

TODAY'S Supervisor®



www.nsc.org

Vol. 78 • No. 9 • September 2014

What supervisors need to know about PPE

If a hazard is reported in the workplace, it is the supervisor's responsibility to do everything possible to rectify it and protect workers.

According to the National Safety Council's "Supervisors' Safety Manual," eliminating hazards generally happens by way of engineering controls (can the hazard be isolated?) and administrative controls (can the hazardous job be performed when fewer workers are present?). After these options are explored, the use of personal protective equipment may be the next best option. However, PPE use does nothing to eliminate workplace hazards and relies completely on worker compliance. NSC describes what supervisors should know to develop an effective PPE program:

- Stay up to date on government standards and requirements for PPE.
- Understand the results of workplace hazard assessments and what it means for your employees' PPE needs.
- Know how your company pays for and maintains purchased equipment.
- Create an educational training program for workers who are required to wear PPE.
- Review and understand any applicable Safety Data Sheets for your workplace.

- Stay familiar with PPE on the market.
- Develop an industrial hygiene evaluation procedure to ensure all workplace PPE meets SDS requirements.

Helpful tips

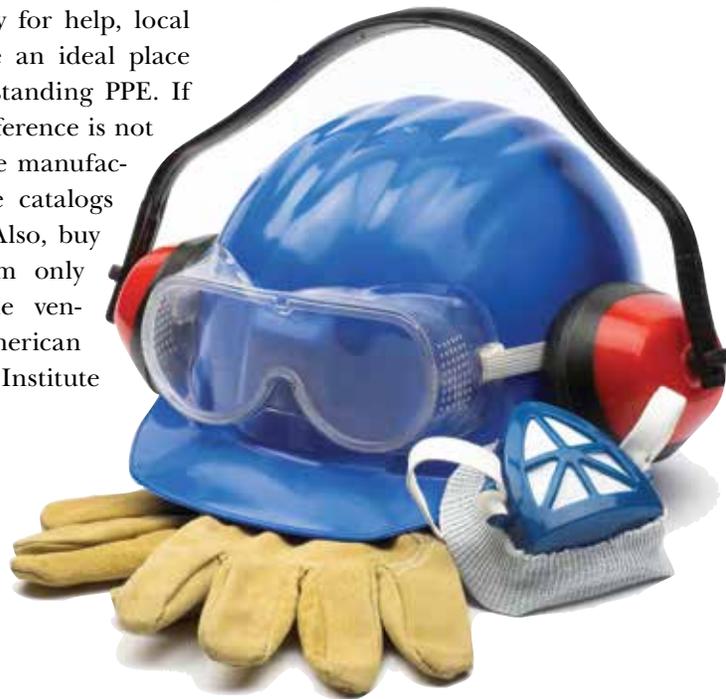
It is critical for supervisors to understand why their workers need PPE, and how to properly use any necessary safety equipment. NSC states that PPE manufacturers often provide training on the equipment, as well as information on staying up to date on changes in requirements. Besides contacting manufacturers directly for help, local safety conferences are an ideal place to get help on understanding PPE. If attending a safety conference is not possible, check out the manufacturer's website, online catalogs and trade literature. Also, buy safety equipment from only trusted and reputable vendors that adhere to American National Standards Institute standards.

Involving employees

Getting workers to wear PPE can be a challenge. However, workplaces with high

levels of employee participation in safety procedures have been found to have fewer safety-related disciplinary problems.

So how can you get workers to wear PPE? Ask if their safety eyeglasses fit properly, or if their helmets or work boots are comfortable. To help ensure fit and comfort, NSC recommends having multiple sizes and brands of PPE available so every worker can find gear that best fits him or her. Employees should be involved in every aspect of the PPE selection process.



Mind the cords

Electrical extension cords are found in many office buildings and at construction sites, and should be treated with caution. According to the Division of Workers' Compensation at the Texas Department of Insurance, the safe use of extension cords is an important component of electrical safety on the job.

The following are do's and don'ts provided by TDI/DWC for working safely with extension cords:

Do:

- Check cords for damage before use.

- Ensure all equipment and extension cords have the mark of an independent testing laboratory.
- Fully insert the plug of an extension cord into an outlet.
- Keep extension cords away from water.
- Use ground fault circuit interrupter protection in damp environments.
- Store extension cords inside.
- Unplug extension cords when not in use.
- Only use extension cords temporarily; permanent wiring should be installed when use of the cords is no longer temporary.

Don't:

- Use an indoor extension cord outdoors.
- Attempt to plug extension cords into one another.
- Use an extension cord that has a lower wattage rating than the tool being used with it.
- Overload cords.
- Force a plug into an outlet.
- Work with an extension cord when it is wet.
- Overheat an extension cord.
- Drive over a cord.
- Place cords under rugs, carpets or in busy areas.



Five Minute Safety Meeting

Take steps to prevent eyestrain

Do you ever catch yourself rubbing your eyes, blinking repeatedly and looking away from your computer screen? You may be experiencing eyestrain. The American Osteopathic Association notes that as more and more workers stare at computer screens and monitors all day, side effects from eyestrain – including blurred vision, headaches, dry eyes and frequent blinking – are becoming common.

