

SUPERVISOR

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Report Identifies Most Common Causes of Workplace Accidents and Injuries

(Editor's note: The following article cites American workplace injury statistics, but Statistics Canada reports similar injury causes, with overexertion/strenuous movement and falls accounting for nearly half of occupational injuries. A further 32 percent of work-related injuries across Canada involve accidental contact with a sharp object, tool or machine, or being accidentally struck or crushed by an object. The most frequent type of occupational injury in Canada is sprains and strains, followed by cuts and fractures.)

The Travelers Companies, Inc., the largest workers' compensation carrier in the United States, has released an Injury Impact Report identifying the most common causes of workplace accidents and injuries between 2010 and 2014.

The company analyzed more than 1.5 million workers' compensation claims and determined that the most common workplace injury was strains and sprains, accounting for 30 percent of all claims. That was followed by cuts and punctures, accounting for 19 percent of the total; contusions (injuries to muscle, bone or soft tissue), accounting for 12 percent; inflammation injuries (five percent); fractures (five percent) and all other types of injuries, comprising the remaining 29 percent of claims.

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NIOSH Researching Whether Coffee Workers Are at Risk for Lung Disease

Hundreds of millions of people can't live without their coffee, and scores of workers make their livings preparing fancy and regular coffee drinks for them. But could those workers potentially be at risk for developing obliterative bronchiolitis, a serious lung disease?

That's what researchers at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) are trying to determine. Obliterative bronchiolitis is an irreversible lung disease in which the smallest airways of the lung (the bronchioles) become scarred and constricted. Symptoms include coughing, shortness of breath upon exertion, and wheezing.

This disease, which can be serious enough to require a lung transplant, was earlier identified in flavoring manufacturing workers and microwave popcorn workers who were occupationally exposed to diacetyl (2,3-butanedione) or butter flavorings containing diacetyl. It was given the name "popcorn lung" in reference to microwave popcorn workers who became ill.

"Workers at coffee processing facilities also may be at risk for obliterative bronchiolitis," says Dr. Rachel L. Bailey, a medical officer in NIOSH's Respiratory Health Division. "NIOSH investigators published a paper in the American Journal of Industrial Medicine about a health hazard evaluation at a coffee processing

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Report Details Climate Change's Potential Health Effects on Workers

Potential health effects on workers as a result of climate change are included in a new report from the US Global Change Research Program. The US Global Change Research Program Climate and Health Assessment report (<https://health2016.globalchange.gov>) contains a section on populations of concern, including outdoor workers and workers who may be exposed to other extreme weather environments.

Climate change may increase the severity and prevalence of known occupational hazards, as well as the development of new hazards, with outdoor workers being most at risk—particularly agricultural workers, commercial fishers, utility workers, construction workers, transportation workers, and first responders.

The report states that workers in hot indoor work environments such as warehouses and factories are also at risk for health effects caused by climate change.

“The risk workers face from climate change includes working in hotter temperatures and the possibility of longer spans of hot days for outside work. These kinds of exposures can cause

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Picture This!

A Rock and Roll Construction Site

Slips, trips and falls are extremely common on construction sites and with conditions such as those shown in this photograph, it's easy to see why. A worker is seen navigating a sea of rebar on the ground, much of it loose. Slipping or tripping here could lead to a fatal impalement incident. (eLCOSH)

SEVEN STATISTICS: HOUSEKEEPING AND WORKPLACE SAFETY

When people think of major hazards in the workplace, poor housekeeping likely isn't the first thing to spring to mind, but a cluttered, disorganized workplace can lead to deadly consequences. Consider what could happen if fire exits were blocked by piled up equipment or materials and workers couldn't get to safety in time. Other examples could include fatal foodborne illnesses caused by filthy production machinery or people on the ground being injured or killed when high winds pick up and throw unsecured building materials. Here are seven statistics relating to housekeeping and workplace safety:

