

# eplica ▶▶ Safety Lines

## In this edition:

### ▶▶ Foot Injury Prevention

The first step in developing a strategy to reduce foot problems is to identify relevant hazards in the workplace. Such hazards should be assessed in each workplace, no matter how safe or how dangerous they may seem.

Page 1 & 2

### ▶▶ CA Heat Illness Standard

California employers are required to take these four steps to prevent heat illness.

Page 2

### ▶▶ Machine Guarding

Before operating any machinery, make sure you are properly trained on safeguards and lockout /tagout procedures.

Page 2



## How Can Foot Injuries Be Prevented?



There isn't any workplace where workers are immune to foot injuries. However, the foot hazards workers face differ according to their workplace and the tasks they perform. The first step in developing a strategy to reduce foot problems is to identify relevant hazards in the workplace. Such hazards should be assessed in each workplace, no matter how safe or dangerous they may seem.

### How can the job design improve foot safety?

Aching, flat or tired feet are common among workers who spend most of their working time standing. The most important goal of job design is to avoid fixed positions, especially standing positions. Good job design includes varied tasks requiring changes in body position and using different muscles. Job rotation, job enlargement and teamwork are all ways to make work easier on the feet.

- ▶▶ Job rotation moves workers from one job to another. It distributes standing among a group of workers and shortens the time each individual spends standing. However, it must be a rotation where the worker does something completely different such as walking around or sitting at the next job.
- ▶▶ Job enlargement includes introducing a variety of tasks in a worker's duties. If it

increases the variety of body positions and motions, the worker has less chances of developing foot problems.

- ▶▶ Teamwork gives the entire team more control and autonomy in planning and allocating their work. Each team member carries a varied set of operations to complete the whole product. Teamwork allows workers to alternate between tasks, which in turn, reduces the risk of overloading their feet.
- ▶▶ Rest breaks help to alleviate foot problems where redesigning jobs is impractical. Frequent short breaks are preferable to fewer long breaks.

### How can the workplace design improve foot safety?

Redesigning the job alone will not effectively reduce foot problems if it is not combined with the proper design of the workplace.

- ▶▶ For standing jobs, an adjustable work surface is the best choice. If the work surface is not adjustable, install a platform to raise shorter workers or a pedestal to raise object for taller workers.
- ▶▶ Workstation design should allow workers enough room to change body position.
- ▶▶ A foot-rail or footrest enables workers to shift weight from one leg to the other. This ability reduces the stress on the lower legs and feet.
- ▶▶ When possible, workers should be allowed to work sitting or standing at will. Even when work can only be done while standing, a seat should be provided for resting purposes.

### How can one improve the foot safety in workplaces where foot injuries occur frequently?

Job and workplace designs also have the potential to increase foot safety in workplaces that are specifically hazardous. Here are some examples:

- ▶▶ Separating mobile equipment from pedestrian traffic and installing safety mirrors and warning signs can decrease the number of accidents that might result in cut or crushed feet or toes.
- ▶▶ Proper guarding of machines such as chain saws or rotary mowers can avoid cuts and severed feet or toes.

Continued on Page 2



## How Can Foot Injuries Be Prevented?

Continued from Page 1

### July Safety Tip:

#### Machine Guarding

Employee exposure to unguarded or inadequately guarded machines is prevalent in many workplaces. Consequently, workers who operate and maintain machinery suffer approximately 18,000 amputations, lacerations, crushing injuries, abrasions and over 800 deaths per year.

Amputation is one of the most severe and crippling types of injuries in the occupational workplace and often results in permanent disability.

Before operating any machinery, make sure you are properly trained on safeguards and lockout /tagout procedures.

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- ▶▶ Effective housekeeping reduces the number of accidents at workplaces. For example, loose nails, other sharp objects and littered walkways are hazards for foot injury.
- ▶▶ Using color contrast and angular lighting to improve depth vision in complicated areas such as stairs, ramps and passageways reduces the hazard of tripping and falling.

#### How can the kind of floor used in workplaces improve foot comfort?

- ▶▶ Standing or working on a hard, unyielding floor can cause a lot of discomfort. Wood, cork, carpeting, or rubber - anything that provides some flexibility - is gentler on workers' feet.
- ▶▶ Where resilient floors are not practical, footwear with thick, insulating soles and shock-absorbing insoles can alleviate discomfort.
- ▶▶ Anti-fatigue matting is also useful whenever workers have to stand or walk. They provide a cushioning that reduces foot fatigue. However, the use of matting requires caution. When installed improperly, it can lead to tripping and slipping accidents.

#### What should I know about footwear?

- ▶▶ Proper footwear is important for both foot comfort and general well-being. Improper footwear can cause or aggravate existing foot problems. Unfortunately, being fashionable sometimes takes precedence over choosing well-fitting, supportive safety footwear.

#### What should I know when I buy footwear for work?

Good footwear should have the following qualities:

- ▶▶ The inner side of the shoe must be straight from the heel to the end of the big toe.
- ▶▶ The shoe must grip the heel firmly.
- ▶▶ The forepart must allow freedom of movement for the toes.
- ▶▶ The shoe must have a fastening across the instep to prevent the foot from slipping when walking.
- ▶▶ The shoe must have a low, wide-based heel; flat shoes are recommended.

#### People buying footwear for work should take the following advice:

- ▶▶ Do not expect footwear that is too tight to stretch with wear.
- ▶▶ Buy shoes to fit the bigger foot.
- ▶▶ Buy shoes late in the afternoon when feet are likely to be swollen to their maximum size.
- ▶▶ Consider using shock-absorbing insoles when the job requires walking or standing on hard floors.
- ▶▶ When selecting footwear, remember that tight socks or stockings can cramp the toes as much as poorly fitted shoes. Wrinkled socks, or socks that are too large or too small, can cause blisters.

Foot safety is often not taken seriously and overlooked until an actual injury occurs. Don't wait for a foot injury to happen – keep your feet safe every day!

## California Employers are Required to Take These Four Steps to Prevent Heat Illness

### 1. Training

Train all employees and supervisors about heat illness prevention.

### 2. Water

Provide enough fresh water so that employees can drink at least 1 quart per hour and encourage them to do so.

### 3. Shade

Provide access to shade for at least 5 minutes of

rest when an employee believes he or she needs a preventative recovery period. *They should not wait until they feel sick to do so.*

### 4. Planning

Develop and implement written procedures for complying with the Cal/OSHA Heat Illness Prevention Standard.

For more information on California Heat Illness guidelines, please visit:

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/heatIllnessQA.html>

## July Safety Quote

“Keep cool in the sun, wear light-colored clothing.”