Types of Injuries – How Workers Get Hurt Meeting Kit

WHAT'S AT STAKE

Accidents can happen anywhere and at any time. Many workplace accidents and injuries are preventable, though, if workers know the causes of accidents and are taught how to protect themselves.

WHAT'S THE DANGER

COMMON WORKPLACE INJURIES

1. **Trips, Slips and Falls.** Slips, trips, and falls account for one third of all personal injuries in the workplace. The types of injuries incurred include head, back and neck injuries, broken bones, cuts, sprains and pulled muscles.

The most common reasons for falls in the workplace are:

- **Slips:** Occasional spills, wet or oily surfaces, weather hazards like icy steps or walkway, and loose rugs.
- **Trips:** Poor lighting, clutter, wrinkled carpeting, or mats uncovered cables, and uneven walking surfaces.

1. **Being Struck By Or Caught In Moving Machinery.** Accidents with heavy machinery although are more common in factories, with farm equipment, and construction equipment. Machinery that's not properly guarded is a safety hazard. When body parts get caught in or struck by exposed moving parts or flying objects from machines without protective guards, the results are often times disastrous. The long and horrifying list of machinery related injuries includes crushed hands and arms, severed fingers, blindness and even worse.
2. **Vehicle Related Accidents.** Where there are vehicles of any kind, there's the potential for accidents. These include being struck or run over by a moving vehicle, falling from a

vehicle, being struck by objects falling from a vehicle and getting crushed by or stuck under an overturned vehicle.

3. **Fire And Explosions.** Explosions and fires in the workplace are frequently caused by risk factors such as faulty gas lines, improperly stored combustible materials or open flames. The resulting injuries incurred include damage to the respiratory system, varying degrees of burns and even potential disfigurement. Explosions and fires account for 3 percent of workplace injuries and have the highest casualty rate of all probable workplace accidents.
4. **Repetitive Stress and Overexertion Injuries.** Repetitive Stress Injuries (RSIs) are the fasting growing category of workplace injury and comprise more than 100 different types of job-induced injuries, and they're severe enough to inhibit simple activities with crippling and debilitating pain. They could even eventually permanently impair a worker's ability to perform his or her job.

Causes for these types of injuries include:

- Improper Lifting or Manually Lifting Heavy Objects
- No Breaks
- Intensive Keying

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

WORKER INJURY AVOIDANCE CHECKLIST

- **Incorporate a safety and wellness plan.** The foundation for a safe work environment is an effective accident prevention and wellness program. The program needs to cover all levels of employee safety and health with the encouragement to report hazardous practices or behavior.
- **Conduct pre-placement physicals.** Some accidents are caused by inexperience and the inability to physically perform the position. Screening applicants is a safeguard for placement with the appropriate positions matching their physical capabilities.
- **Educate employees and management staff.** Continually

cultivate a safety standard among employees and management staff. Train employees about the importance of following safety measures as often as possible. Supplemental training in body mechanics can reduce strain injuries and keep employees safe during lifting and moving.

- **Research safety vulnerabilities.** Every business is unique and doesn't necessarily have the same safety concerns. Pay extra attention to common accidents and develop strategies to avoid these setbacks.
- **Provide protection equipment.** Personal protection equipment is essential and should be enforced at hiring, meetings, and with spontaneous monitoring. Take time to teach employees how to properly use goggles, face protection, gloves, hard hats, safety shoes, and earplugs or ear muffs.
- **Have adequate staffing levels.** More often than not, overtime hours are implemented because of low staffing levels. Overworked employees may suffer from exhaustion and cut corners to meet or exceed output.
- **Don't take shortcuts.** Accidents happen when employees skip steps to complete a job ahead of schedule. Make sure all instructions are clear and organized to prevent undue mishaps in the workplace.
- **Inspect and maintain all company vehicles.** Maintenance should include monthly inspections and repairing vehicles as soon as possible.
- **Monitor safety measures.** After initial training, reinforce safety measures at every opportunity, i.e. staff meetings, supervision, and education.
- **Keep an orderly workplace**. Poor housekeeping can cause serious health and safety hazards. The layout of the workplace should have adequate foot path markings, be free of debris, and stations for cleaning up spills.

BE PROACTIVE TO PREVENT INJURIES

Look for Patterns. A WHS management system helps keep track of injuries and how they occurred.

Investigate the Cause & Make a Change. Injuries have a bad habit

of repeating themselves in workplaces.

Improve Staff Training. Knowing the cause of injuries in the workplace can identify training opportunities.

WHS Audits. Organisations can commission a third-party to conduct a WHS audit and risk assessment.

FINAL WORD

Becoming proactive at injury prevention in the workplace is possible with the right systems in place which allows for the organization to learn from previous mistakes.