

Daily Safety Focus



"Leading with Safety"

Daily Safety Focus



July 2011

- July 1 – Running on Empty
- July 2 – Four way to Prevent Dog Bites
- July 3 – Debunking Some Seat Belt Myths
- July 4 – Chances You Can't Afford To Take
- July 5 – Safety Attitudes
- July 6 - Poison ivy, Stings and Bites
- July 7 – Defensive Driving
- July 8 – Slips, Trips and Falls
- July 9 - Job Safety Affects the Whole Family
- July 10 - Avoiding Road Wrath
- July 11 – Circle of Safety
- July 12 - Why Take a Chance
- July 13 - Off-the-job Safety
- July 14 – Lawn Safety
- July 15 – Job Briefings
- July 16 - Drive Forwards - Not Backwards
- July 17 - Hurrying or Working Efficiently
- July 18 - Stinking Thinking
- July 19 - Develop a Healthy Safety Attitude
- July 20 - Storms: Protecting Yourself, Co-workers, and Family
- July 21 - Why Safety Belts
- July 22 - Get A Handle on Stress!
- July 23 - Little Things That Count
- July 24 – Safety Doesn't Stop at the Exit
- July 25 – Oh, My Aching Back!
- July 26 - Pinch Points
- July 27 - Sprains and Strains
- July 28 - Tiny Tick Carries Lyme Disease
- July 29 - Drivers Distractions
- July 30 - Hand Tools
- July 31 - Heat Disorders and Their Health Effects

Daily Safety Focus



Four Ways to Prevent a Dog Bite

July 2

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that over 4.7 million people are bitten by dogs each year. Tragically, children and the elderly are the most frequent victims. What's more, statistics prove that the majority of biting canines are not stray Pit Bulls, but our own household dogs!

Why dogs bite

Most dog bites are reported as "unprovoked." However, something causes a dog to bite, and victims are often taken by surprise.

Many people see dogs as gentle, devoted creatures that live to serve and rescue. But beneath that soft fur is a predatory hunter. Domesticated or not, dogs live by their instincts. These instincts tell them to chase prey, guard their territory, protect their young and defend themselves when cornered.

Learn how to protect yourself

Some people think that if you encounter an aggressive, frightened or otherwise dangerous dog, you're bound to receive a nasty bite. But there are ways you can protect yourself. Here's how.

1. Learn the warning signs

Dogs constantly communicate and usually give some type of warning before they bite.

Most warning signs you can see; others you hear. They include:

Growling, snarling or aggressive barking

Shyness or fear, such as when a dog crouches, has his head low or tail between his legs

Fur raised up, ears erect, body stiff, tail high

An unnaturally still or unresponsive dog (many fighting breeds have been bred for their ability to disguise aggressive intentions)

A dog in pain will bite anyone that touches him -- even his owner

2. Avoid dangerous situations

Follow these tips to avoid coming face-to-face with a biting dog:

Stay away from dogs that are in cars, chained or cornered -- they often feel vulnerable and will bite to protect their territory

Never run past a dog -- joggers and children on bicycles can trigger their instinct to chase and attack

Don't go near a dog that's eating, chewing, sleeping or caring for puppies

Never tease a dog or play too rough

Be careful around older dogs -- they may be blind, sensitive to touch or hearing-impaired

Never leave infants or children alone with a dog -- according to the CDC, infants top the list for dog-related deaths

Never try to break up a dog fight with your hands; use a water hose, stick, or throw a blanket over the dogs to disorient them (children should call an adult for help)

Keep your face away from your dog's, especially when disciplining

3. Know self-defense moves

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Daily Safety Focus



Many people are bitten because they unintentionally provoke or escalate an attack. If you're approached by an aggressive dog, don't make eye contact or move suddenly, says Mitzi Robinson, who runs Bulli Ray Enterprises, a dog-bite prevention company in San Diego, CA. This can challenge a dog and cause him to attack. Stand motionless, like a statue. Face the dog, but turn your head away.

If a dog lunges at you, don't try to overpower him. If you're holding something, put it into his mouth. "If you don't have anything in your hand, put your arm up to protect your face," Robinson says. If you're knocked to the ground, don't move or scream. Pretend that you are a turtle: curl up in a ball face down, and cover your head with your arms. Stay in this position until the dog leaves.

4. Make your dog people-safe

Take your dog to training classes -- develop his respect for humans

Your dog should be part of the family -- unsocialized, "outdoor" dogs bite more frequently than "indoor" dogs

Establish house rules and standards of behavior for your dog -- this will make your pet happier, more respectful and safer to be around

Dogs are magnificent creatures, but you must fully understand them to safely co-exist together. Once you've learned to respect dogs, they can truly be your best friend.

What to Do If You're Bitten

If you are bitten and don't know the dog, try to remember what he looked like and where he went. Your doctor needs to rule out the possibility of a rabies infection.

Wash your wounds with plenty of warm, soapy water or saline solution, and cover with a clean, dry dressing. Call your doctor immediately. Renee Ralls, a home-care nurse in Sonoma County, CA, warns, "Be sure your tetanus vaccination is up to date. Tetanus is a common virus, and infections can be fatal."

Report the incident to the police, your local health department, and an animal control agency.

Daily Safety Focus



Debunking Some Seat Belt Myths

July 3

By this time everyone must be familiar with some of the statistics about motor vehicle accidents, injuries, and fatalities. For example:

- Over 12 million vehicular accidents per year, involving over 20 million vehicles, and of course even greater numbers of people.
- More than 50,000 fatalities and millions of disabling injuries yearly.
- The major cause of work-related deaths—more than one-third.

The value of "buckling up for safety," because use of seat belts could prevent well over half of each year's vehicular fatalities, has also been emphasized over and over again.

And yet there is a reluctance, or even refusal, by many to take advantage of this protection. And a number of excuses have been offered to justify this refusal.

Here are a few myths that, for safety's sake, need to be exploded:

- "I just don't think I'll be one of those statistics; I'm a careful driver." Many of those killed in motor vehicle accidents were in no way at fault, and many were passengers—and more than half of them were not wearing their seat belts.
- It has been estimated that every one of us can expect to be in a crash every 10 years—a fifth of those will be serious crashes. Out of every 60 children born today, one will be involved in a fatal vehicle accident.
- "I'd rather be thrown from the car—that would be safer in the long run." Wrong. Passengers thrown out of a vehicle are 25 more times likely to travel to the morgue.
- "I'm afraid I'll be trapped in the car, in a fire or under water, and won't be able to get my seat belt off to escape." Only about one vehicle accident in 250 involves fire or deep water. Even in those that do, failure to wear a seat belt increases the likelihood of serious injury that would, itself, prevent escape.
- "I can brace myself if there's a crash." Very unlikely, when you realize that the force of impact at 30 miles an hour is the same as if your vehicle fell off a five-story building. (Remember, too, that a 30-mph impact means one car hitting a stationary object at that speed. A collision between two vehicles traveling at 30 mph has a 60-mph impact.)
- "I'll use mine on a long highway trip, but not when I'm just buzzing into town for groceries." Not a sound move, since two out of three car accidents take place within 25 miles of home—and half of fatal accidents occur at speeds under 40 mph.
- "I really resent seat belt laws, because they don't treat me as an adult with the right to make decisions about my own safety." The point here is that a driver who is not wearing a seat belt can reduce the margin of safety of others in the same car.

I hope none of you have been in the habit of using one of these excuses—or any other excuse—for not buckling up on the road, as either a driver or a passenger. If you have been, I hope you now realize that ignoring your seat belt is taking a

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Daily Safety Focus



serious gamble. It's a gamble in which there are no winnings and the losses July be permanent. Company policy states that all passengers and drivers are required to use the personal restraint system supplied with the vehicle or equipment while doing business for the company. Besides that it's the law!

