

# eplica Safety Lines

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The best way to prevent the re-occurrence of an accident is by looking at "close calls." By investigating the root causes of an accident, steps can be taken to eliminate the hazard and improve the work system.

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Being aware of the information provided on an MSDS can mean the difference between an accident and a tragedy. For your safety and those you work with, learn the hazards of the chemicals you work with and the precautions related to them.

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Nearly 75 percent of all strain or exertion mishaps occur when an employee is trying to move an object, often without supervisor authorization.

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## "That Was a Close Call!"



Sometimes there are multiple causes for an accident involving equipment (unguarded machinery), environment (poor lighting or noise level), people (procedures not understood or followed) or management (allowed shortcuts).

Don't rush to judge. Examine the facts and find what's missing. Look for immediate and underlying causes. An immediate cause may be an unsafe condition like a mechanical failure or it could be an unsafe action by an employee. The underlying cause could be poor machine maintenance, a missing guard, a crowded work area or a lack of training.

All incidents should be reported to the supervisor so accident/injury report forms can be completed. Once an investigation is complete, solutions should be sought to prevent the accident from occurring again. Solutions may involve engineering controls, administrative controls, additional training or increased communication between management and workers.

Workers should inspect the work area daily for unsafe conditions or unsafe actions and if found, report them to the supervisor. Hazard awareness is the key to preventing accidents before they happen. Take steps to eliminate hazards as soon as they are discovered. Learn the real lesson from close calls. Tell your supervisor about every incident even if it seems minor. You never know when an incident may be repeated and result in an injury or even death.

A "close call" or accident without injury is easy to shrug off and forget. But there is a danger in brushing off accidents that don't hurt, harm or damage. When a close call happens it should immediately send up a red flag that something was wrong, unplanned, unexpected and could happen again. And the next time it happens, it could result in serious damage, injury or death.

For every accident there are usually several contributing factors, most of which can be controlled. The best way to prevent the re-occurrence of an accident is by looking at those close-call situations. By investigating the root causes of an accident steps can be taken to eliminate the hazard and improve the work system.

## Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)



Chemicals pose a wide range of hazards, from mild irritation to possible death. OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard is designed to ensure that workers and employers have information about these hazards and can establish appropriate protective measures. One important source for this information is the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS).

The MSDS is your primary tool for finding information about the chemicals you work with. They can be in any format, but OSHA has established certain requirements for the MSDS. First, it needs to be in English.

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## October Safety Tip

### October is Fire Safety Month

Here are some items to check during the month:

- Replace smoke and carbon monoxide detector batteries.
- Replace detectors that are 10 or more years old.
- Discuss fire safety, emergency escape and a meeting place plan with your household. You might even try a drill.
- Have your home heating system tested for proper operation and CO2 (carbon monoxide) at safe levels.
- Replace or clean (if cleanable) forced air furnace air filters.
- Visually check fire extinguisher pressure. Replace unit if pressure is low.
- Check the following Web site: <http://www.firepreventionweek.org/>

## Contact Us

Editor-in-Chief /Writer  
CLAUDIA C. HARO

Editorial Consultant/Writer  
JEFF ADCOCK

Staff Writer  
APRIL FLAK

Contact us:  
[allsafety@eplicaservices.com](mailto:allsafety@eplicaservices.com)

## Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)

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Second, all MSDS must be readily accessible during each work shift. If you or your coworker must travel between work locations, the MSDS may be kept at a central location but must be accessible.

Chemical manufacturers and importers are required to obtain or develop a material safety data sheet for each hazardous chemical they produce or import. Distributors are responsible for ensuring that their customers are provided a copy of the MSDS. Employers must receive and retain an MSDS for each hazardous chemical they use.

While an MSDS does not need to be physically attached to a shipment, it must accompany or precede the shipment. If it doesn't, your employer must obtain one from the manufacturer, importer or distributor as soon as possible. The same is true if an MSDS arrives that is incomplete or unclear.

You need to read a chemical's MSDS before using the chemical to find out what safety precautions are needed. A certain chemical may not be compatible with other chemicals you are using.

You may need to wear personal protective equipment to protect yourself from the chemical's effects. You may need to be careful about the ambient temperature the chemical is used in. The information on an MSDS will help you determine what safety measures you will need and could save valuable time in the event of an accident.

In the case of an emergency where someone may have been exposed to a hazardous chemical, you may also need to consult the associated MSDS to obtain information on how to treat the victim.

Being aware of the information provided on an MSDS can mean the difference between an accident and a tragedy. For your safety and those you work with, learn the hazards of the chemicals you work with and the precautions related to them.

## Cubicle Safety 101



Thousands of working Americans are injured in offices every year. Perhaps the biggest risk is not realizing the potential dangers associated with some common office features that can lead to injuries.

File cabinets are a major source of office injuries. When too many drawers are open at once, cabinets can become unbalanced and tip over if

not secured. People can bump into or trip over unattended open drawers and drawers can be accidentally pulled out too far and dropped.

Nearly 75 percent of all strain or exertion mishaps occur when an employee is trying to move an object, often without supervisor authorization.

Office equipment such as copy machines or printers can be dropped when moved by an employee. In 2006, employees suffered 18,990 injuries from overexertion requiring days away from work, mostly from holding, carrying or lifting objects

Objects on an employee's desk also present a hazard. Pencils, knives and scissors should never be stored with the point upward or toward the employee. Paper cutters should have guards, and glassware should never rest near the edge of a desk or table.

Assess your workspace and make any changes that might help keep you and your colleagues safe.

## October Safety Quote

“Learn from others’ mistakes; don’t have others learn from yours.”