1. According to the US Department of Labor, **15** percent of all accidental worker deaths are attributable to slips, trips or falls, many of which are linked to poor workplace housekeeping.
2. **Six** housekeeping good practices to help prevent workplace slips, trips and falls include reporting and cleaning up spills and leaks; keeping aisles and exits clear of debris; installing mirrors and warning signs in blind spot areas; replacing worn, ripped or damaged flooring; installing anti-slip flooring in areas that can't always be cleaned; and using drip pans and guards in places where spills may occur. (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS))
3. **Nine** signs of poor housekeeping are cluttered and poorly arranged work areas; dangerous storage of materials; dirty, dusty floors and work surfaces; hanging on to items that are no longer needed, or having too many of the same items; blocked or cluttered aisles and exits; tools and equipment that are not returned to proper storage; broken containers and damaged materials; overflowing waste bins and containers; and spills and leaks. (Workplace Safety and Prevention Services)

4. **One** major aspect of workplace housekeeping is maintenance. If burned-out light bulbs aren't replaced or if damaged or uneven flooring isn't fixed, people can easily suffer injuries.



5. Incidents resulting in injury or death that stem from poor housekeeping include these **four** examples: tripping or falling over objects; fires caused by the ignition of unsafe buildups of combustible dusts; slips on wet, slick or greasy floors; and being struck by objects that have fallen after being improperly stored.
6. **Five** housekeeping responsibilities that all workers should share include cleaning up during the shift; day-to-day cleanup; waste disposal; removal of unused materials; and inspections to ensure that cleanup is completed. (Commonwealth of Virginia Workers' Compensation Services)
7. **Six** benefits of good housekeeping are as follows: It eliminates clutter, which is a common cause of slips, trips and falls and fires and explosions; it reduces the chances of harmful materials such as dust or vapors entering workers' bodies; it improves productivity because the right tools and materials are always easy to find; it reflects a professional and well-run business; it helps your company to keep inventory to a minimum; and it makes the workplace a neater, more comfortable and pleasant place to work.

SAFE SUPERVISOR

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 Publications Mail # 40065442
 Published Monthly.



CLIMATE CHANGE'S POTENTIAL HEALTH EFFECTS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

heat-related illnesses, as well as stress and fatigue, which can put workers at risk for injury,” says the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). “Workers may also have less control over their exposures to climate-change-related risks than the general public.”

The report also notes that changes in climate patterns can cause increasingly frequent and severe weather extremes, such as storms, flooding and drought. Warmer and drier conditions have also increased the duration of the wildland fire season.

Judge Reverses Decision That Had Banned Random Drug Testing at Suncor

An Alberta Court of Queen's Bench judge recently quashed an earlier ruling that had prevented Suncor Energy from conducting random alcohol and drug testing of its workers.

The 2014 arbitration panel had ruled that such testing would violate union workers' privacy. However, Justice Blair Nixon found that the panel had not considered evidence regarding incidents involving drugs and alcohol among all Suncor workers, including non-union contract workers.

The justice noted in his decision that the majority of the panel had “ignored evidence pertaining to some two-thirds of the individuals working in the oil sands operation.”

Suncor Energy first announced plans for random drug and alcohol testing in 2012. The company reported nearly 2,300 drug and alcohol “security incidents” between 2004 and 2013.

However, Unifor, which represents union workers at Suncor, noted that only 12 of the incidents involved union workers. Unifor has said it will appeal Justice Nixon's decision on the grounds that random testing violates workers' privacy.

Sneh Seetal, a spokeswoman for Suncor Energy, says the company is pleased with the ruling because it protects the safety of workers, the public and the environment.

WorkSafeNB Warns Auto Mechanics on Asbestos Hazard

WorkSafeNB (New Brunswick) has issued a hazard alert concerning the possibility of auto mechanics being exposed to deadly asbestos while working on brake shoes, brake pads, and clutch plates.

The warning came after a worker who was using compressed air to clear debris from a trailer's brake shoes stirred up a dust cloud, drawing the attention of other employees. A laboratory analysis determined that the airborne material contained 20 to 30 percent chrysotile asbestos—the most common form of asbestos.

“When employers are unsure if these products contain asbestos, they must implement control measures to protect employees as per the requirements of Regulation 92-106, Working with

Material Containing Asbestos,” says WorkSafeNB. “Auto mechanics who perform brake and clutch repairs risk exposure to dust that may contain asbestos fibres. Once suspended in the air, asbestos fibres can be inhaled. Prolonged exposure to asbestos dust can cause chronic lung disease or lung cancer.”