Daily Safety Focus



Chances You Can't Afford To Take

July 4

What is safety? Every one of you could give an answer of some sort, but let's rely on an authoritative source and consult Mr. Webster. His dictionary indicates that being "safe" means being "secure from the threat of danger, harm, or loss." So why should following or enforcing safety ever be a problem? Isn't everyone interested in being free from danger, harm, or loss? Why on earth would anyone, through negligence or disinterest, expose himself or herself—and others—to those threats?

Perhaps it's partially because it can be difficult to recognize certain situations as potential accident producers. Danger is obvious in many situations, but not all of them. For example, suppose you have occasion to use a stepladder. You see that one leg is completely broken off, but the ladder can still stand. An accident is obviously a potential, though not inevitable, outcome if the ladder is used.

Suppose the leg is not broken, but only cracked. The danger is not obvious, but an alert person, recognizing that there is a possibility of an accident anytime a ladder is used, will inspect the ladder, discover the crack, and tag it for repair. There is no accident.

But Julybe there would not have been an accident anyway. How can you tell when you have prevented an accident that would otherwise surely have happened? You can't.

Visualize another situation. Dwayne is eating lunch on the stair steps and leaves his soda can there. A little later, Teresa comes along and sees the cup. If she picks it up, does this mean she is preventing an accident? Julybe it wouldn't cause a slip or trip anyway, but there's no way of knowing.

There's one thing we can be sure of knowing, though. The odds are a lot more favorable for safety when the cracked or broken ladder is avoided and the drink can is removed from the stairs. Using flawed equipment July or July not cause an accident. Avoiding it will not.

Carry this over to other situations in which workers July tempt fate by taking chances. That's what's happening every time you turn on a power tool without checking to see that it and its wiring are in good condition. That's exactly what's happening when anyone removes or sidesteps a machine guard—even for 'just these few operations.'

These are chances you can't afford to take, if your goal is your own safety and that of your co-workers.

Daily Safety Focus



Safety Attitudes

July, 5

Most of us have had some type of safety training during our childhood. We were taught to look both ways before crossing streets and not to play with matches. As adults we are warned by others and by the media not to smoke in bed, not stay out in the sun too long, and not to drive while under the influence of alcohol. And yet, common as these safety rules July be, how many of use can truthfully say we have not turned on or off a light with wet hands, smoked in bed, got a sunburn or driven home from a party after having one to many drinks.

As employees we sometimes neglect safety rules because we are in a hurry, figure accidents always happen to someone else or are resentful towards our supervisors. Every time we engage in unsafe acts, we are betting that an accident will not occur. Is health and possibly life itself worth such a bet?

We can offer excellent safety training. You can know all the safety rules and be able to demonstrate the safe ways to do a job, but knowing every safe rule ever written will not protect you if you fail to use that knowledge daily on the job. If you have a habit of doing things the wrong way, that habit July be difficult to break, but it can done. The next time you are about to break a safety rule, stop and think about all that could happen to you, your co-workers your family. Imagine the pain, the inconvenience the lost time and money that could result. Then do the job correctly, the safe way. When you do this you will find safety becoming a habit. Safety will turn out to be one of the best habits you have ever had, because it will decrease your chances of joining those who are disabled or killed in accidents each year. Let look at a few basic safety rules:

Report all accidents so others will be able to learn and avoid them in the future.

Know what type of fire extinguishers July be used safely on each class of fire.

Use good body mechanics when lifting or moving objects. Wear eye protection and appropriate PPE at all times.

Practice good housekeeping.

No one can say when an unsafe act or condition will result in an accident, when an accident will result in injury or when injury will cause permanent disability or death. So don't take chances with your life or health. Resolve to work safely.

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Daily Safety Focus



Poison ivy, Stings and Bites

July 6

There is a big difference between people who go outside and "outside" people. Anyone who works outside should, by all means, be an inside person. The payoff comes in knowing how to be prepared for outside work.

Always wear proper clothing and have extra clothes handy. Hard hats, good footwear, safety glasses, goggles, personal safety equipment, lotions and repellents are a must for working outside. Be cautious of weather conditions too, including wind, rain, snow and sun.

It is important to protect your arms and hands with clothing, especially when working around poison ivy. Wear high boots when mowing fields containing poison ivy and thoroughly wash all clothing and tools that have been in contact with this plant by using soap and water. Do the same with any exposed part of the body and then cleanse the area with alcohol. If you have previously contacted poison ivy without any harmful results, infection can occur at a later date, weakening the body's resistance.

Contact with the ivy's growing leaf, stem, fruit, or roots is hazardous. Even smoke drifting from the burning foliage is extremely infectious. Also, contact with an object that has retained some of the oil or "sap" where the foliage has been lying can be infectious.

An effective method used in preventing infection is a serum taken orally in the spring with a booster shot in late summer. There are also resistance shots that can be administered by a physician.

If you have been subjected to poison ivy, report it to your employer. You should know the plant on sight, both the climbing and ground-covering types. You should also be able to recognize snakes and the nests or combs of insects that are capable of producing painful and sometimes fatal stings and bites. These insects, including bees, hornets, yellow jackets and paper wasps, are known as social insects, which means they live in colonies.

If you are sensitive to the stings of social insects, get medical treatment right away. An insecticide aerosol bomb should be available for quick knockdown of these insects and spiders. Bee colonies are often located high above the ground in hollow trunks of decaying trees. Hornets' comb is usually suspended from a tree or shrub in the shape of a football. It July vary in length from a few inches to several feet.

Yellow jackets build their combs in the earth under shrubs, in stone walls or in fields, whereas paper wasps' combs are frequent in dense evergreens and are constructed of pulp from chewed bark or wood.

Workers engaged in utility line and right-of-way-clearing work should wear the proper clothing and footwear, be able to identify poisonous snakes, have snake bite treatment kits on hand and know the proper way to use the kits. If you are bitten, apply ice to the affected area as a first-aid measure.

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Daily Safety Focus



Defensive Driving

July 7

Defensive driving does not require a high degree of special training. The characteristics of a defensive driver are the same characteristics that apply to many aspects of our lives. Let's look at the four most important requirements for defensive driving.

Knowledge

Defensive drivers take time to educate themselves about safe driving techniques. They know how to recognize hazards and avoid collisions. They know the traffic laws in their area. This knowledge helps them know how to act correctly and quickly in traffic situations. They also know how to properly maintain their vehicles in a safe operating condition.

Alertness

Defensive drivers are alert, both to traffic conditions and how their mental and physical conditions July affect their driving. They pay attention to the traffic situation to the front, sides and rear, glancing in rear – and sideview mirrors many times a minute. They give all their attention to the task of driving.

Foresight

Defensive drivers know that their worst enemy is the unexpected. They never assume the other driver will do the right thing. They anticipate hazards by scanning the road to size up the traffic situation as far ahead as possible. In this way they are able to prepare for hazards rather than simply react to them. They practice long-range foresight by keeping their vehicle well maintained, by checking them before driving, and by always wearing a safety belt.

Judgement

Good drivers use common sense and knowledge to make decisions wisely and quickly. They maintain control of their behavior, resisting the temptation to make risky maneuvers to get somewhere faster.

Can you think of other aspects that make a good defensive driver?

Daily Safety Focus



Slips, Trips and Falls

July 8

We have all heard examples about the seriousness of slips and falls in the workplace. They happen suddenly. They're totally unexpected, and the results can be a painful and possible permanent injury that could change your entire life.

Falls kill more people each year than any other kind of accident. Most of these accidents result from slips and falls at floor level rather than from high places. About 75% of these slips and trips occur on walking surfaces such as floors, stairs and sidewalks.

Basically, slips and falls can happen almost anywhere and can be caused by a number of things. Trying to catch your balance when you slip for example can pull muscles, tear ligaments and cause permanent damage to your back, even if you avoid falling down. Standing on a bumper to clean your windshield is an open invitation for a bad slip or fall. Be especially careful of your footing on ladders attached to trucks and catwalks, and always face a ladder when climbing or descending.

