



5-minute safety talk

Hazard Recognition: Watch Out for Dangers

It pays to pay attention

Today, there are always multiple things vying for your attention. However, a lack of focus on the task at hand can lead to tragedy, especially in higher risk situations.

One of the leading causes of work-related deaths is due to contact with objects, which include being struck against an object; struck by an object; caught in an object or equipment; or caught in collapsing material. According to *Injury Facts*[®], there were 721 workplace deaths due to these types of incidents and more than 230,000 cases of injuries with days away from work in 2013. These types of injuries can arise from falling objects or from being inadvertently struck by a moving vehicle – such as a forklift or a car. Falls are the most common office incident, accounting for the greatest number of disabling injuries. In fact, office workers are twice as likely to suffer a fall as non-office workers.

Paying attention to your surroundings and concentrating on the task at hand is vitally important in keeping you and your coworkers safe. Here are some tips to help prevent these injuries:

- Neatly store loose materials
- Secure items that are stored at a height
- Store heavy objects close to the floor
- Open one filing cabinet drawer at a time to prevent a tip-over
- Wear the proper personal protective equipment for your environment, such as steel-toed shoes
- Always walk behind moving equipment, if possible
- Never obstruct your vision by overloading moving equipment
- Only operate equipment that you are properly trained to use
- Make sure all the safety devices on your equipment are in good working order before use
- Use extra caution around corners, in high traffic areas and near doorways

All workers should schedule regular safety walks around work areas to identify existing and potential hazards. A reporting system should be in place for reporting and correcting the hazards.

If you are witness to an incident resulting in injury:

Always be sure the area is safe before entering to provide first aid. If an area is unsafe, do not enter. Instead, call 9-1-1 to report that there are injured people in an unsafe environment and request that the dispatcher summon help to make the scene safe. In home environments, make sure the scene is as safe as possible. For example, turn off the power from the main circuit breaker before helping a victim who has been in contact with electricity.

Bring it home

You can take steps to make your home safer from contact with objects, too. Think about your furniture arrangement so there is always enough room for normal traffic. Don't fall victim to distracted walking, especially when using your cell phone. Be present in the moment and try to keep your mind from wandering, even if it's a task you've done a million times.

Safety is everyone's responsibility. It's important that everyone develop an interest in following safe practices both on and off the job.