Employers in the automotive repair business must develop a code of practice for Class 1 or low-risk work. WorkSafeNB says it must include these elements:

- ✳ Before beginning work, all visible dust must be removed from surfaces using a damp cloth or a vacuum cleaner equipped with a HEPA filter.
- ✳ Use drop sheets made from polyethylene or other suitable material to control the spread of asbestos dust outside of the work area.
- ✳ Before starting work, wet all asbestos-containing material, unless wetting causes a hazard.
- ✳ During the work, frequently clean up any dust or waste containing asbestos using a damp cloth or HEPA-filter-equipped vacuum.
- ✳ Never use compressed air hoses or brushes to clean up dust.
- ✳ Provide NIOSH-approved N95 respirators (or better) to employees.
- ✳ Dispose of waste material containing asbestos according to the requirements of the New Brunswick Department of the Environment and local governments.
- ✳ Transport waste material containing asbestos in accordance with the requirements of the Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act.

Teen Receives Brain Injury and Some Paralysis in Impalement Incident

A 14-year-old suffered significant brain injuries when she became impaled by a golf club during a run at the Ford Test Track in Windsor Ontario.

The City of Windsor had placed several sawed-off golf clubs in a line, connected by a wire, to guide crews painting chalk lines on a field.

Madison Arseneault, a Grade 8 student, tripped over the wire while running with her gym class and the blunt end of a golf club flew up and punctured the back of her skull.

She was rushed to hospital in critical condition with the club still impaled in her brain. Two weeks after the incident she remained in serious, but non-life-threatening condition.

Jennier Bezaire, a lawyer representing Arseneault's family, said at that time that Madison “does have some awareness and is awake, although is heavily medicated.”

The teenager was also experiencing paralysis on her left side following the incident.

Some Tips for Helping Workers Who Have Arthritis

Arthritis, which typically occurs between the ages of 35 and 50, is a leading cause of disability. That means most of the people who develop the disease between those ages are still working.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) says an estimated seven million Canadian adults will be diagnosed with arthritis within the next 20 years. In the United States, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is projecting that by the year 2040, an estimated 78 million Americans ages 18 and older will have been diagnosed with arthritis.

“Arthritis can affect workers anywhere—in offices, manufacturing plants, retail environments and those working outdoors. Common symptoms such as pain, fatigue, joint swelling, stiffness and limited movement can make it difficult to perform any job,” notes the CCOHS.

People with arthritis may experience a variety of symptoms, and periods when no symptoms are present. It is common for arthritis sufferers to feel frustrated and anxious.

“According to a national study of arthritis in the workplace, many Canadians are giving up breaks to complete tasks and using sick days and taking vacation time to rest at home in order to continue working,” notes the CCOHS.

It adds that modifying the way one performs his or her work and making changes to one’s work environment can help reduce the adverse effects of arthritis. Share with your workers these tips from the CCOHS for reducing some of the debilitating effects of arthritis:

- ✦ Organize your workspace so that frequently used items are within easy reach.
- ✦ Stand square to your workstation so you are not bending or twisting, and use a footrest to decrease the pressure on your lower back if you work in a standing position or at a counter.
- ✦ Use an anti-fatigue mat to help relieve strain on the lower back and legs if you stand for long periods of time on hard floors.
- ✦ If you use a chair, use a chair mat to make it easier to slide or turn your chair. In some cases it might be beneficial to use a sit/stand stool.
- ✦ Use of a telephone headset will reduce the amount of neck side-bending required to hold the phone receiver.
- ✦ Sit in a proper upright, relaxed position. You should feel no strain on your back, neck or limbs. Sit so that your hips, knees, ankles and elbows are each at a 90-degree angle. Your armrests should be at the right height, with your shoulders and elbows in a relaxed position.
- ✦ Make sure your chair is comfortable, that it provides good support to your back and legs, and that it is properly adjusted.

✦ If you use a computer, use a split keyboard so that your hands, wrists and forearms are in a more natural position. The use of a specially designed mouse called a trackball mouse can reduce the amount of hand and arm movement required to perform computer tasks.

