

SUPERVISOR

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Lightning Frequently Overlooked as an Occupational Hazard

According to a new fact sheet from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), lightning is frequently overlooked as an occupational hazard.

The two agencies note that more than 300 people are struck by lightning in the US each year, with an average of 50 deaths occurring. In Canada about 10 people die each year after being hit by lightning.

"Precautions should be taken to prevent worker exposure to lightning. Employers should recognize lightning as an occupational hazard. Supervisors and workers at outdoor worksites should take lightning safety seriously," say OSHA and NOAA.

Workers whose jobs involve working outdoors in open spaces, on or near tall objects, or near explosive or conductive materials such as metal, face significant exposure to lightning risks. The hazards are particularly significant in jobs such as:

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Listen Up and Prevent Permanent Hearing Loss

Being exposed to average daily occupational noise levels of between 92 and 96 decibels (dB)—such as while working in a foundry, shipyard, brewery or paper mill—can cause some workers to develop permanent hearing impairment in as little as six months, according to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS).

Air jets, widely used for cleaning, drying, power tools and steam valves, can generate sound pressure levels of 105 dB, while woodworking saws can hit a screaming 106 dB.

If you or the workers you supervise must raise your voices in order to hear one another, your workplace likely has a noise problem. And, if after your shift, you need to raise the level of your vehicle's sound system to properly hear it, or you experience ringing in your ears (tinnitus), you are being exposed to excessive noise on the job.

"One of the most common occupational health hazards, noise is the bane of workers in heavy industrial and manufacturing environments, in cafeterias, call centres and a host of other industries," says the CCOHS. "While noise may not cut, burn, bruise or strain our bodies as other types of hazards can, it can cause another form of physical injury, which may become permanent if left unchecked."

The degree of injury to a worker's hearing depends on:

- 🌸 How loud the noise is;
- 🌸 How long a worker is exposed to it;
- 🌸 How high or low the sound frequency is; and
- 🌸 The type of noise.

The CCOHS notes that besides posing a risk of hearing loss, noise—even at lower levels—can also be annoying and may interfere with workers' ability to speak, listen and communicate warnings of safety hazards to one another. It can also

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Helping Co-Workers is Fine, To a Point: Study

Every worker can use a little help from time to time, but workers who get drawn into helping needy workers all the time can suffer emotional exhaustion and reduced job performance, according to a new study.

A study led by Russell Johnson, associate professor of management at Michigan State University, tracked 68 employees across a variety of industries—including finance, engineering and healthcare—over 15 consecutive workdays. They were asked to respond to survey statements such as “Today, I went out of my way to help co-workers who asked for my help with work-related problems.”

The survey measured negative effects or “depletion” on the helpers as a result of taking time away from their own job duties to assist others. The depletion effects were especially strong for employees who are strongly motivated to help others.

“Helping co-workers can be draining for the helpers, especially for employees who help a lot,” says Johnson. “Somewhat ironically, the draining effects of helping are worse for employees who have high pro-social motivation. When these folks are asked for help, they feel a strong obligation to provide help, which can be especially taxing.”

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Picture This! Crumpled Cones Point to Driver's Inattention

We've all seen them—traffic cones that are knocked over and bent out of shape. But these cones easily could have been a highway work zone worker struck down by an inattentive driver. This powerful image serves as a good reminder to drivers to slow down and pay attention in work zones. (flaggerforce.com)

SEVEN STATISTICS: THE FLU



Seasonal influenza (the flu) is an infection of the airways caused by the influenza virus. It is easily spread and easily caught. Here are seven statistics related to the flu:

1. In Canada only about **36 percent** of adults get an annual flu shot, according to the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). In the US, flu shot percentages range from about 31 percent for adults under age 49 to 70 percent for adults 65 and older (US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC))
2. **Three** initial symptoms of the onset of the flu are headache, chills and cough.
3. Once the flu takes hold, people experience these **eight** additional symptoms: fever, loss of appetite, muscle aches, fatigue, runny nose, sneezing, throat irritation and watery eyes. (Immunize Canada)
4. Each year, between **4,000 and 8,000** Canadians die from influenza and its complications, including pneumonia. (Immunize Canada) In the US, up to 36,000 flu-related deaths occur annually. (CDC)
5. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends an annual flu shot for these **five** groups of people: pregnant women; children ages six months to five years; adults 65 and older; individuals with chronic medical conditions; and healthcare workers.
6. Remember these **three** words if you want to dramatically reduce your odds of catching a cold or the flu: *Wash your hands!* And do so frequently throughout the day.
7. **Four** differences between the common cold and the flu are as follows: The flu can be prevented by getting a flu shot, whereas colds cannot; flu symptoms come on more quickly than cold symptoms; flu symptoms are more severe than cold symptoms; and cold symptoms generally occur above the neck. (Prevention magazine)

