobsites, construction, oil rigs, chemical plants come to mind very quickly. Snow removal usually is last in a list of dangerous activities or jobs. But in a cold analysis, snow removal procedures and physical impact on general public and workers has a significant impact. There is much more than “meets the eye” once one investigates the full scope of snow removal domestically, commercially and the health effects.