Most trips, slips and falls are the result of unsure footing, and not exercising caution or keeping alert. They can happen on any surface that is covered with mud, snow, water, oil, grease or any other slippery substance. Whether you spill a substance or see a spilled liquid take the time to clean it up. Uneven or defective surfaces, littered floors, telephone wires and electrical cords, open drawers or anything else that project from the walking surface July cause a fall.

Stairways present another tripping problem, whether they're poorly lighted and set inside a building, or steps outside. Materials, cartons, boxes or other items should never be stored on stairways.

Proper lighting, without glare, shadows or violent contrasts between floor areas and the conditions of workers shoes are also important. Falls can be prevented if you use common sense and remember:

1. Not to climb over boxes and material or use it for a makeshift platform.
2. Not to jump off of ladders, stairs or trucks.
3. To carry only what you can reasonably handle and keep you balance.
4. To stay alert and always expect the unexpected at all levels.

Be careful. Watch your step. Report all hazardous conditions to your Forman or supervisor immediately, unless you can take care of them. The important thing is not to let slips and falls bring you down.

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Daily Safety Focus



Job Safety Affects the Whole Family:

July, 9

When we commit an unsafe act on the job, we rarely consider the consequences in our lives off the job. But workplace injuries can take a terrible toll on our personal lives, and the lives of our families.

A workplace injury can tragically change a family life. The consequences are much greater than the financial ones, although those are certainly a burden.

When a man or woman receives a serious workplace injury, the whole structure of the family can undergo a change. Things which the family used to take for granted are no longer possible. The role of the injured person July undergo a drastic change, and everyone else is forced to adjust accordingly.

All of this makes safety a family matter - to encourage you and to support you in receiving training for safety procedures, wearing the correct Personal Protective Equipment, and working with an attitude for safety.

With this in mind, you are encouraged to take this safety talk home and discuss it with your family. After all, they have almost as much to lose as you do if you are badly injured at work.

Workplace accidents and workplace environments can cause brain damage, hearing loss, paralysis, amputations, blindness, chronic and terminal illnesses, and other life-changing conditions.

The following "Partner's Pledge" is intended to point out how much your spouse or other family members could be affected if you receive a serious on the job injury. Take it home and talk about it.

Note: This exercise is in no way intended as a reflection upon persons with disabilities-who cope admirably, who are taking their rightful place in increasing numbers in the workforce, and who are of course valued family members. It is merely intended to drive home the possible consequences of workplace injuries and their effects on the family.

Partner's Pledge

I, _____, hereby authorize you, my family partner, to work without Personal Protective Equipment such as safety goggles, safety shoes, ear plugs, hard hat and respirator. You have my permission to ignore seatbelts, machine guards, lockout-tagout procedures and chemical hazard warnings.

I hereby promise I will, without condition, carry out the following duties in case you become seriously disabled:

- ***If you choose not to wear head protection*** - I promise to accept any radical personality change resulting from your brain injury.

- ***If you choose not to wear hearing protection*** - I promise to explain by saying to our grandchildren that ... "Grampa's really not yelling at you - he speaks loud only because his ears ring and he can't hear too well".

- ***If you choose not to use fall arrest equipment*** - I promise to transport you everywhere you can no longer go on your own.

- ***If you choose not to wear eye protection*** - I promise to describe each fantastic sunset, each colorful spring garden and every Christmas morning that you won't be able to see.

- ***If you choose not to follow lockout / tagout procedures*** - I promise to tie your shoes every morning and to do all of the yard work that you used to enjoy.

- ***If you choose not to follow confined space entry procedures*** - I promise to hold down two jobs to support our children in the lifestyle to which they have become accustomed.

And most of all ... in doing so I promise that I will remain cheerful in spite of the pain and sadness that will overwhelm us all.

Partner's Signature

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Daily Safety Focus



Avoiding Road Wrath

July 10

Road rage is the name of a growing problem on our streets and highways. Angry drivers can cause collisions, and have been known to assault, stab or shoot other drivers who annoy them.

Keep control of your emotions when you drive. Take a few deep breaths, check your speedometer and slow down mentally and physically if necessary. Allow enough time to get to your destination, taking into account the usual delays related to weather, heavy traffic, construction and even errors made by other drivers. Otherwise, you might find yourself in a collision or in an angry confrontation with another driver.

How do you recognize the angry driver before it is too late? Here are some behaviors to watch for:

- Speeding, especially in congested areas, with no regard for other vehicles or pedestrians.
- Ignoring traffic signals and signs by running stop signs and red lights.
- Obstructing other vehicles, preventing them from passing or changing lanes.
- Bumping another vehicle from behind.
- Weaving from lane to lane, speeding and tailgating.
- Passing on the right side of a vehicle and passing on the road shoulder.
- Making rude gestures and facial expressions.
- Yelling, screaming, honking the horn and flashing headlights or deliberately blinding other drivers with bright lights.

When you do see an angry driver, stay out of his way! If an aggressive driver tries to pick a fight with you, back down. If you retaliate, the incident can quickly escalate from angry to life-threatening.

How can you protect yourself and others from a raging driver? Here are suggestions:

- Move out of the way.
- Do not challenge or compete with the angry driver by speeding up or tailgating. Never retaliate by cutting the other driver off.
- Avoid eye contact. Do not respond to nasty gestures.
- Call the police at a roadside telephone or on a cellular phone. Be ready to describe the vehicle and give the license number. Authorities will also want to know the location and direction of travel.
- If an aggressive driver you have encountered is involved in a crash, stop and wait for police so you can report what you witnessed.
- Drive your best at all times. While there is no excuse for aggressive behavior on the road, your driving error July tick another driver off.

If another driver is baiting you, keep your distance. Just calmly drive on your way and avoid a fight.

Daily Safety Focus



Why Take a Chance?

July 12

Have you ever made a decision to break a safety rule? How long did it take for you to reach that decision? What did you gain by taking a chance? It only takes a moment to decide to break a safety rule, yet that one moment could change your life forever. This offers you an opportunity to think about your personal safety behavior, both on and off the job. We'll talk specifically about taking safety risks, your personal commitment to safety, and what you can do to keep that commitment strong.

Do you always work safely? Are you 100% committed to the safety of yourself, your coworkers, friends, and family? Are there times when your commitment to safety is not as strong as it should be? Have you been taking risks and getting away with it? Don't expect your luck to hold. No one ever plans an accident. An accident, by definition, is an unplanned event. No one wakes up in the morning and drives to work thinking, "I will have an accident today so I'd better buckle up." No one ever climbs to the very top of a ladder and knows for sure that they won't fall. That's why it's so important to have a personal commitment to safety; a commitment to do the right things to prevent an accident--or minimize the damage done in case an accident does occur.

What is gained by taking a chance? Think about a time when you've risked your personal safety. Have you ever bypassed lockout-tagout procedures? Have you ever driven a car after you had too much to drink? Have you failed to use fall-protection equipment because it was just too much trouble? What did you gain in that situation? A minute of time, an ounce of convenience? Now honestly ask yourself if those gains were worth it. Is a little bit of time or convenience really worth chancing electrocution, a car accident, or a bad fall? Don't sacrifice your healthy future by taking a chance. Every time you're tempted to take a chance with your safety ask yourself if it's really worth the risk. Your family and friends will thank you for making the right decision.

Keeping a strong commitment to safety is not easy. What interferes with your commitment to safety? Is peer pressure a problem? Do your peers think it's silly to take time for safety? You can set a safe example for your peers. Consider taking a stand for safety. By committing to safety 100% of the time, you can help reverse the peer pressure that sometimes causes unsafe behavior. Keep up this exemplary behavior. Someday you July find that the old peer pressure has given way to something new--the respect of your peers earned by setting a safe example.