- ✦ Make sure that your chair is positioned within a comfortable distance from the computer and that your elbows are in a relaxed 90-degree angle to the keyboard. Your eyes should be about 40 to 70 centimetres (15 to 27 inches) from the monitor. You should be looking straight ahead at the screen, at eye level.
- ✦ If you must move heavy objects as part of your job, use a dolly or cart to help reduce strain in your back, arms and legs. Try to roll or slide heavy objects if possible. Push, don’t pull. Take your time moving objects. Rushing could cause injury to your joints. If you need help, ask a co-worker for assistance.
- ✦ Use a step-stool to reach items high on shelves and use a briefcase on wheels when taking work home or to a meeting.
- ✦ Wear comfortable footwear that supports your feet and promotes good posture. Avoid wearing shoes with high heels. Use insoles to help reduce strain on your feet, legs and lower back.
- ✦ You can help mitigate the effects of arthritis by getting enough sleep, eating a healthy diet and exercising regularly.
- ✦ Work at a moderate pace and plan to get extra rest if you know you have an important event coming up at work.
- ✦ Save those important or more difficult tasks for when you feel the most energetic. Switch it up to prevent straining yourself. Alternate your position from sitting, standing and walking as much as possible and take stretch breaks. Most of all, keep moving.

The CCOHS advises employers to provide an ergonomic workplace and job accommodation by allowing a flexible work schedule for workers with arthritis.

“For example, allow the employee to work from home during (arthritis) flares, and accommodate medical appointments. Raise awareness so everyone knows what support systems are available, including the employee benefits plan, and encourage and maintain good two-way communication with employees who live with arthritis,” it says. ✦



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Highway Work Zone Safety – It’s no Accident

WHAT’S AT STAKE?

Highway work zones are chaotic and dangerous. They are filled with people, equipment, surface and overhead hazards, and a steady flow of vehicles and pedestrian traffic. Every year hundreds of people lose their lives or suffer serious injuries in work zone-related accidents.

WHAT’S THE DANGER?

There are five types of work zone hazards.

Road Hazards

- ✿ Limited space between work activity and vehicles puts workers in harm’s way.
- ✿ Curves, hills, and trees can limit a driver’s line of sight and make it hard to see warning signs, workers and equipment.
- ✿ Overhead power lines, underground cables, uneven ground and construction debris create electric shock and slip and trip dangers.

Traffic Hazards

- ✿ Busy intersections with traffic coming from multiple directions can be confusing and dangerous.
- ✿ Heavy traffic, vehicles merging into and out of traffic and oncoming vehicular traffic passing through the work zone increases the chances for distracted drivers to be involved in an accident.
- ✿ Schools, parks, and playgrounds nearby means children are also nearby. Not only might they be curious about the equipment and work being done, but children also might not understand the risks of work zones.

Equipment Hazards

- ✿ Moving construction equipment poses struck-by and caught-between hazards. For example, swinging excavator arms and buckets filled with dirt and rock moving and dumping material from one place to another, can easily strike workers or pin them against a piece of equipment.
- ✿ Concrete trucks pouring concrete, hot tar, and asphalt machines and large roller compactors used to compact soil, gravel, concrete and asphalt, can bury or crush workers.

Weather and Lighting Hazards

- ✿ Rain, snow, ice, and fog reduce visibility and make roads slippery and dangerous.

- ✿ A rising or setting sun can produce a blinding glare for drivers.
- ✿ Low light or night work makes it hard for workers to see hazards and for drivers to see signage, barricades and workers in and around the work zone.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Drivers in vehicles are responsible for the majority of work zone fatalities. Distracted driving is a factor in more than 15 percent of fatal work zone crashes and speeding is a factor in nearly one-third of them. When driving, pay attention to signs alerting you to upcoming work zones. Always obey work zone speed limits; slowing down gives you extra time to react and stop if needed. When traveling through a work zone, be extra alert for workers and equipment entering and leaving the work zone and for sudden slowing or stopping of traffic.