SAFE SUPERVISOR

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HELPING CO-WORKERS IS FINE, TO A POINT **CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2**

The findings suggest that employees should exercise caution when agreeing to help co-workers, because helping may leave them emotionally drained and less effective at work. Those workers seeking help also need to realize that asking for help numerous times during a shift has detrimental effects on others.

“This is not to say that co-workers should avoid seeking help, but that they ought to consider the magnitude and solvability of the issue before doing so and avoid continually seeking help from the same person,” says Johnson.

On the bright side, when helpers are thanked or made aware of the positive results of their actions, they can minimize and may even reverse some of the depletion effects, he adds. Previous research on helping behaviors has focused largely on the people receiving the help. This is one of the first studies to examine how helpers are affected.

Alberta’s Auditor General Chastises Labour Ministry About Safety Orders

Merwan Saher, auditor general for Alberta, has slammed that province’s Ministry of Labour for delays in improving its processes surrounding workplace safety orders. Saher noted that it has been six years since recommendations were made to fix Alberta’s workplace safety compliance system, yet significant enforcement problems remain today.

While his report states that in the six years since the original audit, the department has made a number of recommended improvements to OHS systems, the department has still not fully implemented process improvements to enforce compliance for all OHS orders issued, and to evaluate and report on OHS program result analysis compared to desired results.

“The department is unable to demonstrate, with evidence, that it has a complete set of processes to apply department policies to keep Alberta’s workers safe.”

Saher also criticized the ministry for failing to demonstrate that its OHS program is reducing lost time claim rates and disabling injury rates. Saher’s report notes that stop-use/stop-work orders have been mishandled, with unwarranted extensions granted to employers found to be breaching OHS rules.

Labour Minister Christina Gray expressed disappointment over the report but said the problems were largely created by the previous PC provincial government. She said the ministry is working to resolve the problems by strengthening oversight and training provided to OHS officers.

Heart Attack Victim Credits Co-workers for Saving His Life

A 53-year-old window manufacturing plant worker says he owes his life to co-workers who used an automated external defibrillator (AED) to shock his heart back into a normal rhythm after he collapsed from a heart attack.

“My doctors said I’m alive because they reacted so quickly,” Manuel Rodriguez said in a statement from Alberta Health Services’ emergency medical services.

Rodriguez suffered a heart attack shortly after starting his shift at All Weather Windows in Edmonton. He lost consciousness and started turning blue.

Four co-workers jumped into action, two using an AED to shock him and the others contacting 911 and waiting to escort paramedics to the scene.

Rodriguez’ heart began beating normally again after receiving two shocks. He spent three weeks in hospital.

The Heart and Stroke Foundation says only five percent of Canadians survive heart attacks occurring outside hospitals and for every minute without defibrillation, the victim’s chances of survival decrease by seven to 10 percent.

AEDs are becoming increasingly popular in public places and many workplaces. These machines are available for less than \$2,000—a small price to pay for potentially saving lives.

Did You Know? Guess What Percentage of Drivers Exhibit Road Rage or Significant Anger and Aggressive Driving

We have all witnessed road-raging drivers in action and may have been prone to a little road rage ourselves, but a new study from the AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety shows that a whopping 80 percent of drivers admit to experiencing significant anger, aggression or road rage at least once during the past year.

“The most alarming findings suggest that approximately eight million US drivers engaged in extreme examples of road rage, including purposefully ramming another vehicle or getting out of the car to confront another driver,” says Michael Green, AAA’s director of public relations.