It's normal for your commitment to safety to fluctuate. Sometimes it's strong, at other times it's weak. Unfortunately, it tends to be strong just after a close call, or perhaps for a few days after you hear of an accident. Then the commitment wanes, only to be strengthened again by another tragedy. Simply recognizing this pattern can help you avoid it. Think about your work habits.

Have there been times when you're more likely to take a risk? How about those times when you've been extra careful? Did the strength of your safety commitment depend on an outside event--like another person being involved in an accident?

You can keep your commitment to safety strong by remembering the commitment is for you. If you allow things that happen to other people determine the strength of your commitment, it is likely to fluctuate a lot. You can always learn from things that happen to other people, but to keep your commitment strong all the time, stay focused on your personal safety and those things that you do, that affects it.

Having a personal commitment to safety and keeping it strong are more important than any safety program, procedure, or rule. In fact, programs, procedures, and rules depend on a strong personal commitment to safety. Ask yourself where you are with your own safety attitude and behavior. Are you 100% committed to safety, 100% of the time? You are? Great! Need some improvement? Promise yourself to work on it--and keep that promise. You'll be glad you did.

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Daily Safety Focus



Off-the-job Safety

July 13

Most of us are familiar with on-the-job safety. Our company strives to maintain a safe working environment and keeps employees informed and alert to possible hazardous situations. But what about safety off-the-job? Many of us are safety-conscious at work, but when we get home, we forget to use some of the same precautions. It July surprise you to know that three out of four deaths, and over half of all injuries suffered by workers, occurred off the job. The latest statistics show that off-the-job accidents accounted for 25% more days lost by workers than accidents on the job. Of all off-the-job deaths, 63% were motor vehicle accidents. The other 37% occurred at home or in public places. Statistics like these show that Julybe our safety sense off the job isn't what it should be.

Let's review some safety tips that July help you and your family enjoy a safer environment. Warm weather means more outdoor activities including yard and home maintenance. Tools, equipment and flammable liquids July be hazardous if used or stored improperly. The following guidelines July help cut down on some of these hazards.

1. Each year, some 150,000 people are injured using power lawn mowers, and the injuries are usually serious ones. Often, taking some extra precautions can prevent these accidents. Wear eye protection and long pants when weed whacking. Always survey the area before mowing. Rocks, sticks and other objects can become deadly missiles when thrown by the mower blade. Children should not be allowed in the area while you are mowing.
2. Yard and home maintenance often involve digging, raking, hoeing, and handling heavy or bulky materials such as bagged fertilizers or soils. Take extra precautions when lifting or moving these objects to avoid strains or injuries.
3. Flammable liquids, like gasoline and charcoal lighter fluids, can also be fire hazards. Gasoline for fueling powered equipment should be kept in proper storage containers. Gasoline powered equipment should only be fueled when cool. A hot engine could ignite the vapors. Follow directions when using charcoal lighter fluid. Many burns occur each year when fluids are sprayed into flaming or smoldering coals, and fire flashes back to the container.
4. Pesticides, insecticides, weed killers and other chemicals also require special storage and handling. A lot of chemicals will react violently when mixed together. Keep them out of the reach of children. Follow directions carefully regarding mixing, application and personal protection for eyes and skin.
5. Falls from ladders are the leading type of off the job injuries. Take the time to properly set up a ladder on solid footing and utilize ladder safety.

(continued)

"Leading with Safety"

Daily Safety Focus



LAWN SAFETY

July 14

Remember the first time you cut your parent's lawn by yourself? If you are over forty, you probably used a manual push type, which required the strength of Samson for overgrown yards. As time progressed, our parents got gas powered push movers and eventually they moved on to riding mowers. Mowing the yard was not too bad. You could cut the yard, watch the neighborhood action, and get the feel of an engine (a true Tim the Toolman experience!). Since you are now an adult, you realize that there is more to mowing than just cranking up the engine and riding off to the green gloryland. Below are some basic tips to keep you safe while you keep yourself and the yard in shape.

For Gasoline Mowers:

Fill the tank before starting and don't refill it after the engine is hot.

Never dangle gas cans from mower handles where a hot exhaust pipe could ignite escaping fumes and cause an explosion.

Start the mower on level ground where you have firm footing. Mow parallel to a slope. Never pull the mowers toward you always push it.

Always turn off the mower and disconnect the spark plug wire before unclogging the machine or adjusting it. Gasoline mowers can start even when they're turned off if the blade is rotated.

For Electric Mowers:

Check cords and plugs. If you cut the cord with the mower frequently, use a ground fault interrupter to insure your safety.

Hedge Trimmers/Weed Trimmers/Lawn Edgers:

Wear safety eye protection. It's also a good idea to wear long pants when doing lawn work to protect from abrasions.

Never use electric-hedge trimmers over your head. If trimmers become lodged on something, disconnect power source before, attempting to dislodge it.

Remember weed trimmers are intended for groundwork only, not for overhead work in trees or bushes where the hazard of flying debris is a real possibility.

When using a weed trimmer, disconnect power before advancing the line if it is a manual-feed trimmer.

In General:

Before mowing, trimming or edging, read the owner's manual, and pay particular attention to safety recommendation.

Clear the lawn of sticks, stones, toys, and anything else that might be flung by the mower, trimmer or edger.

Also, clear the yard of 'Children and pets. Always be aware of where others might be in the yard. A moment's inattention could mean tragedy.

Wear sturdy shoes with rough soles. Never go barefoot or wear cloth shoes or sandals.

Keep hands and feet away from the mower housing and never unclog the mower when it's running.

Keep children away from a mower unless you're sure they're trained in how to use it and the dangers.

Don't mow, trim or edge in "blind spots". There July be hidden obstacles under bushes or hedges, or in trees.

Be aware of the lawn surface, watch out for "pot holes" or tree roots.

Never leave equipment running. And never leave tools where others might stumble over them.

"Leading with Safety"

Daily Safety Focus



Drive Forwards - Not Backwards!

July 16

Here's a driving challenge for you - try to get through the day without ever backing up!

Backing up can be much more dangerous than going forward. Backing accounts for many collisions causing damage to vehicles and cargo, as well as fatal accidents, particularly those involving pedestrians.

By planning ahead, you can avoid many situations, which would require backing up. Before you park, enter a loading yard or drive down an alley, think about how you are going to get out. Is there a better way to go, so you can exit by moving forward instead of backward?

If you do have to back up, here are some rules on doing so safely:

- Walk around your vehicle doing a circle of safety. Look for obstacles you might strike when you start to move. This is a good habit even if you are going to be moving forward. Look for obstructions such as other vehicles, curbs, signs, overhanging roofs and overhead wires. Be aware of traffic patterns for vehicles and pedestrians.

- Some departments require their drivers to place cones around the vehicle so they will be reminded to do a circle check as they pick them up.

- Have a co-worker guide you as you back up. The signaler must stand in a safe place in view of the driver and use proper agreed-upon signals. Do not rely solely on the signaler; you remain responsible for control of the vehicle.

- Watch in your rear and side view mirrors and over your shoulder as you back up. Use the "Big Picture" theory. Look at a distance around you in all directions, not just the exact area into which you are backing. Be on the lookout for unexpected pedestrians or obstacles.

- Do not lean out an open driver's door to see as you back up. This gives you only a limited area of vision and can cause the door to strike an object or person. Also, always remember to wear your seatbelt when operating any type of mobile equipment.

- Back up slowly. Cover your brake by keeping your foot above it so you can stop instantly.

- Make use of backup alarms, lights and other signals, required on certain types of vehicles used for construction, utility maintenance and other purposes. These devices - mechanical, electrical, electronic and sonic - are made to warn other personnel and passersby.