If you are part of a road crew, follow these safety tips to keep you safe in a work zone:

- ✿ Review and follow the traffic control plan or work zone layout.
- ✿ Check that traffic control devices such as cones, barriers and signs are in place and in good condition.
- ✿ Be familiar with the hazards of each worksite and review safe work procedures before each shift and whenever plans or conditions change.
- ✿ ALWAYS wear the proper high-visibility clothing, such as vests and other required protective equipment, such as hardhats and safety glasses.
- ✿ Make sure you understand emergency procedures and who to see to report near misses and incidents.
- ✿ Inspect vehicles and equipment before use.
- ✿ Finally, check periodically to make sure signs and other traffic control devices are still in place.

FINAL WORD

Work zones are inherently dangerous, but with planning, caution and an extra level of alertness, they don’t have to be deadly. ✿

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

- Which of the following is a work zone hazard?
a. Fog
b. Curves and hills
c. Sunrise and sunset
d. All of the above
- Swinging equipment is a struck-by hazard.
 True False
- High-visibility clothing is only required when working at night.
 True False
- Distracted driving is a factor in more than 15 percent of fatal work zone crashes.
 True False

What Would You Do?

You’re a crew member starting work on an overpass construction project. You report to your first day of work and are told to put on a high-visibility vest and get to work. You ask about the traffic control plan and are told, “Stay out of the way of traffic. That’s the traffic control plan. Now get to work.” What would you do next?

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

Get Moving - Why Health & Wellness Matters

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Too many of us live sedentary lives. We spend most of our waking hours at work sitting behind a desk, behind the wheel, or behind a counter. Then we plop down on the couch and relax in front of the TV when we get home. Even those of us who have more active jobs likely don't get enough exercise. A lack of physical activity is hazardous to your overall health and wellness.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Too little activity has been shown to increase the likelihood of:

- ✦ Cancer.
- ✦ Heart attack and heart disease.
- ✦ Stroke.
- ✦ Diabetes and obesity.

Without enough exercise you lose muscle mass, strength and flexibility, and bone loss progresses faster in people who aren't active. These factors can lead to falls, broken bones and mobility issues.

Lack of regular exercise has also been linked to an increased risk of dementia, mood swings and depression.

Lastly, a sedentary existence can leave you with a weakened immune system and make you more susceptible to illnesses such as colds and the flu.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Get moving!

- ✦ Research consistently shows that engaging in three days of physical activity per week, totaling 150 minutes or 50 minutes per session, produces health benefits.
- ✦ Brisk walking, running, bicycling, jumping rope, and swimming are all great examples of cardio exercises.
- ✦ Start with light or moderate aerobic exercise, for short periods of time (10 to 15 minutes) with sessions spread throughout the week to reduce your

risk of injury and fatigue. Gradually build up to 50-minute sessions as your level of fitness improves.

Pump it up!

- ✦ Strength training, including lifting weights or resistance training, improves bone density and helps slow bone loss as you age.
- ✦ Weight training strengthens connective tissue, muscles and tendons. This decreases your risk of falls, sprains and strains.
- ✦ Strength training also helps prevent loss of muscle mass.
- ✦ Remember to start slowly to reduce the risk of injury and give your muscles time to rest and recover. Wait at least 48 hours before you train the same muscle group again.

Talk to your doctor before beginning a workout routine to make sure you are healthy enough for physical activity.

FINAL WORD

If you aren't already, start incorporating health and wellness activities into your daily routine. Regular exercise can help you live a longer, happier and healthier life. ✦

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. Regular physical activity **only** helps with weight loss.
 True False
2. Most health benefits occur with at least how many minutes a week of cardio (aerobic) exercise?
 - a. 50
 - b. 100
 - c. 150
 - d. 200
3. Spreading three sessions of physical activity across each week may help reduce your risk of injury and avoid excessive fatigue.
 True False
4. Lack of physical activity can increase your chances for:
 - a. Cancer
 - b. Diabetes
 - c. Heart disease
 - d. All of the above

What Would You Do?

You've recently been to the doctor for your annual check-up. You've put on a few pounds in the past year and you are borderline diabetic. The doctor says daily medication will be necessary if your numbers don't improve in the next three months. How will you deal with this reality?

