

Safety Bugle

Today's Topic: Hazard Awareness



HAZARD AWARENESS

Hazards surround us everywhere whether we recognize them or not. These hazards are on the roads we drive, buildings we enter, and in the work we do. So please take a moment to consider some of the hazards which surround you.

VEHICLE HAZARDS

One of the most dangerous hazards you'll face is while driving your vehicle. Road rage, poor weather conditions/visibility, congested traffic, cell phone blinded drivers, and impaired drivers all contribute to road hazards.

- Be Patient, Pay Attention, and Stay Alert.
- Don't yell or use obscene gestures.
- Don't block the passing lane. Stay to the right if you are obstructing the flow of traffic.
- Always signal when changing lanes. Use your horn sparingly.
- Don't tailgate.
- Avoid using the cell phone while driving.
- Cooperate and don't compete on the road. Let other drivers merge into traffic in an orderly fashion.
- Let the road conditions dictate your speed and following distance.

LAB/OFFICE HAZARDS

Everyday hazards also exist in all workplaces. Safety hazards lurk in the typical work area, causing falls, fires, repetitive strain injuries, and other difficulties. Inspect your area for the following hazards and correct or report them.

Underfoot

- Torn carpeting/loose tiles.
- Tripping hazards (cords, water spills, oil spills, trash, debris).
- Boxes of printer paper or files or parts.
- Carts in the aisleway.

Overhead

- Heavy materials stored up high.
- Shaky shelves/Unsecured items.
- Burned out light fixtures.
- Obscured or inoperative exit signs.

In Between

- Blocked exits.
- Inaccessible fire extinguishers.
- Desk drawers or cabinet doors left open.
- Windows or glass doors without eye-level markings.
- Filing cabinet drawers fully loaded at the top and empty at the bottom.

Be aware of hazards, communicate hazards to others, and have an attitude for safety.

BE AT THE HEIGHT OF SAFETY

Whether it's a simple step stool, a small ladder, or an extension ladder they all help you get the job done. However, there's far more to safe ladder use than having a sturdy ladder and lots of physical ability. Many serious injuries occur from falls from ladders, even small step stools.

Simple Ladder Safety Precautions

- Choose the right ladder for the job
- Examine your ladder before stepping up

- Do not use aluminum ladders when working near electricity.
- Place the ladder on a stable foundation.
- When climbing a ladder, have both hands free for climbing.
- Only one person should be on a ladder at a time.
- Face the ladder when climbing down.

TIME TO TALK BACK

Poor lifting habits and poor posture cause degeneration of the discs of your back.

Smart Moves for Back Care

- Use good posture while sitting and standing.
- Size up the load before you attempt to lift.
- If you're not sure if you can handle it, get help.
- Get as close to the load as possible.
- Lift by straightening your legs. The muscles in your thighs are much better able to handle the load than your back.
- Get help to lift large awkward loads.

Take care of your back and it'll stand behind you in all areas of your life.

HOT WEATHER HAZARDS

Know the symptoms of heat illness:

- Heat cramps caused by heavy sweating which can deplete the body of salt. They may be accompanied by hot, moist skin and a slightly elevated body temperature.
- Heat exhaustion may be characterized by heavy sweating, strong thirst, cool and moist skin, a quick pulse, rapid breathing, nausea, a feeling of fatigue and possible fainting.
- Heat stroke is a serious medical emergency that can quickly proceed to unconsciousness and death. It occurs when the body loses too much salt and water so that sweating stops. At that point, the body's temperature increases rapidly. Symptoms include hot, red, dry skin, a quick pulse, difficulty breathing, dizziness, confusion, strange behavior, weakness and nausea.

Hot weather can bring a host of hazards. Take precautions to prevent heat illness and sunburn.

ATTITUDE: Is Yours the Safe Way

If everyone had a healthy respect for workplace safety, no one would get hurt. However, attitudes toward safety often present the greatest hurdle in providing a safe work place. Who is responsible for your safety on the job? Is it the government, the company, your boss or other members of the team? Actually, all of them have a responsibility for your safety. But ultimately, the challenge is yours. Taking responsibility for your own safety is a full-time job.

This is how to do it:

- Be aware of your surroundings at all times. STAY ALERT.
- Upgrade your training on a regular basis.
- Perform your own work place inspections. Maybe other inspections will have overlooked items you deal with regularly.
- Don't be afraid to point out unsafe practices of others. Encourage others to do the same for you.
- Don't let anyone, even your supervisor, make you do something you believe to be unsafe.