- As a pedestrian or driver, be continually alert for vehicles, which July start to back up. Watch for them in parking lots, terminal yards, loading areas, warehouses, construction sites and in parallel parking slots along the streets. Listen for backup alarms, but never rely on them to warn you.

Backing up a vehicle can put you at risk of an accident causing injury and property damage. Therefore avoiding this maneuver whenever possible is the best alternative.

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Daily Safety Focus



Stinking Thinking

July 18

Too bad safety trainers can't read our minds. If they could, they might be able to point out some dangerous thoughts that lead to accidents and injuries.

At least we can check on our own dangerous thinking. Do you ever think any of the following thoughts?

- I've been doing this job my way for years and haven't had an accident yet.
- There's no point putting the machine guard on - I'll just have to adjust it again soon.
- I'll skip the safety glasses because I am just going to be grinding for a few seconds.
- If I really step on it, I can beat this light.
- I'll just light a match and see...
- What's all the fuss about confined spaces? Gas testing is for wimps.
- I'll clean this up later on.
- Why tag this cracked ladder - it's obviously damaged?
- I'll just stack this stuff in front of the exit. It will be picked up in a while.
- I'll just pour a bit of the solvent into this old coffee cup.
- Why bother locking it out - this adjustment will only take a moment?
- Anyone who can drive a car can drive a forklift.
- The next shift will notice that it's overheating - why bother with it now?
- These cigarette butts look cool enough; I'll just dump them in the wastebasket.
- Why close the drawer on that filing cabinet; I'll only have to keep opening it?
- If I stand on the top of the stepladder I can reach it.
- I'll just reach under the blade to grab it.
- I've been working around this stuff for years and haven't gotten sick yet.
- I'll leave this on the stairs so I'll remember to take it when I go down next time.
- Why wear my seat belt - it's just a few blocks?
- That's safety - it's not my responsibility!
- I've only had a few drinks - I'm okay to drive.
- If I ignore this pain in my hands, it will eventually go away.
- Why tell him; he's a contractor, not an employee of our company?
- I don't have any shaded glasses - but I'll just turn my head away when he strikes the arc.
- This overhead shelf looks like a good place to stash this hammer.
- If I stack one more box on top of these, I can move all of them in one trip.
- I'll just store this stuff under the safety shower - nobody ever uses it anyway.
- There must be something wrong with this gauge. The pressure couldn't have gone up that much.
- This must be safe. If there were anything dangerous about it, someone would have mentioned it to me.
- Fall arrest equipment is for goofs.
- Why ask somebody how to do this job? I don't want them to think I'm stupid.

These are the kinds of thoughts which lead to accidents and injuries to ourselves and to other people. For some people these are the last thoughts to go through their minds.

"Leading with Safety"

Daily Safety Focus



Develop a Healthy Safety Attitude

July 19

You know your job. You have the ability to do it well. But do you have the attitude required to do the job both well and safely?

There's no hiding attitude from others. If you have a poor attitude about safety, you may be able to hide it from yourself, but it will show up in everything you say and everything you do. Some workers seem to have the attitude that safety rules were made to be broken—especially when no one is looking. Even those who are hard working, exacting, and conscientious about every other aspect of their jobs can have a poor safety attitude. They take shortcuts not because they are lazy, but because they want to get the work done more quickly.

Other workers think that not complying with the rules won't cause too much of a problem if they perceive that a risk is small. They take chances, and this leads to accidents.

These individuals don't take safety seriously—until it is too late. These are the people who say, "Don't worry. I've done it this way a lot of times—right before they fall flat on their faces.

Most of us don't intend to walk around with a bad safety attitude—or even realize it when we have one. We think that our last couple of accidents simply "happened" to us

Luckily, attitudes are not permanent states of mind—they can be changed. Here's how you can carry through with a good—even great—attitude concerning safety:

- Keep your mind focused on the job at hand. Put aside for the moment any personal problems that have been bothering you so that you can watch for hazards and accomplish what you have set out to do.
- Tell yourself that you will not let nearby noises or idle conversations bother your concentration and prevent you from doing the job safely.
- Don't give in to pressure from your co-workers to be unsafe. You don't have to join in horseplay or take shortcuts. Instead, take the lead in behaving in an adult and responsible manner.
- Report all accidents and near accidents—even though they may seem unimportant at the time.
- Try to understand why an accident occurred, to help you avoid making the same mistake twice.
- Practice the techniques you have learned for lifting and other methods of doing the job in a safe fashion.
- Practice good housekeeping. Keep your work area free of clutter. Clean up any spills.
- Be considerate of your co-workers. Don't do anything that would endanger them. In fact, go a step farther and remind co-workers about safety. Say something when they forget to put on equipment to protect themselves or when they ignore the rules.
- Take the time to remind your family about staying safe at their jobs, in school, or in the home.

After following all these suggestions for a short while, you will have developed a proper safety attitude, one that others can and will respect and even try to imitate. But even better than that, you'll feel good about yourself and will be able to do productive work and stay safe at the same time.

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Daily Safety Focus



Storms: Protecting Yourself, Co-workers, and Family

July 20

Residents in many areas of the United States are aware of the hazards presented by thunderstorms. To borrow an expression from Paul Harvey "...but do you know -- the rest of the story." How do you protect yourself, your co-workers, and your family during thunderstorms?

The first step is to know what is happening in your area.

When severe weather is imminent, do you know what to do?

If a **tornado** strike is imminent, take the following action:

In Open Country

Seek inside shelter if it is close by and time permits. If there is not time to escape, lie flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch or ravine. A parked vehicle is unsafe as a shelter during a tornado or severe windstorm and should be avoided.

In Office Buildings

The basement or an interior hallway on a lower floor of an office building is safest. Upper stories are unsafe. If there is not time to descend, a closet or small room with stout walls (bathroom), or an inside hallway will give some protection against flying debris. Otherwise, get under heavy furniture. Select and mark shelter areas in office buildings.

Auditoriums, and Other Large Buildings with Wide, Free-Span Roofs

Buildings of this type are particularly vulnerable to tornado wind damage due to the large roof expanse upon which the wind force July act and also the relatively large area between roof supporting walls. Basements of these buildings offer reasonably good protection, as do smaller interior rooms at ground level or nearby sturdy buildings.

In Homes without Basements

Take cover in the smallest room with stout walls, or under heavy furniture, or a tipped-over upholstered couch or chair in the center part of the house. Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Protect your head.

When **lightning** (thunderstorms) threatens, get inside a home or large building. Keep away from windows, exterior doors, water faucets, main distribution frame, switch equipment, electrical appliances, etc. If outdoors, with no time to reach a building or vehicle, follow these rules:

Get out and away from open water. Gets away from bicycles, motor cycles, and wheeled and track equipment. Stay away from aerial lines, downguys, pedestals, towers, wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, rails, or other metallic paths which could carry lightning to you. Stay away from small, isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas.

(continued)

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Daily Safety Focus



Avoid being the highest object on the surrounding landscape. In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. In a

forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. Don't get under a natural lightning rod such as a tall tree.

If you are isolated in a field and your hair stands on end (indicating lightning is about to strike), drop to your knees and bend forward putting your hands on your knees. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND.**

When sitting in or driving a vehicle, you are protected by the shell of the vehicle. Do not touch the door handle or any metal object in the vehicle. Thunder, the sound of lightning, travels at 1/5 mile per second. Count the time that elapses between your first sight of the lightning flash and the sound of the thunder to determine how close the lightning is.

After the storm (or other emergency), our priority is to locate family members who were in different locations when the storm struck. Designated a relative or friend in another city or state as the contact following a disaster. Without a contact plan, families frantically search and add to the already overloaded emergency management communications system.

If you don't have a family emergency action plan, take time to develop one. Make certain everyone knows the safest place to seek shelter in the event of a tornado, the rendezvous point to use if lightning strikes the house and starts a fire. Pre-planning saves lives. Reacting at the height of the storm (without a plan) July place you needlessly in harm's way.