In Canada, a Leger Marketing poll conducted for Kanetix.ca found similar results, with 83 percent of male drivers and 76 percent of female drivers admitting to exhibiting road rage. Here are some of the bad behaviors that US drivers reported exhibiting during the past year:

- **Fifty-one percent**, or 104 million US drivers, admitted to purposely tailgating another vehicle.
- **Forty-seven percent** (95 million drivers) admitted to yelling at another driver.
- **Forty-five percent** (91 million drivers) stated they had honked their horns to show annoyance or anger.
- **Thirty-three percent** (67 million drivers) admitted to making angry gestures.
- **Twenty-four percent** (49 million drivers) stated they had attempted to block another vehicle from changing lanes.
- **Twelve percent** (24 million drivers) admitted to cutting off another vehicle on purpose.
- **Four percent** (7.6 million drivers) stated they had stepped out of their vehicles to confront other drivers.
- **Three percent** (5.7 million drivers) said they had used their vehicles to purposely bump or ram another vehicle.

Nearly two-thirds of the drivers surveyed said they believe that aggressive driving is a bigger problem today than it was only three years ago. And 90 percent said they believe aggressive drivers are a serious threat to others’ personal safety.

How to Recognize and Prevent Workplace Sprains and Strains

Sprains, strains and tears are the most common cause of time-loss injuries in the workplace, with worker overexertion being the biggest contributor to these injuries.

Other causes of sprains, strains and tears are bending, climbing, crawling, reaching and twisting. The lower back is the most commonly injured part of the body, according to the Workers' Safety & Compensation Commission (WSCC) of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

A sprain is a tearing or stretching of the ligaments—the bands of tissue in your joints that connect two bones together. Sprains most commonly occur in the ankles.

A strain is a tearing or stretching of muscles or tendons—the tissue connecting muscles to bones. Strains most commonly affect the lower back.

Along with overexertion, there are several other factors contributing to strains, sprains and tears, according to the WSCC. They include:

- ❖ **Force:** Lifting, pushing, pulling or carrying.
- ❖ **Posture:** Working in the same position for a long time with little or no movement, or bending or twisting in an awkward posture.
- ❖ **Repetition:** Performing the same movement over and over, with little or no time to recover.
- ❖ **Vibration:** Hand or arm vibration from holding a tool or equipment that vibrates continuously, or whole-body vibration from sitting or standing on equipment that vibrates.
- ❖ **Sudden movements:** Pivoting, reaching, slipping or falling.

Symptoms associated with sprains, strains and tears include aching, burning or shooting pain; swelling or tenderness; bruising; muscle spasms; weakness; and a limited ability or inability to move the affected muscle.

Workers who experience discomfort or inability to walk without pain should see a healthcare practitioner, says the WSCC, adding, "If you are injured, do not ignore your symptoms. It is to your benefit to recognize and report them as soon as possible. Early signs and symptoms may progress into conditions which can have long-term effects."

The WSCC advises employers to have a return-to-work program, including offering modified and alternative work to injured workers. Such a program can help reduce costs and improve an injured worker's recovery.

"It is the employer's responsibility to train and alert their workers to any job-related hazards, and to seek out and identify any additional hazards that may lead to sprain and strain injuries. An employer should continually monitor the workplace to ensure that workers follow the proper safety procedures, and work with them to eliminate risk

factors. Employers should also ensure that their workers are reporting early symptoms or concerns."

If a worker visits a healthcare practitioner for a sprain, strain or tear, his or her supervisor should request the functional abilities form in order to determine which work duties are safe for the worker to perform.

The WSCC suggests that supervisors regularly review their return-to-work program, not just for new workers; but for long-time workers as well, and update it as necessary.

The commission has several suggestions for preventing sprain and strain injuries and encourages supervisors to pass these tips on to their workers:

