

eplica Safety Lines

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Machine guarding and safety gloves are common ways to approach hand safety hazards. One obstacle that facilities face is how to find ways to make employees understand what types of safety gloves are required and how to recognize at-risk hazards.

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Headaches are one of the most common workplace maladies effecting productivity, resulting in millions of lost workdays each year—18 million of them due to migraines alone. Many factors can contribute to employees' headaches, such as skimping on sleep, skipping meals or simply being prone to headaches.

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Develop a Habit of Hand Safety



Machine guarding and safety gloves are common ways to approach hand safety hazards. One obstacle that facilities face is how to find ways to make employees understand what types of safety gloves are required and how to recognize at-risk hazards.

Often, different gloves are required depending on the task being completed. And specific machine guarding requirements can be complicated, making them difficult for employees to remember. This uncertainty can de-motivate employees, leading to mistakes and preventable accidents.

When safety gloves are used routinely, it becomes second nature to use the right gloves for the task being completed. Once workers develop the habit of using safety gloves, it will almost feel strange not to wear them.

The traditional approach of regulatory compliance is important but needs to be supplemented with other strategies to remind people consistently until safe behaviors become habit. Habits are formed by setting expectations and consequences for at-risk behaviors and repeating that expectation over and over again. To be successful over the long term, you must develop a habit of safe behaviors.

To accomplish this goal, try supplementing your existing program to include approaches that build repetition to the expectation in a positive way.

Machine Guarding Supplement

Machine guarding is a common way to engineer out hazards to hands by developing a barrier,

sensing device or the like, thereby reducing exposure to the employee. Guards are often manipulated over time and may not protect employees as originally designed. One way to identify potential areas of concern is by using your employees to help solve the problem.

Machine guarding hazard awareness training can be technical and may not be understood the first time presented. To help employees remember the information, have them trace their hand onto cardboard and cut it out. They should then affix the cut-out to a stick and use it to see if OSHA machine guarding requirements are met or if they are able to reach any moving parts. All findings are documented on an action-items sheet. Each team then reports their findings to the group and turns the action items in for further review. Action items generated are hung on a safety board until completed.

This method makes safety personal to each employee, empowering him or her to make change while building repetition each time the activity is completed. It's easy to understand and remember, and can be a lot of fun.

Glove Program Supplements

A glove-stocking program is a critical component that is easy to forget. Many organizations put a lot of time and energy into developing regulatory compliant hand safety programs while overlooking the daily stocking requirements. When employees try to find gloves that are required and not available, the perception becomes negative and a disconnect develops between management expectations and employee perceptions.

Taking time during the planning phase to make sure you have a successful stocking program can help ensure success over the program's duration.

Glove Safety Boards

Reducing the number of gloves required can help clarify expectations but may not be possible. Many times jobs are complex and require multiple tasks and several types of gloves. Employees must understand which gloves are required for what tasks.

One way to help clarify this is by developing a glove board for each work area. Post each glove on the board and, under each glove, list the



August Safety Tip

Falls and fires are dangerous and common in the workplace, but that's just the beginning. There are many possible safety issues that can occur at your workplace. Follow these steps when you recognize a workplace safety issue.

When a potential hazard is discovered...

- ▶▶ Make sure that everyone else in your workplace is aware of the problem.
- ▶▶ Notify your supervisor.
- ▶▶ File any reports or documents about the problem.
- ▶▶ Follow up. Telling someone there's a problem is not a guarantee that the problem will be resolved satisfactorily. Report it and later follow up to make sure the problem was addressed.

Contact Us

Editor-in-Chief/Writer
CLAUDIA C. HARO

Editorial Consultant/ Writer
JEFF ADCOCK

Staff Writer
APRIL FLAK

Contact us:
allsafety@eplicaservices.com

Or visit us online.

Develop a Habit of Hand Safety

inspection procedure, limitation of use and tasks for which it should be used. Once completed, the board can be used to review glove requirements at team meetings or as a reference tool for employees. In addition, you can distribute gloves next to the boards so employees have an immediate reference and repetition tool. Soon the constant reminders of what is required will form a glove safety habit.

Rotating Parts Glove Hazard

It is important to note that protective clothing such as gloves can also create hazards. A protective glove can be caught between rotating parts. Rotating motion can be dangerous; even smooth, slowly rotating shafts can grip clothing and through mere skin contact, force an arm or hand into a dangerous position. Injuries due to contact with rotating parts can be severe.

Hand Safety Alerts

You can develop safety alerts for each incident, near miss and reported hazard, outlining what

happened and what will be done to fix the problem. Include pictures so you "show" as well as "tell." Review each safety alert, taking a few minutes to determine if a similar hazard exists in the area.

As an example, if the issue was a missing guard, you could review the safety alert with employees and search the entire facility as a team to make sure all guards are in place. This approach reminds employees of hand hazards based on real-world examples and personalizes the expectation.

Compliance Counts

None of the supplemental approaches presented in this article are meant to replace regulatory compliance obligations; however, supplemental concepts in addition to regulatory compliance requirements can build lasting change. By communicating hand safety expectations through positive repetition, safe habits develop into reduced hand injuries.

Got a Headache?

Headaches are one of the most common workplace maladies effecting productivity, resulting in millions of lost workdays each year — 18 million of them due to migraines alone.

And although it's true that many factors beyond your control can contribute to employees' headaches, such as skimping on sleep, skipping meals or simply being prone to headaches, you can address the following factors in the workplace to help prevent them:

Keep it comfortable. Check for noise levels and temperature settings. If noise is a problem, consult your building's maintenance department or engineer to see about noise reduction measures.

Practice good ergonomics. Make sure workstations are modified to suit individual employees' needs in order to prevent over-reaching, twisting or bad posture. For example, each person's desk and chair should be adjusted so that his or her eyes are level with the top of the computer screen.

Watch the glare factor. Make sure that light from windows or fixtures is not directly hitting computer screens and causing glare, or use glare filters that attach to screens. Encourage employees to adjust fonts and brightness on their computer screens to minimize eyestrain.

Clear the air. Make sure there is excellent ventilation if your work environment includes the presence of strong chemicals or odors that can trigger migraines. Keep employees sensitive to the fact that wearing strong perfume or cologne may trigger headaches for others.

Bring in a bubbler. Dehydration can contribute to headaches. Having a water cooler handy can help employees stay hydrated.

Encourage breaks. Persisting at one task for too long can trigger a tension headache. Make sure employees are taking breaks to get up and move about.

These tips will not only help prevent headaches, they can also help reduce stress in your workplace. That's a bonus for everyone.

August Safety Quote

"Drink plenty of cool water to prevent dehydration in the summer."