Daily Safety Focus



Why Safety Belts?

July 21

To understand the value of safety belt use, it's important to understand some of the dynamics of a crash. Every motor vehicle crash is actually comprised of three collisions.

The Car's Collision

The first collision is known as the car's collision, which causes the car to buckle and bend as it hits something and comes to an abrupt stop. This occurs in approximately one-tenth of a second. The crushing of the front end absorbs some of the force of the crash and cushions the rest of the car. As a result, the passenger compartment comes to a more gradual stop than the front of the car.

The Human Collision

The second collision occurs as the car's occupants hit some part of the vehicle. At the moment of impact, *unbelted* occupants are still travelling at the vehicle's original speed. Just after the vehicle comes to a complete stop, these *unbelted* occupants will slam into the steering wheel, the windshield, or some other part of the vehicle interior. This is the human collision.

Another form of human collision is the person-to-person impact. Many serious injuries are caused by *unbelted* occupants colliding with each other. In a crash, occupants tend to move toward the point of impact, not away from it. People in the front seat are often struck by *unbelted* rear-seat passengers who have become high-speed projectiles.

The Internal Collision

Even after the occupant's body comes to a complete stop, the internal organs are still moving forward. Suddenly, these organs hit other organs or the skeletal system. This third collision is the internal collision and often causes serious or fatal injuries.

So, Why Safety Belts?

During a crash, properly fastened safety belts distribute the forces of rapid deceleration over larger and stronger parts of the person's body, such as the chest, hips and shoulders. The safety belt stretches slightly to slow your body down and to increase its stopping distance.

The difference between the belted person's stopping distance and the *unbelted* person's stopping distance is significant. It's often the difference between life and death.

Excerpts from "Sudden Impact," NHTSA, 1992.

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Daily Safety Focus



Get A Handle on Stress!

July 22

Stress is unavoidable. It's your natural response to the challenges and changes of life.

You do have a choice in how you deal with stress, though. You can learn to relax physically and mentally. You can let off steam through physical exercise. You can reduce the causes of stress in your life.

Here are some healthy ways to deal with stress:

- Keep your sense of humor. There's usually something to laugh about no matter how bad things are.
- Get regular exercise. This will improve your fitness for dealing with all of life's physical and mental challenges. It is also a good way to shift your focus away from things which upset you or make you angry. A simple and effective response to an unhealthy stress problem is to rid yourself of the excess energy by doing something physical such as sports, running or walking.
- Eat right to maintain your health. Eat a variety of fruits and vegetables, the fresher the better. Fill up on complex carbohydrates such as whole grain bread, rice, pasta and potatoes. Skip the foods filled with fat and sugar.
- Get enough sleep. Individual sleep needs vary, but you should sleep long enough to wake up feeling rested and refreshed. Sleep patterns are often disrupted when a person is stressed.
- Cigarettes, alcohol and caffeine kick your body into high gear and can add to your stress level over the long run, so cut back or quit. If you need help in staying off alcohol or drugs, get help from a treatment program or self-help group.
- Manage your time wisely. Do the most important things first.
- Talk about your problems. The listener July not be able to offer solutions, but talking them out helps put your problems in perspective.
- Learn some relaxation techniques. Here's a simple one: Close your eyes for a few moments and breath in and out deeply and slowly. Concentrate on the sensation of breathing. Obviously, you can't do this while you are doing something like driving or operating a drill press, but you can do it while you are taking a break.
- Look on the bright side. Optimism is a good antidote for stress.
- Most people are well into unhealthy stress situations before they realize it. People around them can help by noting their symptoms and letting them know.

When you are feeling worried, remember that most of the things we fear never actually happen. Save the heavy stress reactions for genuinely threatening situations. In the meantime, relax and try to enjoy your life today!

Daily Safety Focus



Little Things That Count

July 23

A riddle that made the rounds when I was in school asked, "what are the little things that count?" to which the supposedly hilarious answer was "the first grade arithmetic class." But in the real world, the little things that counts have many different meanings and ignoring them can have results that are far from funny. This is particularly true when it comes to safety. We've all been trained to be on the lookout for, and to recognize, the big hazards that could harm us, but the little ones can sometimes be just as threatening to our well being.

One company recently became very concerned when its incidence of injury and illness showed a big increase over a three-month period. Management began an in-depth check of systems, equipment, and material that could be considered high-hazard: heavy machinery, ventilation, toxic substances, and the like.

To their surprise but Julybe not to yours—none of these things were causing the problem. Chemicals were properly labeled and stored; machines were in good repair and properly guarded; the exhaust fans, sprinkler systems, respirators, etc., were all in good working order. Instead, as you've probably guessed, it was various "little things" that were at the bottom of the trouble. For example, serious falls had been caused by:

A patch of oil on the garage floor that no one had poured absorbent on because it was too small to worry about. It wasn't too small to trap a passing mechanic who was looking forward, not down.

A toolbox that had been left on the floor in front of a bench, instead of underneath. It had been sidestepped dozens of times before someone finally tripped over it.

A ladder that was improperly placed in front of an outward-opening door, "just for a minute." Another worker coming through the door with a handcart toppled it, and both he and the climber were injured

All of these "accidents waiting to happen" had been ignored because they didn't really strike the workers involved as dangerous. After all, they knew about and carefully avoided important hazards like doing repairs on energized electrical equipment, or bypassing machine guards, or pouring a chemical into a drum that might not have been totally emptied of previous, possibly incompatible, contents.

We're all tempted to take shortcuts from time to time, and all too often we intend to report a defective tool, extension cord, or stepladder to maintenance but forget about it as we go about our regular routine. But we must learn to resist that temptation and follow through on that good intention, because these are just the sort of "little things" that can lead to big grief for a fellow worker or ourselves.

Another example of little things that can cause big trouble if ignored is minor injuries that are left untreated. "Just a scratch" can become infected; a speck of dust in the eye can cause severe damage if not attended to. So be sure to report even these seemingly trivial hurts and get the appropriate first aid.

We're fortunate to have a pretty good safety record, but I know we all want to keep it that way or even improve the situation. So if we all make a special effort to be on the alert for those little things that can count, it can add up to a safer, healthier life here on the job.

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Daily Safety Focus



Safety Doesn't Stop at the Exit

July 24

You've finished work for the day-or night. Now you can relax and forget about the job. Good. Forget about the nagging little details of your workday, who got on your nerves, and what you didn't like about your lunch. Step away and leave all that behind. But for goodness sake—or, rather, for your sake—don't forget about safety!

Off-the-job accidents can be just as serious as those that happen at work-just as disabling or just as fatal. So it's just as important as it is at work not to let those accidents happen!

Probably the first thing you do when you leave work is get in your car. That means the second thing you should do is buckle your seat belt. Of course, if the weather is bad, the very first thing you'll want to do is clean the snow and ice off the car window, hood, and roof so that your vision can't be obscured while you're driving. (By the way, have you replaced the windshield wipers recently? Is the windshield in good condition-easy to see through?) Now, don't start thinking about arriving home; think about driving there—carefully, and as slowly as necessary in order to be safe.

When you do get there, try something different today. If there's a pet to be kissed, and spouse or kids to pat, go ahead. But then, take a careful look around. In other words, do a safety inspection of your own premises.

If there's a mat inside the door, is it secure, or is someone likely to trip over it? What about the rest of the rugs and flooring? Is there a danger spot where someone has already had a fall or a near accident? Make this the day you retack a carpet that's coming up, or skidproof any area rugs.

Are there any stairways in your home? Make sure the lighting there is good, the handrail secure, and any carpeting completely trip-resistant.

Trips and falls are so common in the home, in fact, that preventing them should be a number one priority in your residential safety review. Clear up any areas that are too cluttered for walking safely. Make sure no cables and electrical or telephone cords cross anyone's possible path. In the bathroom, where many falls occur, keep the floors wiped dry and install a nonskid type of mat by the tub or shower. In addition, a rubber mat or antiskid adhesive inside the tub or shower July prevent a bad accident.