- ❖ **Reduce forces required for the job.** Examine the items that you need to move, or the movements involved in doing the job, and plan ahead to ensure you are not overexerting yourself.
- ❖ **Take your time with tasks.** Sudden or unexpected movements can cause sprains or strains. Pay attention to your surroundings and do not rush. Make sure that lighting is adequate to see what you are doing and where you are going.
- ❖ **Take advantage of equipment and machinery offered in your workplace.** Use carts, hoists, and mechanical equipment whenever possible to handle heavy materials. Ladders, work platforms, scissor lifts and extension poles can reduce the need to reach overhead and overextend yourself, and can bring the work closer to you. And powered tools can reduce the force required for a task.
- ❖ **Work together.** Do not attempt to lift or carry large items or materials by yourself. Ask a co-worker for help. If you must lift and carry items by yourself, carry a load that you can safely lift and maintain proper posture by keeping items close to your body to help reduce strain on your joints.
- ❖ **Wear proper and appropriate footwear for your work.** Keep one hand free to help maintain balance or break a fall. If you work in an environment where you may walk or move around on slippery or wet surfaces, request that your employer invest in some non-slip mats to prevent slip, trip and fall accidents.
- ❖ **Maintain good housekeeping practices in the workplace.** Clear any cluttered areas and attend to spills as soon as you see them. Cover any cords or cables that cross walkways, using cable protectors or duct tape.
- ❖ **Maintain good health and warm up prior to physical activity.** Warm-up exercises will loosen your muscles and increase the range of motion in your joints. Take regular breaks to give your body time to recover. ❖

Near Misses are Too Close for Comfort!

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

A near miss, or close call, is an event that almost results in an injury, illness or property damage. Think back to a close call you had. Was a split second, a few inches, or dumb luck the only thing between you and death?

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Near misses are red flags that something is dangerously wrong with a process, task, piece of equipment or tool, or something in the work environment. Too often these red flags are ignored, not reported or not corrected. This leaves room for the following to get too close to you and your co-workers:

- ✿ Catastrophic equipment failure.
- ✿ Fire and explosions.
- ✿ Chemical spills and other environmental disasters.
- ✿ Serious injury and death.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

The best thing you can do to protect yourself and your co-workers is to speak up. Report near misses that you witness or that happen to you. This is easier said than done sometimes because you might:

- ✿ Fear getting in trouble or be embarrassed about your part in the incident.
- ✿ Not understand the importance near miss reporting plays in accident prevention.
- ✿ Be worried about breaking a safety or production record for so many days without an incident; or
- ✿ Be discouraged by the lack of action when similar issues have been reported.

While keeping silent may seem like the easy way out, think about how you would feel if a co-worker died because of a hazard that you knew existed but didn't report?

Some other ways you can protect yourself include:

- ✿ Be aware of how your co-workers conduct themselves and work together to prevent injury and safeguard one another from incidents. Compare your routines and habits with theirs and share tips.
- ✿ Take responsibility for the equipment or machinery you use. If equipment or machinery causes you problems or appears to be broken, stop using it and report it to your supervisor.
- ✿ Ensure you understand and follow all safety procedures. If you have questions or have ideas for a safer way to do something talk to your supervisor.

FINAL WORD

Don't give danger a second chance to get too close for comfort. Report all near misses immediately so they can be investigated and hazards can be corrected. ✿

Meeting material to go: *Safety meeting materials such as presentation tips, PowerPoint presentations, quiz answers and more are downloadable at www.SafetySmart.com*

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Near misses are red flags that something is dangerously wrong with a process, equipment or task.
 True False
2. A near miss is an event that results in minor injury, illness or property damage.
 True False
3. You should **not** report a near miss if you know it will break a safety or production record for days without an incident.
 True False
4. Keeping silent about a near miss could lead to you or a co-worker being injured or killed.
 True False

What Would You Do?

You're walking in the warehouse and as you turn the corner of a main aisle you are almost hit by a forklift coming the other way. That's the second time in a month this has happened. What's your next move? What are some safety measures that can be put in place to prevent this near miss from turning into something more serious?

Quiz Answers: 1. True, 2. False, 3. False, 4. True

Did you Get the Memo on Office Hazards?