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

Mining Company and Two Supervisors Fined

Two supervisors have been fined, along with their employer, after being found guilty of OHS charges relating to a rock fall injury incident involving two workers at a mine.

The incident occurred at the Cochenour Mine in Red Lake, ON, on Aug. 4, 2013, while the workers were being transported by a mechanized raise climber up a ventilation raise (vertical opening underground) to the face of rock where work was being performed.

The employees had earlier completed drilling and explosives had been detonated. They were travelling back to the face to resume work when rocks suddenly began falling onto the mechanized raise climber.

One of the workers was knocked out, while the second worker suffered minor injuries. It took mine personnel about three hours to rescue the miners.

J.S. Redpath Ltd. was found guilty of failing to ensure that the worker who fell unconscious had been properly registered in a training program to work on the mechanized raise climber in the ventilation raise.

The company was also found guilty of failing to ensure that the area where drilling and blasting were undertaken was examined by a supervisor during each work shift; and failing to provide information, instruction and supervision to the workers. The latter charge involved failing to ensure that job task observations of a crew driving a raise were made by a supervisor or trainer.

J.S. Redpath Ltd. was fined \$125,000, plus a \$31,250 victim fine surcharge.

Mine Superintendent Philip Parrott was convicted of failing to take the reasonable precaution of having a supervisor or trainer conduct job task observations, and failing to ensure that he or another supervisor visited a ventilation raise where drilling and blasting were being carried out during each work shift. Shift supervisor Robert Beldock was also convicted of failing to visit a ventilation raise where drilling and blasting were taking place.

Both Parrott and Beldock were also convicted of failing to ensure the use of safety nets designed to protect workers from falling rock hazards.

Parrott was fined \$6,000, while Beldock was fined \$5,000. The two supervisors must also pay victim fine surcharges of \$1,500 and \$1,250 respectively. 🍁

Company Fined for Failing to Provide Proper Training

An Ontario company has been fined \$10,000, plus a \$4,000 surcharge, after a worker fell six metres (20 feet) in Saskatoon, SK.

The fall occurred as a result of the boom of a track hoe striking a catwalk guardrail on June 14, 2014.

Lafarge Canada Inc. of Mississauga, ON, appeared in Saskatoon Provincial Court and pleaded guilty to a charge of failing to ensure that any worker who is required or permitted to assemble, use, maintain or dismantle rigging is trained in safe rigging practices. 🍁

Windsor Company Fined \$218,750 in Crushing Fatality Case

A Windsor, ON, automotive sector manufacturer has been fined \$175,000, plus a \$43,750 victim fine surcharge, with regard to the crushing death of a worker on Sept. 19, 2014.

Canadian Electrocoating Ltd. appeared in the Ontario Court of Justice in Windsor and pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that materials are transported, placed or stored in such a manner that they can be removed without endangering the safety of any worker.

Three workers were working at a parts table, loading parts onto a rack in an area known as the line load. The production line then moves loaded parts from the line load area through the painting process.

A forklift operator was lifting and moving material in the line load area when the machine's forks caught an edge of a bin containing automotive parts and weighing some 680 kilograms (1,500 pounds). The contact caused the stack of bins to wobble and some of the bins toppled in the direction of the three workers. One of the workers died after being struck and pinned by the bins.

The forklift operator was fully trained and certified and there was no evidence that the machine was being operated in a dangerous manner. However, the materials being handled were tightly nested, leaving little room for error on the operator's part.

An Ontario Ministry of Labour investigation found that the company's safety rules included the concept of a fall zone, or area that would be affected if a load being carried by a forklift were to tip, collapse or fall. The rule stated that workers should stay clear of the fall zone—a full circle around the lift truck equal to twice the height of the carried load.

That meant that workers should have been kept at least nine metres (30 feet) away from the stacked bins. However, they were within about five metres (16 feet) of the bins. An inspector found another area within the plant where Canadian Electrocoating Ltd. workers were too close to the fall zone. Therefore, two stop-work orders were issued. 🍁

A WORKPLACE HOUSEKEEPING CHECKLIST

Use the following workplace housekeeping checklist as a general workplace guide.

