



YCPARMIA Safety Journal

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Workspace Safety

Always begin with a safety inspection

Your safety and health on the job depends on your ability to identify hazards and take proper precautions. An effective way to eliminate some of the hazards you might face is to take time at the beginning of every workday to conduct a quick inspection of your work area and your workstation.

To assist with your inspection, consider creating a checklist like the one below to make sure you identify all potential hazards. This one is a general list of what to look for. You need to add more specific items to reflect the nature of your work area and the hazards that exist there. Use this list to get started:

- Is the general work area clean and neat?
- Are walkways clear of obstructions and debris?
- Will co-workers and others working in the area be creating hazards you need to be aware of?
- Is your workstation and the area around it in orderly condition?
- Are personal possessions stowed safely away where they won't be in the way or misplaced?
- Are the items you use most during the day within easy reach?
- Have other tools and materials been stored in their proper place?
- Are trash and scrap containers empty?
- Do you have the personal protective equipment (PPE) you need for the day?
- Is PPE clean and in good condition?
- Are containers of hazardous materials kept tightly sealed and safely stored?
- Are chemical containers properly labeled?
- Are material safety data sheets (MSDSs) that you will need during the day readily available?
- Are machines and equipment clean and in good operating condition?
- Are machine guards in place and operating correctly?
- Is electrical equipment properly grounded?
- Are electrical cords and plugs in good condition?
- Have you avoided overloading electrical outlets or circuits?
- Are emergency supplies, such as fire extinguishers and first-aid kits, in their proper place in case they are needed during the day?

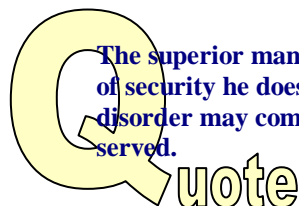
MINI-INSPECTIONS

Starting the workday out safely with a work area inspection will certainly help keep you safe during the day. But remember that workplace conditions are always changing. If you let your guard down and take things for granted, a hazard might develop where you least expect it. So you have to keep alert throughout the workday.

Don't be lulled into a false sense of security just because the work area looked good at the beginning of your shift. Later in the day it might be a different story.

For example, your work area might have been nice and neat at the start of your shift, but trash or scrap might have built up and created a fire hazard. Or tools and materials might have been left lying on the floor where they could create a tripping hazard.

A good way to keep on top of changing conditions is to conduct mini-inspections all day long. A quick glance around from time to time will do the trick. Look for anything that's different—anything that could cause an accident or injury.



The superior man, when resting in safety, does not forget that danger may come. When in a state of security he does not forget the possibility of ruin. When all is orderly, he does not forget that disorder may come. Thus his person is not endangered, and his States and all their clans are preserved.

Confucius (551 BC - 479 BC)

Sign Language

Pay attention to safety signs

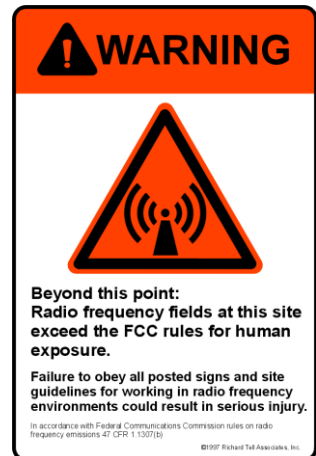
One of the ways we attempt to prevent accidents is by posting safety signs all around the building to warn you about hazards and to provide brief instructions about how to avoid an injury. Pretty much everywhere you go you'll see some kind of safety sign.

- ▶ Some signs say “**DANGER**” in big block letters in a field of bright red.
- ▶ Some are yellow and “**CAUTION**” you to take certain actions to protect your safety or health.
- ▶ There are also orange “**WARNING**” signs that alert you to serious hazards.
- ▶ Other safety signs tell you to wear certain PPE, e.g., “**Eye Protection Area.**”
- ▶ Still other safety signs prohibit certain actions, e.g., “**No Smoking.**”



Some signs have symbols or graphics on them as well as words. For example, “No Smoking” signs often show a graphic of a cigarette inside a red circle with a slash. Poison signs have a skull and crossbones. A sign requiring you to wear certain PPE might have a graphic of these items or people wearing these items.

But whatever the warning, or whatever form it's in, always do exactly what the sign says. If you don't understand the information on a safety sign, ask a supervisor. Never enter or begin working in a posted area unless you understand the hazards and have taken the required precautions.



Inspect Your Vehicle

Prevent breakdowns and accidents

Work area safety inspections help prevent accidents. So do vehicular safety inspections. Whether you drive on the job and your work area *is* your vehicle or whether you just use your own car or truck to get to work, you want to make sure it's safe to drive. Here are the key things to check for:

- ④ **Tires.** Use a pressure gauge to check tire pressure, because you can't tell by looking whether tires are properly inflated. Underinflated tires are dangerous.
- ④ **Lights.** Make sure all lights are working properly. Check headlights (both low and high beams), tail lights, turn signals (front and back), and back-up lights.
- ④ **Fluids.** Check oil, coolant, and brake and steering fluids. Low fluid levels could cause a breakdown or worse.
- ④ **Belts and hoses.** Take a look to make sure they are not worn.
- ④ **Loads.** If your vehicle is carrying a heavy load, make sure the load is not too heavy for the vehicle's rated capacity. Make sure the load is properly secured and doesn't block your rear vision. Also, remember that a heavy load makes it more difficult to stop and maneuver the vehicle, so adjust your speed and allow more time for safe braking.