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

An office is almost like a second home to those that work there. Considering how much time a lot of us spend at our office it's easy to feel that way. It's also easy to feel comfortable and safe at the office, just like we do at home. But before you get too comfortable, here's a memo for you: Tens of thousands of injuries and work-related health problems effect office workers each year.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Here are four office hazards you may not have given much thought to:

1. Slips, trips and falls are often caused by boxes, files or other items piled in walkways. Hazards also include cords, open file cabinet drawers, unsafe use of a ladder or using a chair or box to reach something. These hazards can lead to broken bones, back injuries and injured pride.
2. Sitting and using a computer, phone, or staring at a monitor all day can cause a great deal of discomfort and ergonomic injuries to office workers. Improperly set up workstations and poor ergonomic work practices put workers at risk for ergonomic injuries like carpal tunnel syndrome, eye strain, and headaches.
3. Poor indoor air quality is another potential hazard and also one you may not have a lot of control over. Odors and allergens from dust, office materials, and even the carpet can cause respiratory irritation. Faulty or not well maintained heating and cooling systems can also lead to illness.
4. Damaged power cords, overloaded power strips and outlets are common office fire hazards you probably overlook on a daily basis. So too is blocked fire safety equipment such as sprinkler heads and portable fire extinguishers. Finally, the improper use of electrical appliances such as space heaters, coffee makers and microwaves are also potential office fire hazards.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Protecting against slips, trips and falls is easy.

- ✿ Clean up spills immediately.
- ✿ Keep boxes, files, cords and clutter picked up, put away and out of walkways.
- ✿ Push cabinet drawers in when not in use.
- ✿ Don't use chairs, boxes, or anything but a ladder or step-stool to reach items up on shelves or otherwise out of easy reach.

- ✿ Use all ladders safely and ask for help if you need it.

If you're experiencing ergonomic issues, such as pain, tingling or weakness, ask your supervisor for assistance adjusting your work station. Ergonomic guidelines for office workstation setup include:

- ✿ Position the chair, keyboard and monitor in a straight line with your body.
- ✿ Maintain a relaxed, neutral posture.
- ✿ Sit up straight, adjusting the chair to provide firm back support.
- ✿ Let your arms hang loosely at the shoulders.
- ✿ Keep your elbows at a 90-degree angle while typing.
- ✿ Use an adjustable keyboard tray to position your keyboard and mouse at a comfortable height (usually lower than the desk surface).
- ✿ Place your mouse next to the keyboard, and keep it as close as possible to your body, to avoid reaching.
- ✿ Adjust the chair's height so that your feet are firmly on the ground; and finally
- ✿ Take rest breaks to stretch and relax your muscles and your eyes.

While you may not have a lot of control over indoor air quality there are some things you can do. Don't wear heavy perfumes or cologne. Don't burn scented candles, which is also a fire hazard, and report indoor air quality concerns to your supervisor immediately.

Help prevent fires by following these easy tips:

- ✿ Inspect power cords regularly for damaged prongs, exposed or frayed wires.
 - Never use a cord if the third prong has been damaged or removed.
 - Replace if damaged.
- ✿ Don't overload outlets or power strips.
- ✿ Don't leave coffee pots on when they are empty and don't leave food cooking unattended in a microwave.
- ✿ Keep items clear of sprinkler heads; and
- ✿ Never block emergency exits routes or emergency exits.

FINAL WORD

Your office can be a safe and comfortable place to work. Do your part and put into practice the tips you just learned to prevent common office hazards. ✿

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

1. Tingling, pain and numbness are possible signs of an ergonomic injury.
 True False
2. Rest breaks aren't needed when your job involves sitting at a computer all day.
 True False
3. You notice the power cord to your computer is starting to fray. What's the safest course of action to take?
 - a. Wrap up the frayed wire in electrical tape and call it good.
 - b. Get a new power cord and put the frayed one in the storage closet.
 - c. Ignore it until it starts sparking or smoking.
 - d. Get a new power cord and properly dispose of the frayed cord.
4. Rest breaks do little to reduce the risk of ergonomic injuries.
 True False

What Would You Do?

There's a box you need in the storage room. It's higher than you can reach and the only thing to climb on in is an old office chair. One of the wheels on the chair's is broken so it doesn't roll. Would you use it? Should you use it?

Quiz Answers: 1. True, 2. False, 3. D, 4. False

IN THE COURTS

Centre for Addiction and Mental Health Fined for Violent Attacks on Staff

The Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) has been fined \$80,000, with an additional \$20,000 victim fine surcharge, in connection to physical attacks on two workers by a patient.

CAMH pleaded guilty to failing to develop, establish and put into effect measures and procedures, including safe work practices, to protect workers (in the circumstances) on the night shift from workplace violence or the risk thereof posed by a patient.