Floors and Other Areas

- Are floors clean and clear of waste?
- Are signs posted to warn of wet floors?
- Are floors in good condition?
- Are there holes, worn or loose planks or carpet sticking up?
- Is anti-slip flooring used where spills, moisture or grease are likely?
- Are there protruding objects such as nails, sharp corners, open cabinet drawers, trailing electrical wires?
- Are personal items, such as clothing and lunch boxes, in assigned lockers or storage areas?
- Is the work area congested?
- Are floors well-drained?

Aisles and Stairways

- Are aisles unobstructed and clearly marked?
- Are mirrors installed at blind corners?
- Are aisles wide enough to accommodate workers and equipment comfortably?
- Are safe loading practices used with hand and power trucks, skids, or pallets?
- Is the workplace lighting adequate? Are stairs well lit?
- Are stairs covered with anti-slip treads? Are faulty stair treads repaired?

Spill Control

- Are all spills wiped up quickly?
- Are procedures followed as indicated on the material safety data sheet?
- Are spill absorbents used for greasy, oily, flammable or toxic materials?
- Are used rags and absorbents disposed of promptly and safely?
- Is a spill area surrounded by a barrier to prevent a spill from spreading?

Equipment and Machinery Maintenance

- Is equipment in good working order, with all necessary guards or safety features operational or in place?
- Is equipment damaged or outdated?
- Are tools and machinery inspected regularly for wear or leaks?

- Is equipment repaired promptly?
- Are drip pans or absorbent materials used if leaks cannot be stopped at the source?
- Is a machine that splashes oil fitted with a screen or splash guard?
- Are machines and tools cleaned regularly?

Waste Disposal

- Are there adequate numbers of containers?
- Are there separate and approved containers for toxic and flammable waste?
- Are waste containers located where the waste is produced?
- Are waste containers emptied regularly?
- Are toxic and flammable waste chemicals handled properly?

Storage

- Are storage areas safe and accessible?
- Is material stacked securely, blocked or interlocked if possible?
- Are materials stored in areas that do not obstruct stairs, fire escapes, exits or firefighting equipment?
- Are materials stored in areas that do not interfere with workers or the flow of materials?
- Are bins or racks provided where material cannot be piled?
- Are all storage areas clearly marked?
- Do workers understand material storage and handling procedures?

Fire Prevention

- Are combustible and flammable materials present only in the quantities needed for the job at hand?
- Are combustible and flammable materials kept in safety cans during use?
- Are hazardous materials stored in approved containers and away from ignition sources?
- Are sprinkler heads clear of stored material?
- Are fire extinguishers inspected and located along commonly travelled routes, and close to possible ignition sources?
- Are oily or greasy rags placed in metal containers and disposed of regularly?

Study Finds Stand-Capable Workstations Boost Productivity by 46 Percent



Most people have heard that workers who sit for hours every day without getting up and moving around are at increased risk for cardiovascular and other health problems—especially if they aren't physically active off the job—but a new study has found that workers who sit may be up to 46 percent less productive than workers who use workstations that allow them to stand or sit.

Researchers at the Texas A&M Health Science Center School of Public Health looked at productivity differences between two groups of call center employees over six months—93 who sat and 74 who used sit-stand workstations. They found that the workers who alternated between sitting and standing, and therefore sat down for about 1.6 fewer hours per shift, completed 46 percent more successful calls per hour than their chair-bound co-workers.

“We hope this work will show companies that although there might be some costs in providing stand-capable workstations, increased employee productivity over time will more than offset these initial expenses,” says study co-author Dr. Mark Benden, associate professor at the Texas A&M School of Public Health and

director of the Texas A&M Ergonomics Center. Study co-author Gregory Garrett, a public health doctoral student, says the large productivity improvements did not occur right away. It wasn't until the second month, when workers became used to standing, that significant gains became evident.

But why would standing workers be more productive?

“We believe that decreases in body discomfort may account for some of the productivity differences between the groups,” says Garrett, who noted that nearly 75 percent of those working at stand-capable workstations experienced decreased body discomfort after using them for six months.

However, Garrett says further research will be conducted to try to measure any positive impact that standing desks have on boosting workers' cognitive (thinking) performance.