Falls are also a potential hazard whenever you're climbing-whether it's an extension ladder that enables you to clean the roof gutters, a stepladder for repainting a bedroom ceiling, or even the kitchen step stool.

Have you been trained in electrical safety at work? Being safe at home also means being safe with electricity. Never disable the grounding plug on a three-prong appliance. Disconnect an appliance by grasping the plug as you pull, so that you won't damage it. Replace worn cords promptly.

Water and electricity just don't mix. Never put electric appliances in a sink full of water; instead, wipe them with a damp cloth. Don't place electrical appliances next to the tub, sink, or shower. Don't enter a flooded basement if electrical appliances are present under water. Have the electric company turn off your power, first.

Fire is probably the most feared home hazard, so it's wise to prepare for emergencies before they happen. Smoke detectors are essential and do save lives. Rope ladders enable exit from upper floors. The whole family should learn and practice escape routes, including an agreed on meeting place away from the immediate area.

You probably already know many other home safety issues, and most of the rules. What's important, though, is following the rules. Let safety become second nature to you at work and after work, wherever you are.

Daily Safety Focus



Oh, My Aching Back!

July 25

Did you ever notice that kids hardly ever complain about an aching back? That's because most people start out life with a strong, healthy back. But over the years, the wear and tear of daily living takes its toll on your back, leaving you with nagging aches and pains.

In fact, almost every adult has suffered some kind of back pain during his or her life. That's why back problems are one of the most common reasons why people take time off from work.

Millions of dollars are spent on therapies, medications, and even surgery every year.

The best way to cure a backache is to stop it before it starts. Here are some ways you can prevent back problems at work or at home:

Lift It Right

- Bend your knees when you lift, not your back.
- Lift with your legs and hold objects close to your body.
- Lift objects only chest-high.
- If a load is extra heavy or awkward, don't be shy—ask for help ahead of time.
- Make sure you are on stable ground when lifting.
- Don't bend over with legs straight or your knees locked, and don't twist while lifting.

Standing and Walking Etiquette

- If you have to stand for long periods of time, put one foot up on a footrest. Change feet often.
- Maintain a posture that feels good.
- Walk with your head high and chin tucked in.
- Wear comfortable shoes with good support.
- Don't stand in one position too long. Take breaks.

Sitting Properly

- Sit in chairs that are low enough to allow you to place both feet flat on the floor keeping your knees levels with your hips. If the chair is too high, adjust it or use a footrest.
- Sit firmly against the back of the chair.
- Protect your lower back with a lumbar support.
- Don't slump.
- Make sure your chair is not too far away from your work.
- Avoid leaning forward and arching your back.
- Stand up and stretch frequently.

Daily Exercise

Try to exercise every day to maintain a healthy back. Strong abdominal muscles help support the back, so don't forget those sit-ups. Partial sit-ups, or "crunches," can help you avoid back strain while exercising. Safe stretching exercises will loosen muscles and guard against injury.

Be Aware

Medical experts say that people often don't feel the pain of injury when it occurs, but they suffer from backaches the next day after the muscles have tightened up. That's why it is so easy to forget to follow safe lifting practices because there is no warning that you are straining your back.

Always be on alert for any possible overexertion and consistently follow safe lifting techniques.

You owe your back a break!

Daily Safety Focus



Pinch Points

July 26

To most of us a pinch doesn't sound too serious. A pinch on the cheek or a friendly pinch for fun is one thing, but the pinches you get on the job are something else. Recently, a worker was crushed to death against a wall by a huge truck that was backing up. That was a pinch point accident. In another instance, a pair of pliers slipped and pinched a worker's hand, which caused a blood blister.

Between these two extremes lie hundreds of pinch point situations in this industry. And there are just as many examples of injuries sustained because of these pinch points on record.

Pinch point conditions are one of the most difficult hazards to guard. Closely stored 55-gallon steel drums, when moved or handled, create pinch points between each other or the dolly being used to move them. Because the drums are round, they are more difficult to handle and control in many cases. Here the only protection is care and alertness.

The same thing applies to heavy crates, castings, and boxes that are stacked close to each other. It is dangerous to work around machinery that has oscillating or reciprocating parts or elements. Of course, most of these areas are guarded, but in cases when guards are removed to do work or make adjustments, be sure tie parts cannot move or be moved. Tag out or lock out the equipment and be sure the machinery cannot cycle if it is off balance or activated by accident.

There are many commonplace things that are potential pinch points, like heavy steel doors or heavy covers for bins or hoppers, and often there is no way to guard these hazards. Care is your only safeguard. Even extension ladders can create serious pinch points, the rungs sliding past each other can catch fingers, hands, and feet.

A little thought will bring to mind the many pinch points (sometimes called nip points) here in our own operation. Let's take a few minutes to discuss and identify some of them.

Daily Safety Focus



Sprains and Strains

July 27

Athletes in training know their abilities and their limitations, because going beyond what are physically possible leads to strained and sprained muscles and ligaments. Those injuries could put the athlete out of competition. Your job may include lifting and carrying heavy material. You should be aware of how much you can do in order to avoid any injury that could put you on the bench for a while.

Sprains and strains can occur anywhere--in the workplace, during recreational and sporting events, and at home. A sprain occurs whenever a muscle is stretched beyond its limit. Muscles do a great deal of work. However, they must be conditioned if they are to perform in a given way. Professional athletes condition their muscles through rigorous training. We also must condition our muscles. A worker who is accustomed to manually handling a large number of pieces of material in a given workday can do so with ease. Those of us who have different duties would find it difficult to do that same amount of work without paying for it with aching muscles. If we should continue to do the work, however, we would soon be conditioned and be able to perform the job without pain.

However, even the conditioned athlete or worker cannot exceed the limitations of the muscles. When a muscle is stretched too much, the ligaments pull and sometimes even tear. Stretched ligaments and tendons are termed strains. A sprain is when tearing has occurred.

The industrial setting provides many opportunities for the occurrence of sprains and strains; the most common is material handling. We all handle material in one way or another. Even the office worker is involved with material handling when picking up a package, box or chair to move it.

Other movements can also cause sprains and strains--overreaching or overextending a part of the body; reaching over something to pick up a load; or trying to reach a top shelf without using a proper stool or ladder.

What can we do to minimize these injuries? *Well, this meeting is a beginning.* If we understand what causes sprains and strains, we are better equipped to prevent them. A few basic rules to remember are:

1. Understand your limitations. Don't charge into a job cold. Warm up to it. Take a lesson from athletes--try to keep yourself in good condition and at your proper weight.
2. Don't overextend yourself--use a stepstool or a ladder when necessary.
3. Lift with your legs, not with your back. Keep the load close. Don't twist your body while *carrying* a load.

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Daily Safety Focus



4. Be sure there are no slipping or tripping hazards in your work area or around your home. The sudden jerk caused by a slip or trip can cause a sprain or strain.
5. Don't shy away from hard work because you fear a strain. Condition your body to do what is necessary.
6. Look into ways to eliminate lifting and carrying or to keep it to a minimum. Is there a better way? Work smarter, not harder; it's easier and safer.

Daily Safety Focus



Tiny Tick Carries Lyme Disease

July 28

Outdoor workers in most states face a health threat of Lyme Disease spread by ticks. Landscaping, brush clearing, forestry work, parks and wildlife management are some of the occupations, which are most at risk for tick bites, and Lyme Disease.

The tick is a tiny, eight-legged, insect-like creature, which feeds on the blood of animals and human beings. While it is mostly harmless, They can spread bacteria responsible for Lyme Disease. The deer tick, which is the main carrier, is about the size of the dot at the end of this sentence.

