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# eplica Safety Lines

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## The Importance of Eye Safety at Work

*Why is eye safety at work important?*
Eye injuries in the workplace are very common. More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. About 1 in 10 injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover from. Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20 % will cause temporary or permanent vision loss. Experts believe that the right eye protection could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of eye injuries in accidents.

*What are the common causes of eye injuries?*
- Common causes for eye injuries are:
- Flying objects (bits of metal, glass)
- Tools
- Particles
- Chemicals
- Harmful radiation
- Any combination of these or other hazards

*What is my best defense against an eye injury?*
There are three things you can do to help prevent an eye injury
- Know the eye safety dangers at work-complete an eye hazard assessment
- Eliminate hazards before starting work. Use machine guarding, work screens, or other engineering controls)
- Use proper eye protection.

*When should I protect my eyes at work?*
You should wear safety eyewear whenever there is a chance of eye injury. Anyone working in or passing through areas that pose eye hazards should wear protective eyewear.

*What type of safety eyewear is available to me?*
Safety eyewear protection includes:
Non-prescription and prescription safety glasses
Goggles
Face shields
Welding helmets
Full-face respirators

*What type of safety eye protection should I wear?*
The type of safety eye protection you should wear depends on the hazards in your workplace. If you are working in an area that has particles, flying objects, or dust, you must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields). If you are working with chemicals, you should wear goggles. If you are working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) you must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed for that task.

*What is the difference between glass, plastic, and polycarbonate safety lenses?*
All three types of safety lenses meet or exceed the requirements for protecting your eyes.
Glass lenses
-Are not easily scratched
-Can be used around harsh chemicals
-Can be made in your corrective prescription
-Are sometimes heavy and uncomfortable
Plastic lenses
-Are lighter weight
-Protect against welding splatter
-Are not likely to fog
-Are not as scratch-resistant as glass
Polycarbonate lenses
-Are lightweight
-Protect against welding splatter
-Are not likely to fog
-Are stronger than glass and plastic
-Are more impact resistant than glass or plastic
-Are not as scratch resistant as glass

*Does safety eye protection work?*
Yes, eye protection does work. The Wise Owl Program, sponsored by Prevent Blindness America, has recognized more than 86,000 people who avoided losing their sight in a workplace accident because they were wearing proper eye protection.

## February Safety Tip

- Something in your eye? Don't rub it. Let your tears naturally wash the eye or use an eyewash. If you get no relief, keep the eye closed and lightly bandaged and see your health care provider.
- To avoid eye infection do not share eye makeup or eye drops with anyone. Many bacteria, including the cold sore virus (Herpes), can spread to your eyes and damage your vision.
- Never allow children to play with Laser pointers they are not toys. The light from a laser pointer aimed into the eye can be more damaging than staring directly into the sun.

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# Emergency Action Plan

An emergency action plan (EAP) is a written document required by particular OSHA standards [29 CFR 1910.38(a)]. The purpose of an EAP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies. Well developed emergency plans and proper employee training (such that employees understand their roles and responsibilities within the plan) will result in fewer and less severe employee injuries and less structural damage to the facility during emergencies. A poorly prepared plan, likely will lead to a disorganized evacuation or emergency response, resulting in confusion, injury, and property damage.

Putting together a comprehensive emergency action plan that deals with those issues specific to your worksite is not difficult. It involves taking what was learned from your workplace evaluation and describing how employees will respond to different types of emergencies, taking into account your specific worksite layout, structural features, and emergency systems. Most organizations find it beneficial to include a diverse group of representatives (management and employees) in this planning process and to meet frequently to review progress and allocate development tasks. The commitment and support of all employees is critical to the plan's success in the event of an emergency; ask for their help in establishing and implementing your emergency action plan. For smaller organizations, the plan does not need to be written and may be communicated orally if there are 10 or fewer employees [29 CFR 1910.38(b)].

At a minimum, the plan must include but is not limited to the following elements [29 CFR 1910.38(c)]:
-Means of reporting fires and other emergencies
-Evacuation procedures and emergency escape route assignments
-Procedures to be followed by employees who remain to operate critical plant operations before they evacuate
-Procedures to account for all employees after an emergency evacuation has been completed
-Rescue and medical duties for those employees who are to perform them
-Names or job titles of persons who can be contacted for further information or explanation of duties under the plan

Although they are not specifically required by OSHA, you may find it helpful to include the following in your plan:

- A description of the alarm system to be used to notify employees (including disabled employees) to evacuate and/or take other actions. The alarms used for different actions should be distinctive and might include horn blasts, sirens, or even public address systems.
- The site of an alternative communications center to be used in the event of a fire or explosion; and
- A secure on- or offsite location to store originals or duplicate copies of accounting records, legal documents, your employees' emergency contact lists, and other essential records.

Now that you have read through the basic overview of an emergency action plan, find out how to implement your plan, or use a free fill-in-the blank generator to get started at: http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/evacuation/expertsystem/default.htm#

You may also access a template to print out and fill in information at: http://cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-101/emrgact/emrgact.doc

# February Safety Quote

"To see or not to see, use eye protection."