“This research is a breakthrough in measuring productivity impacts of office workers, as this population of call center workers was directly tied to very objective data on their productivity,” says Benden. “Now that we have this type of finding, we will search for more creative ways to find objective productivity measures for other types of office workers in both traditional seated environments and the newer stand-capable environments. 🍁

NIOSH RESEARCHING WHETHER COFFEE WORKERS ARE AT RISK FOR LUNG DISEASE CONTINUED FROM COVER

facility that roasted, ground and flavored coffee. This facility had five former workers with obliterative bronchiolitis.”

Bailey says diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione, a diacetyl substitute, are used as flavorings in microwave popcorn, bakery mixes and flavored coffee. The two chemicals are also naturally produced and released during the coffee roasting process.

NIOSH investigators found elevated levels of diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione in the air at the facility where the five people with obliterative bronchiolitis had worked and identified three sources. These included an area where flavoring chemicals were added to roasted coffee beans; a distinct area of the facility where grinding and packaging of unflavored roasted coffee were undertaken; and another area where roasted coffee was being stored in hoppers to off-gas.

Coffee roasting facilities package newly roasted coffee in bags fitted with one-way valves or in permeable bags to allow for off-gassing. Alternatively, newly roasted coffee is often placed in containers and allowed to off-gas, which Bailey says can contribute to worker exposures.

“Grinding roasted coffee beans produces greater surface area for the off-gassing of these and other chemicals. We hope to learn if workers at the coffee processing facilities and cafes that we are currently evaluating are at risk for exposure to diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione,” she says. “We are collecting air samples at the facilities to measure the concentrations of diacetyl and 2,3-pentanedione in the workplace air.”



Bailey says the goal of air sampling is to identify if there are areas, jobs and tasks such as roasting, grinding, opening storage bins or containers with roasted coffee beans, and pouring or adding flavorings—with higher exposures that require exposure controls.

“We also are administering health questionnaires to determine if workers are having any respiratory symptoms, and breathing tests to assess workers' lung function,” she says.

NIOSH has developed a coffee processing webpage (www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/flavorings/processing.html) with interim recommendations. These include conducting air sampling to measure potential concentrations of the chemicals; using engineering controls such as local exhaust ventilation and a closed process to transfer roasted beans and flavorings; employing administrative controls such as training workers on potential hazards in the coffee-roasting industry and covering containers of roasted ground or whole bean coffee and flavorings when not in use; and where necessary, ensuring the use of personal protective equipment such as NIOSH-certified respirators. 🍁

On average, strains and sprains resulted in 57 missed workdays, followed by cuts and punctures, resulting in 24 missed workdays. Inflammation and fractures caused the most time away from work at 91 and 78 workdays respectively.

The Injury Impact Report found that the most frequent causes of workplace injuries included:

- ✦ **Materials handling incidents, accounting for 32 percent of total claims.** These were especially common in the manufacturing and retail industries, causing nearly 40 percent of injuries in both sectors.
- ✦ **Slips, trips and falls, accounting for 16 percent of all injury claims.** Falling from height was among the top causes of injuries in both the construction and retail industries.
- ✦ **Being struck by or colliding with an object, 10 percent.** Motor vehicle accidents were one of the most frequent causes of injury in the oil and gas industry.
- ✦ **Accidents involving tools, seven percent.** Eye injuries were one of the most frequent types of injuries in manufacturing and construction.

✦ **Traumas occurring over time, four percent.** These injuries typically involve part of the body being injured by overuse or strain.

“Even seemingly minor injuries, such as strains or sprains, can substantially impact an employee and slow a business’s operations and productivity,” says Woody Dwyer, Second Vice President, Workers’ Compensation, Travelers. “The most common injuries we see can often be prevented if the proper safety measures are in place, if safety issues are promptly addressed, and if leaders continuously emphasize a culture of safety with employees.”

The costliest injuries included amputations, dislocations, electric shock, and crushing and multiple trauma injuries (such as breaking multiple bones simultaneously).

The Travelers suggests a three-pronged approach for preventing employee injuries and establishing a safer workplace, starting with attracting and hiring the right candidates for the job. The other two vital elements are onboarding and training, and supporting and engaging the current workforce. ✦



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