For most people, eyestrain results from focusing too intently on a screen and not

blinking enough, according to AOA. To help relieve eyestrain, blink more or use artificial tears to help your eyes stay moist. Other tips AOA recommends to prevent eyestrain include:

- Ensure your working space is properly lit. This may mean closing blinds to prevent glare and avoiding fluorescent lights.
- To help diminish glare, place an anti-glare monitor on your screen and paint walls dark colors.
- Take regular rest breaks (every few hours for five minutes) to allow your eyes to relax.
- Position your monitor 20 to 26 inches away from your eyes.
- Ask your eye care provider about devices that might help, such as anti-reflective lenses or bifocal lenses.
- If the text size on your monitor is too small, adjust it until it is big enough to comfortably read.
- If you are younger than 40, AOA recommends seeing an eye doctor at least every other year; people 40 or older should make annual appointments.



Photo: Purestock/Thinkstock

Chain saws: A serious res

Chain saws are one of the most efficient portable power tools workers have at their disposal, according to OSHA. They also are one of the most dangerous. Every year, roughly 36,000 people are treated in emergency departments due to an injury caused by a chain saw, states the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

To help workers stay safe when using chain saws, OSHA recommends following these tips:

Before revving up:

- Check that the chain saw's controls, bolts and handles are properly working and adjusted according to the manufacturer's directions.
- Stay at least 10 feet away from ignition sources when fueling.
- The chain saw's fuel container must meet the following requirements:
 - Must be made of metal or plastic
 - Must not exceed 5 gallons
 - Must be approved by the Underwriters Laboratories, Factory Mutual, the Department of Transportation or other Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories

When operating a chain saw:

- Maintain a secure footing.

FACEValue

NIOSH's **F**atality **A**ssessment and **C**ontrol **E**valuation Program

Case report: #09MI085*

Issued by: Michigan Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Program

Date of incident: Fall 2009

TRUCK DRIVER STRUCK, KILLED

A 52-year-old truck driver was struck and killed by a double-axle gravel train semi-tractor trailer. The victim, who was wearing a Class II reflective vest at the time of the incident, was walking to his truck through a parking lot, which was inadequately lit. The driver of the truck had a suspended driver's license and did not have a commercial driver's license. He struck the victim with the driver's side of the tractor as he began to make a turn. Emergency responders declared the victim dead at the scene.



TO HELP PREVENT SIMILAR OCCURRENCES:

- Ensure headlights are on in parking lots when vehicles are moving during dusk through dawn hours.
- Educate workers about fatigue management.
- Create an inspection checklist to identify safety concerns, such as non-functioning lights.
- Establish vehicle traffic flow and pedestrian walkways in parking lots.
- Create and use a safety committee as part of a safety and health management system.

To download the full report, go to www.cdc.gov/niosh/face/pdfs/09MI085.pdf.

*The following report is the product of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's Cooperative State partner. The findings and conclusions in each report are those of the individual Cooperative State partner and do not necessarily reflect the views or policy of NIOSH.



Photo: Huntstock/Thinkstock

possibility

- Keep your hands on the saw handle and away from the blade.
- Keep the operating area and retreat path free of debris.
- Never cut directly overhead.



Photo: iamgramfoto/Stock/Thinkstock

- Before retreating, shut off or release the throttle.
- Turn off or engage the chain brake when carrying the saw more than 50 feet or across difficult terrain.
- Know that kick-backs are possible. To help reduce kick-back dangers, use chain brakes, low kick-back chains or guide bars.

Safety Fact

35 million days of productive time was lost in 2012 due to permanently disabling injuries that occurred in prior years.

FACE photo: NIOSH

Photo: sunstock/Stock/Thinkstock

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Today's Supervisor (ISSN 0734-3302) is published monthly by the National Safety Council, 1121 Spring Lake Drive, Itasca, IL 60143, and is printed in the United States. © 2014 by the National Safety Council.

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News Briefs



Researchers study tobacco use among workers

ATLANTA – Workers in the construction and mining industries are among those most likely to smoke cigarettes and use smokeless tobacco products, according to a recent report from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Researchers studied data from nearly 60,000 workers on tobacco use in 2005 and again in 2010. They found that cigarette smoking among working adults dipped to 19.1 percent in 2010 from 22.2 percent in 2005, but the change in smokeless tobacco use was not statistically significant.

Industry-specific data raised several red flags for researchers. In 2010, 18.8 percent of workers in the mining industry used smokeless tobacco (i.e., chewing tobacco or snuff) and 27 percent smoked cigarettes. That same year, 7.9 percent of workers in the construction industry used smokeless tobacco and 29.5 percent smoked cigarettes.

Both types of products can lead to long-term health issues. Smokeless tobacco is not a safe alternative to combustible tobacco, researchers said.

Researchers recommended employers help reduce tobacco use by designating workplaces as tobacco-free, providing

employees with information about the risks of tobacco use and sponsoring workplace-based tobacco-cessation services.

Go to <http://1.usa.gov/1pLLzz9> for the full report.

Employers and workers differ on workplace noise levels: survey

POMONA, CA – Workers and employers have different perceptions of noise levels in their workplaces, according to the results of a recent survey.

Conducted by Wakefield Research and Source Media, on behalf of EPIC Hearing Healthcare, the survey involved 1,500 full-time workers and nearly 500 benefits professionals in December.

About 80 percent of employers said their workplace is hardly ever noisy. In contrast, only 46 percent of workers said the same thing. "Noisy" was defined as loud enough for a person to have to raise his or her voice to be heard.

Fifty-five percent of employees said their workplaces are noisy for at least an hour a day, compared with 19.2 percent of employers. And 36 percent of workers said their workplaces are noisy for more than three hours a day, compared with 8 percent of employers.