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SAFETY MATTERS

RISK MANAGEMENT NEWSLETTER

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7 WORKPLACE SAFETY TIPS IN 2024

OBJECTIVE Workplace safety is one of the biggest concerns for any business, and rightfully so. Here are seven workplace safety tips every employee should know in 2024.

1. Report Unsafe Conditions

Fixing unsafe work conditions and preventing bad things from happening starts with YOU. Employees must report unsafe work conditions to their managers as soon as they notice something isn't right.

Managers are legally obligated to create a safe working environment so if you report something as unsafe, they have to correct it as soon as possible. From wet floors to a ladder that is slightly bent and more, make sure you speak up so you can create a safe workplace for yourself and your colleagues.

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2. Follow Updated Safety Protocols

Whether your organization purchases new equipment or just updates safety procedures, you must know the new and latest safety protocols and safety topics for work associated with the change. Employers should review these updates with employees.

3. Wear Personal Protective Equipment

Wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) helps to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. Not selecting the proper PPE and inappropriate use can have serious consequences. Some of the main categories of PPE include eye protection, hearing protection, hand and foot protection, head and body protection, and respiratory protection. A few examples of PPE may consist of items such as goggles, gloves, shoes, hard hats, and respirators. Employers should supply protective equipment for their staff as well as educate employees on the proper selection and use of PPE to encourage a safe workplace.

4. Take Regular Breaks

Taking regular breaks is not just required by Cal/OSHA, it's common sense too. When workers are tired, they're more prone to incidents because awareness of their surroundings is hampered by exhaustion. Taking breaks on a regular schedule helps keep employees fresh and alert.

5. Follow Emergency Protocols

Emergencies, for example, don't often announce themselves — like fires, floods, or tornadoes. So, you must be prepared for everything in your region that can disrupt your organization's safety, employees, and stakeholders.

- Anticipate natural disasters and similar emergencies by checking social media alerts and the Weather Channel.
- Identify risks to your organization.
- Identify crucial points to your organization and how to prepare effectively.
- Create an emergency management plan.

WORKPLACE SAFETY FACTS

- In 2022 alone, 5,486 work-related fatalities were reported to Cal/OSHA (California Department of Industrial Relations).
- Around 2.8 million nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses were reported to Cal/OSHA, up 7.5 percent from 2021
- Over the 2021-2022 period, there were 502,380 workplace musculoskeletal disorders that resulted in at least one day away from work

- Make sure your employees complete Emergency Response and Evacuation Training. At a minimum, your safety plans should include the following:
  - Safety hazard observation
  - Incident report
  - Vehicle accident report
  - Safety inspection form (for supervisors)
  - Work order ticket(s)
  - Safety inspection checklist

6. Proper Ergonomics & Body Mechanics

Proper ergonomics and body mechanics are also important factors for employee health and safety. Ergonomics is concerned with the interactions between humans and systems, for example, the tools we use in our daily jobs to complete tasks. Whereas, body mechanics is concerned with how humans move their bodies to complete tasks safely and efficiently, such as lifting and moving items, or repetitive tasks. Understanding the difference between the two practices and how these practices can help in your daily tasks is essential to preventing injuries. A few things to remember:

- It's okay to adjust your workstation to suit your needs as long as it is safe to do so.
- Use assistive devices, such as a dolly/cart, when available.
- Ask for assistance from a co-worker when needed.

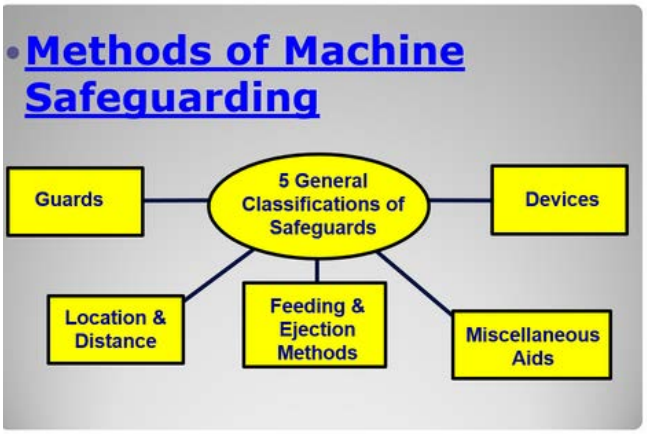
Applying these principles aids in the prevention of musculo-skeletal disorders and other injuries.

7. Equipment Maintenance

Do not perform maintenance on working equipment unless you know it is safe. If you plan to perform maintenance on facility equipment, always decommission it before working on it. Always review and follow manufacturers recommendations and examine tools for safety defects (i.e., machine guard missing) before you use them.

Employers must:

- Provide energy isolation devices to employees.
- Provide proper lockout tags.
- Provide lockout tagout procedures.
- Provide training for Authorized, Affected, and Other employees.
- Perform periodic inspections to ensure that lockout tagout policies are being properly followed.



REFERENCES

Cal/OSHA (California Department of Industrial Relations)
Employer-Reported Workplace Injuries and Illnesses 2022
National Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries in 2022

This California Schools JPA fact sheet is not intended to be exhaustive. The discussion and best practices suggested herein should not be regarded as legal advice. Readers should pursue legal counsel or contact their insurance providers to gain more exhaustive advice.