

eplica Safety Lines

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Keeping hands clean is one of the most important ways to prevent the spread of infection and illness. It is unquestionably the most important tool in the healthcare worker's arsenal for preventing infection.

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Do You Speak Safety?



Ever feel like the "bad guy" at work when you warn people about something they were doing that was unsafe? Have you ever said to yourself, *I should have said something*, after witnessing an accident? Unfortunately, it's a common way of thinking at work and in other parts of our lives.

Why do people hesitate to warn others about workplace hazards or unsafe acts? Remember, our thoughts determine our actions. When we see an unsafe act, the first thing we think is, *Nothing will happen*. Another thought that creeps in is, *I wonder what they'll think of me if I say something?* Even when the outcome is good when we do say something, it still feels awkward or we think, *I'm an idiot for saying that*. These thoughts, if not changed, can have very serious consequences.

Case in point: a news article reported on an incident with an experienced worker who was working on a platform near a hi-voltage bus, with two less-experienced employees watching. They

noticed that the worker was very close to the bus, but decided since he was experienced they wouldn't say anything because they worried he might get upset. They assumed he knew what he was doing. The experienced worker didn't see the bus. He touched it, and lost the arm and part of his other arm. The emotional damage to the two onlookers from their guilt by not saying something added to the overall severe consequences of the accident.

That is why it's so important to change these thought patterns. The initial thought when noticing an unsafe act should prompt a helpful statement, such as, "Can I help you be safer today?" This kind of statement generally gets the attention of the person you are addressing without you or them being defensive. Then, follow with, "As you know ..." before the warning or identification of the hazard. In the case of the electrocution accident, the workers might have said, "As you know, there's a hi-voltage bus next to you." That would allow the more experienced worker to acknowledge the danger or even save face with "Yeah, I know."

If someone tries to warn you of danger or correct your unsafe act, always say, "Thank you for telling me" – even if the person made a mistake and there was no real danger or hazard. This kind of response helps keep open communication among workers so that no one feels defensive or reluctant to say something that might save a life or prevent harm. Safety enforcers are not cops; they're lifeguards.

The Importance of Washing Your Hands

Ignaz Semmelweis, an Austrian-Hungarian physician, first demonstrated more than 150 years ago that hand hygiene can prevent the spread of disease. Unquestioned today as the most important tool in the healthcare worker's arsenal for preventing infection, hand washing was not readily accepted in Dr. Semmelweis' era. Sanitation is now a standard, and thousands of lives have been saved because of Dr. Semmelweis' discovery.

When washing hands with soap and water:

1. Wet your hands with clean running water and apply soap. Use warm water if it is available.

2. Rub hands together to make lather and scrub all surfaces. Continue rubbing hands for 15 to 20 seconds.
3. Rinse hands well under running water.
4. Dry your hands using a paper towel or air dryer. If possible, use your paper towel to turn off the faucet.

If soap and clean water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer to clean your hands. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers significantly reduce the number of germs on skin and are fast acting.

Reference: Semmelweis I. Etiology, concept, and prophylaxis of childbed fever. Carter KC, ed. 1st ed. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1983.



September Safety Tip:

Keep your eye, mind and thoughts on the road.

Keeping emotions in control makes a huge difference in driving skills, but there are other things many drivers do that take their attention away from driving and can cause problems for themselves and others.

Even if you work in your car and almost never seem to leave it, refrain from eating, reading, map consulting, Internet surfing, applying makeup or holding pets while you are driving.

As long as you are moving, your attention should be on the road and traffic at all times—not diluted by distractions or strong emotions.

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Are Conveyors Dangerous?



Carelessness with conveyors can cause injuries and damage.

OSHA governs conveyor safety under the General Duty Clause. Conveyor systems are the heart of many different kinds of assembly and distribution operations. A conveyor makes a wide variety of tasks faster and more efficient. And, if operators are taught how the system works and follow proper procedures and precautions, conveyors are very safe. Every conveyor system is designed to incorporate a number of safeguards specifically to prevent injuries.

Overhead conveyors, those running at head height, or the type that carries material hung from hooks should have safeguards such as sideboards in place to prevent material from falling on or striking workers. Employees in the area must remain constantly alert for possible danger.

Watch your hands near conveyors. When putting materials on a conveyor, place them so that they will ride safely.

The fact that conveyors run steadily and smoothly may lull you into a false sense of security when you are around them. Don't fall into this trap. Conveyors can be dangerous even if you don't work directly with them, so follow these precautions:

12 Fundamental Conveyor Safety Rules

1. Never climb, step, walk or ride on a conveyor.
2. Never reach into conveyor mechanisms if something is stuck or jammed. Turn off the

3. power first at clearly marked switches. Don't perform service on conveyor until motor disconnect is locked out! Don't attempt to clean any belts or parts while the conveyor is running unless proper barrier guards are provided at pinch points. Conveyor should be serviced only by authorized maintenance personnel.
4. Don't remove or alter conveyor guards or safety divides!
5. Wear a hard hat if working beneath a conveyor.
6. Avoid loose clothing and tie back long hair near conveyors. Keep clothing, fingers and other parts of the body away from conveyor!
7. Don't load conveyor outside of the design limits.
8. Know location and function of all stop/start controls.
9. All personnel must be clear of conveyor before starting. Be alert when the conveyor start alarm is sounded.
10. Keep all stopping/starting control devices and area around conveyors clear of obstructions.
11. Operate conveyor with trained personnel only.
12. Report all unsafe practices to your supervisor.

Conveyors should be stopped and controls locked out when repairs are being made and the equipment shouldn't be started again until all is clear. As with any machinery, you must observe basic safety rules around conveyors. Report unsafe conditions or malfunctions to your supervisor.

The U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics reports more than 50 workplace fatalities a year where conveyors are the primary source of injury. Workplace injuries account for nearly 25% of all workers' compensation claims and up to 35% of all associated costs. Clearly, your company cannot afford to ignore conveyor safety, and must actively find ways to enforce it.

Follow these precautions, and you should eliminate hazards and protect yourself around conveyors.

September Safety Quote

“S-A-F-E: Staying Accident-Free, Everywhere”