You don't have to be a mechanic to conduct a basic safety check of your vehicle—just be smart and cautious.



What Shocks You?

Be aware of electrical hazards

You know that electricity can be dangerous. But you may not be aware that over half of workplace deaths are from electrocution caused by defective electrical equipment and failure to follow safe work procedures. Find out what else you might not know about electrical hazards with this quiz:

- 1. Is the human body a:**
 - a. Good conductor of electricity?
 - b. Poor conductor of electricity?
- 2. What protects you from current moving through wires and cables?**
 - a. Bonding
 - b. Insulation
- 3. How does grounding protect you from electrical shocks?**
 - a. It monitors current going in and out of an electrical device.
 - b. It connects electrical equipment to the ground.
- 4. What should you plug equipment into outdoors or in wet locations?**
 - a. A ground fault circuit interrupter
 - b. An insulator
- 5. What is the proper type of fire extinguisher to use on an electrical fire?**
 - a. Class ABC or CO₂ extinguisher
 - b. Class A or water-based extinguisher
- 6. If a piece of electrical equipment needs repair, what should you do?**
 - a. Fix it yourself if you can.
 - b. Leave it to a qualified electrician.

Answers: (1) a (2) b (3) b (4) a (5) a (6) b

Silence Isn't Golden

If you don't understand, ask

Sandy Jamison usually sat at the back of the room for safety meetings and kept her head down same as she did at school so she wouldn't be called on. She listened to what her supervisors and co-workers said, but she never participated in discussions, offered suggestions, or asked questions. That just wasn't Sandy.

Usually, however, she learned what she needed to learn to perform her job safely. But one day there was a meeting about an important new procedure. The supervisor kept emphasizing the hazards and warned everyone to be very careful. Sandy wasn't sure she really understood what she needed to do. But true to form, she kept quiet and left the meeting without asking some important questions that had been running through her mind.

A couple of days later, Sandy had an accident. The incident involved the new procedure. She'd failed to take the proper precautions and ended up with a serious injury.

The point of this story is simple:

If there's anything about your safety that you don't understand, ask. Ask your supervisor privately if you feel more comfortable than in a meeting. But please, don't ever let information that affects your safety go by without understanding what you need to do.

HEART TO HEART

February is **American Heart Month**. That makes this a good opportunity to consider the risks of heart attack.

People most at risk of having a heart attack include smokers, overweight people, those with high cholesterol levels, people with high blood pressure or diabetes, and those with a family history of heart attack.

Although men are generally at greater risk of having a heart attack, heart disease is still the leading cause of death among women. More than 250,000 women die each year from heart attacks, which kill six times as many women as breast cancer.

Keep these other statistics in mind:

- ⌘ Heart disease is the #1 killer of both men and women in the US.
- ⌘ More than 1 million Americans have heart attacks every year, and half don't survive the attack.
- ⌘ Millions more are heart attacks waiting to happen—and many don't even know they have heart disease.
- ⌘ About half of all heart attack deaths occur within 1 hour of the start of symptoms and before the person gets to a hospital.
- ⌘ Most heart attack victims wait 2 hours or more after symptoms begin before they seek medical help.

Work Safe, Keep Safe

8 tips for preventing accidents

Most accidents are the result of three things:

1. **Not recognizing hazards.** People don't take the time to get the information they need to work safely so they're not aware of all the potential hazards.
2. **Not paying attention.** They don't concentrate on what they're doing; they've got their mind on other things so they don't see a problem coming.
3. **Taking risks.** They don't think they're going to get hurt so they take chances, cut corners, and do other risky things like fail to wear required PPE.

That means you can prevent accidents by identifying hazards and taking pre-cautions. Remember eight simple tips for preventing job accidents:

Work carefully and wisely—no rushing, no fooling around, no shortcuts.

Organize your work and plan each job before you start.

Remain alert for hazards while you work.

Know what to do in an emergency.

Seek the information you need to start and complete the job safely.

Ask if there's anything you don't understand.

Focus on what you're doing and avoid distractions.

Examine tools and equipment to make sure they're in good condition.



YCPARMIA Video Library

New DVDs are being added all the time

Here are just a few of the new titles that are available::

1122 Trenching Safety I (5 min DVD)

The fatality rate for trenching work is estimated to be 112% greater than the rate for construction work in general. This video provides guidelines for a safe trenching job. It includes warning signs, spoil, factors of collapse, ladders and ramps.

1158 Getting Out Alive (15 min DVD)

Ensure your employees know what to do in the event of a major fire. This video shows specific details about planning for and surviving a workplace fire, including creating a working fire evacuation plan, strategies to avoid being trapped by fire, and fire drills.

1155 Avian Flu (15 min DVD)

The Avian Flu lacks one trait that could turn it into a pandemic: the ability to spread from human to human. But the lethal virus could become contagious any time, so employers must be prepared to protect their workers from exposure. And, employees must be aware of methods to protect their families. This program informs viewers about the Avian Flu virus and offers important tips on how to avoid transmission.