The two attacks occurred on Jan. 14, 2014 at the Queen Street Facility in Toronto. A registered practical nurse performing rounds on the night shift was attacked from behind by a patient who had a history of violence and had not been following a prescribed medication plan.

The nurse was assaulted in the hallway of a unit in the facility, with the attack continuing near a nursing station. A co-worker who tried to help the nurse was also assaulted.

The Ontario Court of Justice in Toronto heard that both victims suffered physical and psychological injuries. The patient was charged and convicted of committing the assaults. 🍁

Hand Amputation Brings \$140,000 in Penalties

A company has been ordered to pay a \$100,000 fine, plus a \$40,000 victim fine surcharge, after a Saskatchewan worker lost his hand in an incident involving a conveyor.

Saskatoon Provincial Court heard that the worker had been unloading fertilizer products using a conveyor system at Crop Production Services (CPS) Canada near Elstow, SK, when the belt began slipping because of precipitation. The worker removed a guard around the belt while applying a drying agent and his left hand became caught in the conveyor. It could not be saved.

The Calgary-based company pleaded guilty to failing to provide an effective safeguard where a worker may contact a dangerous moving machine part.

The court heard that CPS Canada has since spent \$1.4 million on improvements to equipment and worker training to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future.

The worker submitted a victim impact statement which indicated that the injury had wrecked his life, since he is no longer able to enjoy fishing, golfing and manual labour. He continues to suffer phantom limb pain more than two years after the amputation. 🍁

CNRL Fined \$500,000 for Company Execs Blame Workers' Actions For Fatal Explosion

Nexen Energy executives say an explosion that killed two workers at its Long Lake Oil Sands Upgrader Facility in Alberta was caused by the employees who died.

Two maintenance workers were fitting valves on a compressor when the explosion occurred in January 2016. It destroyed half of the building's roof and blew a wall out.

One worker died at the scene, while a second worker died from severe burn injuries at an Edmonton burn unit about a week later.

Ron Bailey, senior vice president of Canadian operations, said the workers, Dave Williams, 30, and Drew Foster, 52, had been working outside the scope of their normal activities and, "We believe decisions were made by the employees that caused the explosion."

Bailey did not elaborate on what those decisions may have been. However, he said that the fatalities point to gaps in Nexen's safety culture that need to be addressed through better training and education. 🍁

FROM THE FATALITY FILES

Singing Was a Deadly Substitute for a Much-Needed Nap

The sad death of a British doctor in a car accident is a strong reminder that there is no safe substitute for pulling over and taking a nap when a driver is overcome by fatigue.

Dr. Ronak Patel, 33, was using a hands-free cell phone to sing to his wife at home to help him stay awake on the drive home after working three consecutive night shifts. He had chosen to drive home rather than sleep at the hospital where he worked.

His phone suddenly cut off and his wife, Helen told an inquest that repeated calls back to him went unanswered.

Police found Patel dead after his VW Golf collided with a large truck on a highway in Honington, Suffolk. The truck driver testified that Patel's car drifted to the wrong side of the road on a bend and there was nothing he could do to avoid a collision.

Patel was a trainee anesthetist at Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital who was a highly regarded, capable and popular doctor, according to a statement from the hospital. 🍁

POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Preventing Strains and Sprains Associated with Manual Handling and Slips, Trips and Falls

The main causes of musculoskeletal injuries such as twisted ankles, sprained knees, tendonitis and back injuries are manual handling tasks, along with slips, trips and falls. Use this checklist from WorkSafe Victoria in Australia to ensure you are taking adequate steps to minimize these types of injuries.

Manual Handling

Quick checks to help prevent injuries

- Tasks are designed to avoid workers having to handle things
- Worker activities are varied to use different muscles
- Mechanical aids are used to move items, eg: trolleys, forklifts, hoists
- Mechanical aids are maintained so they are easy to use
- Equipment is available to move or support patients and clients
- Work surfaces are the correct height for workers
- Hand tools have anti-vibration and anti-kickstart features
- Frequently used objects are within easy reach
- Storage areas are organized to reduce the need to bend and stretch to reach items
- Workers are trained to use equipment safely and understand the manual handling risks

