

Injury Prevention Month

April is Injury Prevention Month, so it makes this the perfect time to show employees exactly how to prevent injuries in the workplace.

Injuries are costly in both human and economic terms. Employees injured in workplace accidents often pay a heavy price. Injuries can be painful, disabling, and even fatal. There's also the economic cost, which results in workers' comp claims, lost productivity, and lots more.

Every year employers lose millions of work hours and billions of dollars because of workplace injuries. Anything you can do to prevent job injuries is time and money well spent.

Get to the Root Causes

There are two causes of workplace injuries: 1) unsafe acts, and 2) unsafe conditions. Safety experts say that more than 80 percent of all job accidents are caused by unsafe acts—things employees do, or fail to do. As we all know, failing to take precautions can be just as dangerous as actively taking risks. Unsafe acts may be committed for a variety of reasons:

- Lack of appreciation for the risks;
- Lack of knowledge of proper safety procedures;
- Rushing and working too fast;
- Carelessness;
- Complacency;
- Fatigue;
- Indifference to the safety rules;
- Attitudes such as believing that accidents only happen to other people.

The other factor behind workplace injuries is unsafe conditions. With workplace safety conditions constantly changing, what may have been safe yesterday might not still be safe today. You always have to be on the alert for new and different hazards that could arise anywhere, at any time. If you identify a new hazard, be a *Leader in Safety* and correct the hazard. If you are unable to correct the hazard, immediately report it to you supervisor.

What You Can Do

All employees must do what they can do to prevent injuries on the job. It isn't hard to avoid accidents and injuries. It just takes the right skills and the right mindset. Here are some ways you can avoid an injury:

- Inspect your work area, materials, and equipment for safety every day before you start working.
- Plan jobs, identify hazards, and anticipate anything that could go wrong.
- Keep alert for anything that doesn't look, smell, or "feel" right.
- Cooperate with co-workers to plan and coordinate jobs to ensure safety—yours and theirs.
- Give your work your full attention.
- Avoid becoming complacent or taking shortcuts, no matter how many times you've done a job or how many years of experience you have.
- Ask your supervisor any time you're unsure about a hazard or a precaution—or if you uncover a problem you're not able to deal with alone.

When we share the responsibility for safety in the workplace, everyone wins!!