If Lyme Disease is diagnosed early and treated with antibiotics, it can be cured. It can also be treated effectively in its latter stages, but response varies from one patient to the next. Some symptoms can linger for years.

Use these measurements to prevent illness from tick bites:

- When you are working or walking in grassy or wooded areas, cover up. Wear solid shoes, long pants tucked into your socks, a long-sleeved shirt and a hat.
- Use insect repellents containing DEET or permethrin. Follow all the precautions on the label.
- Check yourself for ticks often when you are working outdoors and when you take a break. After work, shower and wash your hair. It is believed ticks cannot transmit the disease until they have been attached for 36 to 48 hours and have become engorged with blood.
- If you find a tick attached to your skin, remove it with tweezers or with your fingers protected by a glove or even a plastic bag. Pull it out gently without squeezing it. Wash the area thoroughly. Dispose of the tick where it will not re-infest. If you suspect Lyme Disease, put the tick in a sealed container such as an old pill bottle and take it with you to the doctor.
- Watch for the early signs of Lyme disease infection. A red rash, especially surrounding the tick bite, possibly in a "bull's eye" pattern, may appear in the first week or two.
- Flu-like symptoms and joint pain develop over the first month. Extreme fatigue, a stiff and aching neck, tingling in the fingers and facial paralysis can follow. Weeks or month's later severe headaches, painful arthritis, heart problems and central nervous system difficulties can occur.

Find out about the potential for Lyme Disease in your area, and learn to protect yourself when working or playing outdoors.

Daily Safety Focus



Drivers Distractions

July 29

Several years ago, my former law partner's husband was killed on his bicycle by a 16 year old who was attempting to reach for a soda bottle on the floor of his pick-up truck. Recently we've read about people in cars, on the sidewalk, and even in their own homes, being killed or seriously injured by individuals that turn their vehicles into weapons by driving recklessly. The stories are too similar and occur too often.

Sadly, the death and destruction caused by careless drivers can easily be avoided by the use of common sense, prudence and defensive driving techniques. Although drunk driving certainly causes a substantial amount of harm, surprisingly, most death and serious injury related accidents are caused without alcohol involvement. Driving safely will save lives. On a daily basis we see drivers not willing to stop at red lights and speeding through yellow lights rather than slowing down and stopping. We also frequently see individuals on our highways crossing several lanes of traffic to try to make it to the exit without regard for the drivers that they are cutting in front of along the way.

Other troubling traffic incidents include persons applying make-up in the car, dialing hand-held cellular phones, even reading the newspaper while driving. The results are often severe and devastating. Some of us have felt the pain of losing a family member or good friend as a result of drivers' acts or omissions on the road. There is nothing sadder than to get a call or visit from the police explaining that someone you love has been killed or seriously hurt in a car crash. This is every parent and spouse's nightmare. Unfortunately, this bad dream is too often a bitter reality for many.

Accidents don't just happen. They are caused by indifference, lack of attention, carelessness or recklessness. We can all help save lives by promoting careful and responsible driving habits.

Let us encourage "safe driving" among our co-workers, by working together and making "safe driving" an important priority.

Daily Safety Focus



Hand Tools

July 30

The Hand Tool Institute, an association of hand tool manufacturers and suppliers based in Terrytown, NY, says that most hand tool accidents are preventable if workers just follow basic safety rules. The five main points to remember are:

Always use appropriate eye protection to keep flying pieces and parts from contacting your eyes. The Hand Tools Institute suggests keeping your safety goggles in your toolbox so that you can easily find them to use for every hand tool job. Other important protective equipment includes work gloves for a better grip.

Use the right tools for the job. The Institute warns that each tool is designed to perform a specific function. It is dangerous to substitute or use an inappropriate tool.

Use tools properly, including proper positioning to avoid repetitive stress-type injuries.

Service tools regularly. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for performing proper maintenance on your tools.

Don't use damaged tools. Discard them immediately, fix them, or replace them.

Handy Tips

Just how do these rules apply to your tools?

Here are some examples:

Pliers-Too many people use pliers as wrenches for turning nuts or bolts. This is not the proper function of pliers, which should be used for cutting wire. Discard your pliers when they have chipped or dulled cutting edges.

Hammers-A hammer blow should be struck squarely and parallel to the surface being struck. Glancing blows can cause injury. Never use a hammer with a loose or damaged head or handle. Look for dents, chips, cracks or other signs of wear and tear. Use riveting hammers for sheet steel, carpenter or claw hammers for driving and pulling nails, and ball-peen hammers for metal work.

Screwdrivers-Never use a screwdriver as a punch, wedge, pinch bar, pry, or chisel. Choose the proper-size tip for the screw. The wrong-size driver can cause a chewed-up screw head, damaged screwdriver, and bloody knuckle.

Wrenches-Don't try to extend the handle of a wrench with a cheater bar to add leverage. Instead, use a wrench with the proper-size handle. Make sure the wrench fits the nut, or it could slip or break. If possible, pull the wrench instead of pushing it. The safest wrench is a box or socket type.

“Leading with Safety”

Daily Safety Focus



Cutting-Edge Tools-Dull cutting-edge tools are dangerous, as they require excessive pressure to make them cut. Keep tools sharp. Always cut away from the body.

Safe handling

Be cautious when handling all tools. Don't leave them lying around where they can be a tripping hazard or especially on overhead scaffolds, piping, or ladders where they can fall on people below. Don't carry chisels, screwdrivers, and other pointy tools in your pocket. Use a carrying belt with the pointed end down. Tools should be handed from one worker to another, never thrown. Pass pointed tools with handles first.

Avoid repetitive stress injuries

Minimize repetitive stress injuries by keeping your wrists straight and elbows close to your body. Comfort grips or properly fitted gloves can help reduce the stress on hands and wrists.

Daily Safety Focus



Heat Disorders and Their Health Effects

July 31

Operations involving high air temperatures, radiant heat sources, high humidity, direct physical contact with hot objects, or strenuous activities have a high potential for inducing heat stress in employees engaged in such operations.

Outdoor operations conducted in hot weather, such as construction, and especially those that require workers to wear semipermeable or impermeable protective clothing, are also likely to cause heat disorders among exposed workers. These disorders may include heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat cramps, fainting, heat rashes, and heat fatigue.

Heat Stroke - Heat stroke occurs when the body's system of temperature regulation fails and the body's temperature rises to critical levels. This condition is caused by a combination of highly variable factors and is difficult to predict.

Heat stroke is a medical emergency, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration warns. The primary signs and symptoms of heat stroke are confusion; irrational behavior, loss of consciousness; convulsions; a lack of sweating (usually); hot, dry skin; and an abnormally high body temperature, e.g. a rectal temperature of 105.8 degrees Fahrenheit. If body temperature is too high, death may occur. The elevated metabolic temperatures caused by a combination of workload and environmental heat, both of which contribute to heat stroke, are also highly variable and difficult to predict.

If a worker shows signs of possible heat stroke, professional medical treatment should be obtained immediately, OSHA says. The worker should be placed in a shady area and outer clothing removed. The worker's skin should be wetted and air movement around the worker increased to improve evaporative cooling until professional methods of cooling are initiated and the seriousness of the condition can be assessed. Fluids should be replaced as soon as possible. The medical outcome of an episode of heat stroke depends on the victim's physical fitness and the timing and effectiveness of first-aid treatment.

Regardless of the worker's protests, no employee suspected of being ill from heat stroke should be sent home or left unattended without specific approval from a physician, OSHA advises.

Heat Exhaustion -- The signs and symptoms of heat exhaustion are headache, nausea, vertigo, weakness, thirst, and giddiness. According to OSHA, this condition responds readily to prompt treatment.

Heat exhaustion should not be dismissed lightly, however, for several reasons. One reason is that the fainting associated with heat exhaustion can be dangerous if the victim is operating machinery or controlling an operation