Slips, Trips and Falls

Quick checks to help prevent slips, trips and falls

- Floors are maintained, eg: no holes, uneven surfaces, curled up carpet edges
- Floors are kept clean and dry and have sufficient grip to prevent slipping
- Any ramps, raised platforms or changes in floor level are highlighted
- Water, oil, grease, cardboard, offcuts and wrappings don't end up on the floor
- Walkways are well-lit and free from clutter
- Work areas are tidy, and adequate storage space and bins are provided
- Designated areas are used for deliveries
- Cleaning methods and equipment are suitable for the workplace
- Cleaning happens regularly, and access is restricted when it's in progress
- Spills are cleaned up immediately
- Workers wear the most suitable footwear for their job
- Workers know how to ascend and descend ladders, vehicles and stairways safely

Surviving Large Animal Encounters While Working Outdoors

Working alone or in small groups in remote areas carries a number of challenges, because workers can be hours away from help if something goes wrong. One potential hazard is contact with a large wild animal, such as a bear or cougar.

Within the past couple of years in Western Canada, a female worker was fatally mauled by a black bear and a pipeline worker was mauled by a cougar, but survived.

Lorna Weafer, a 36-year-old instrument technician with Suncor Energy, was fatally attacked by a black bear in broad daylight while working in a group of seven people near Fort McMurray, AB, in May 2014. The bear dragged Weafer off in spite of her co-workers' attempts to stop the attack.

The workers did not have bear spray, but they used a fire extinguisher, a water cannon and an air horn to try to scare the bear away. The bear was not deterred. Suncor Energy later mandated bear safety training for its workers.

Investigators determined that there were no open food or garbage containers in the area and the attack was predatory, occurring as Weafer was returning from a bathroom break at the company's oil sands base plant.

In the cougar attack incident, also occurring in northern Alberta, a pipeline worker was mauled by a cougar weighing about 36 kilograms (80 pounds) in January 2015. The cougar jumped on Stephen Campbell's back, sinking its teeth into the 31-year-old worker's skull and clawing the sides of his face.

Again, Campbell was not alone. Three co-workers fought back with skid hooks and their fists, but the attack continued until Campbell managed to throw the animal to the ground.

Campbell, who needed 30 stitches and reconstructive ear surgery, told reporters that he would not be alive had he been alone.

Both of these events were unusual in that the bear and cougar were not deterred by the presence of several workers and continued their attacks despite efforts to scare them off.

While the results of an encounter with a bear or cougar are unpredictable, here is some advice from Workplace Safety North to pass on to your workers who work outdoors:

- ❦ Carry bear spray, whistles and air horns that can be used to scare off a bear. Don't bury bear spray in your backpack. Have it in a holster, ready to use.
- ❦ Work in a group or in close proximity to others.



- ❦ Avoid carrying food and eating outside of a vehicle or building.
- ❦ Make noise while moving through the bush on foot.

If you encounter a black bear:

- ❦ Try to stay calm and don't run. Talk to the bear in a calm voice. Do not make eye contact, as the bear may take that as a sign of aggression.
- ❦ Arm your bear spray. Be careful to stand downwind.
- ❦ If the bear does not move toward you, slowly back away, talking to the bear in a quiet, monotone voice. Make sure that the bear has a clear escape route.
- ❦ Do not scream, turn your back on the bear, run, kneel down or make direct eye contact.
- ❦ If the bear approaches you, yell and wave your arms to make yourself look bigger. Throw objects and blow a whistle or air horn.
- ❦ If it attacks, stand your ground and use your bear spray. Fight back with everything you have.
- ❦ Do not play dead, unless you are sure a mother bear is attacking you in defense of her cubs.

If you encounter a grizzly bear, stay calm and don't run. Talk to the bear in a calm voice. If it attacks, use your bear spray. If the bear continues attacking, play dead. Lie on your side in a fetal position, with your legs up to your chest and your head buried into your legs. Protect the back of your head with your hands. You can also lie on your stomach, with your arms behind your neck. If you are wearing a backpack it may provide some protection.

If you encounter a cougar, stay calm. Make yourself appear as large as possible. Try to back away slowly, facing the cougar. Never turn your back on a cougar and never try to run away.

If the cougar appears ready to attack, act aggressively. Make noise and maintain eye contact. If the cougar attacks, fight back using sticks or rocks. Try to hit the cougar in the face or eyes. Bear spray may also be used, but because of a cougar's speed and agility, it can be very difficult to get a good stream of spray into its face and eyes. ❦

LIGHTNING FREQUENTLY OVERLOOKED AS AN OCCUPATIONAL HAZARD CONTINUED FROM COVER

- ✿ Logging,
- ✿ Explosives handling or storage,
- ✿ Roofing,
- ✿ Construction (working from scaffolding),
- ✿ Building maintenance,
- ✿ Power utility field repair,
- ✿ Steel erection/ telecommunications,
- ✿ Farming and field labor,
- ✿ Plumbing and pipefitting,
- ✿ Lawn services/landscaping,
- ✿ Airport ground personnel operations, and
- ✿ Pool and beach lifeguarding.

Employers, supervisors and workers should understand lightning risks, characteristics and precautions to minimize workplace hazards. Lightning is unpredictable and can strike outside the heaviest rainfall areas or even up to 10 miles (16 kilometres) from any rainfall.

OSHA and NOAA say many lightning victims are caught outside during a storm because they did not act promptly to get to a safe place, or they went back outside too soon after a storm had passed.

If signs of an approaching thunderstorm become evident, workers should not start any task they cannot quickly stop. With proper planning and safe practices, employers can easily reduce worker exposure to lightning strikes.

The number one thing to do is: Get indoors to a safe place immediately if you hear even a distant rumbling of thunder. There are no safe areas outdoors when thunderstorms are in your area.

Here are some tips from OSHA and NOAA for protecting your outdoor workers against lightning:

- ✿ Supervisors should check weather forecasts before having their workers start any task outdoors. If thunderstorms are in

the immediate forecast, outdoor work should be temporarily rescheduled.

- ✿ Supervisors and workers should continuously monitor weather conditions, watching out for darkening clouds and increasing wind speeds, which can indicate an approaching thunderstorm.
- ✿ If workers see lightning or hear thunder, they should get inside a fully enclosed building which has electrical wiring and plumbing and stay there for at least 30 minutes after hearing the last sound of thunder.
- ✿ If safe building structures are not available, workers should shelter in hard-topped (not convertible) vehicles with the windows up and stay there for half an hour after the last thunderclap.
- ✿ If there are no enclosed buildings or vehicles nearby, workers should stay clear of tall trees, hilltops, utility poles, cell phone towers, cranes, ladders, large equipment, scaffolding, metal objects, fencing, wiring, plumbing and rooftops. Retreat to dense areas of smaller trees that are surrounded by larger trees, or to low-lying areas. But do not enter or stay in water, such as lakes or pools.
- ✿ Don't use corded telephones during a thunderstorm, except in an emergency. However, cordless phones and cell phones may be used safely.
- ✿ Employers should have a written Emergency Action Plan, including a written lightning safety protocol for outdoor workers. This plan should include a warning to workers to take shelter inside if a storm approaches, and locations and requirements for safe shelters. ✿

LISTEN UP AND PREVENT PERMANENT HEARING LOSS CONTINUED FROM COVER

negatively affect the body by raising stress levels and blood pressure. Noise can also interact with chemical substances, increasing the harmful effects on workers' health.

Auditory health effects of noise include acoustic trauma caused by loud, short bursts of noise, like that of a shotgun; tinnitus (ringing or buzzing in the ears); temporary hearing loss that improves after a worker spends time in a quiet place; and permanent hearing loss from continued exposure to unacceptable levels of noise.

Reducing the amount of workplace noise that reaches the ears—either by controlling it at the source or by using hearing protection—is vital toward protecting your workers' hearing.

Noise-induced hearing impairment is the most common irreversible and preventable occupational hazard worldwide. The World Health Organization (WHO) says hearing protection and a noise safety program should be instituted if workers are being exposed to noise levels approaching 85 decibels (dB) over an eight-hour shift.

The CCOHS suggests such noise-reducing measures as purchasing quieter tools or machinery; properly maintaining equipment to run as quietly as possible; or isolating noisy equipment or processes, such as by enclosing it or them with noise barriers. Your workers also need to always use the most appropriate and comfortable hearing protection. ✿



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