



YCPARMIA Safety Journal

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Workplace Firewatcher

Don't let any fire hazards go uncorrected

Fire Prevention Week runs from October 7 to 13 this year. It's a good time to think about what you can do to help prevent workplace fires. The risk of fire could be greatly reduced if everybody was more aware and less careless. First it's a pile of cartons and trash kicked into a corner; then it's some oily rags tossed under a wooden bench. And the next thing you know, there's a fire.

Consider these situations in which fire-related hazards were ignored:

- ☛ *Tom's machine is overheating, but he's in a rush to finish the job, so he ignores the problem, figuring he'll get it checked out at the end of his shift.*
- ☛ *Lynn fails to check the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for a new chemical product she hasn't used before. As a result she doesn't realize that the substance is flammable.*
- ☛ *Rick leaves a stack of pallets in front of a fire exit. He's late for lunch and decides they'll be out of the way there until he gets back from his break.*
- ☛ *Sue's been trying to quit smoking, and she doesn't want to go outside for a smoke with the other smokers and listen to all their flak about her lack of willpower. So she sneaks a smoke in a little-used area where old cartons and other trash are stored for the day before being taken out to the Dumpsters. Halfway through her smoke, she hears someone coming, panics, and tosses her still-lit cigarette into a pile of boxes.*

Don't be like these people. Never let fire hazards go uncorrected. Instead:

- ☛ **Keep alert to the development of any fire hazards in your work area.** Everything might have been fine yesterday, but is it still OK today?
- ☛ **Report any hazards you can't eliminate.** Make sure your supervisor hears immediately about any fire hazards you detect that you can't take care of safely yourself.
- ☛ **Follow up to make sure the hazard has been properly dealt with.** And make sure the same problem doesn't happen again.

WORKPLACE FIRE HAZARDS

Three major causes of workplace fires are poor housekeeping, electrical problems, and improperly handled or stored flammable liquids. Take these precautions.

Good Housekeeping:

- Don't let trash and combustible scrap material build up in the work area — dispose of it daily.
- Dispose of combustible waste and oily rags in covered, airtight metal containers.
- Sweep up dust, lint, sawdust, and scraps.
- Use nonflammable cleaners.
- Keep incompatible substances away from one another.
- Keep doorways and passageways clear.
- Stack materials so they don't block sprinklers, fire exits, or fire extinguishers.

Electrical Safety:

- Don't overload circuits, fuses, motors, or outlets.
- Check plugs and cords to make sure they are in good condition.
- Don't place cords near heat or water.
- Look for loose ground connections.
- Keep combustible materials away from lights and machinery.
- Don't let dust, dirt, or grease build up on machinery.

Flammable Liquids:

- Keep flammable liquids away from ignition sources.
- Use only in well-ventilated areas.
- Store only in approved containers in designated locations.
- Ground and bond containers when transferring flammable liquids.
- Take only as much of a flammable liquid as you need for a job.
- Clean up small spills quickly.
- Report large spills or leaks immediately.

Protect Your Home

Crime-stopping tips to prevent burglaries

October is **National Crime Prevention Month**. Follow these security tips from the Michigan State Police to protect your home against crime.

DO:

- + Install and use deadbolt locks in all doors.
- + Secure sliders with locks or a piece of wood wedged in the track.
- + Lock windows upstairs and down when you go out.
- + Trim shrubs around doors and under windows, and cut tree limbs that could allow a burglar access to upper floor windows.
- + Make sure your entrances, porches, and yard are well lit at night.
- + Get together with neighbors and maintain a neighborhood watch.
- + Change the locks if you lose your house keys.
- + Install a peephole or viewer in all entry doors so you can see who's at the door.
- + Require service personnel to verify their identity before letting them in.

DON'T:

- X Don't hide house keys in mailboxes, planters, under doormats, or other obvious places.
- X Don't put personal identification on key rings.
- X Don't leave household keys on the ring when you give car keys to parking attendants or mechanics.
- X Don't trust door chains, which can be easily broken.
- X Don't open the door to anyone you don't know.



Chemical Hazards

Do you have all the information you need?

After spending several hours painting the production floor with an epoxy sealer, Dave complained to his supervisor about feeling nauseous, light-headed, and headachy. Thinking that he had the start of the flu, he asked to go home. Before letting him go, the supervisor questioned Dave about the job. Dave said he was just finishing up in a small room when he started to feel sick.

The supervisor asked him what type of respirator he was wearing. Dave said he wasn't wearing a respirator because he'd used the same sealer several times before with no problems. But it turned out that this was the first time Dave had used the sealer in a small, enclosed, poorly ventilated place. And it turned out that Dave hadn't bothered to read either the container label or the material safety data sheet (MSDS) for precautions.

If he'd done so, Dave would have known the sealer contained hexane, a chemical that requires a respirator when used in areas with poor ventilation.

Dave was lucky. He might have gotten really sick. In high enough concentration, the chemical could even have killed him.

What tasks do you perform that expose you to chemical hazards? **Do you always take the time to get all the safety information you need to protect yourself?**

Fire Prevention Plan

Are you informed about fire safety?

Every year, firefighters respond to thousands of workplace fires. In some cases, employees are injured or killed, and facilities are damaged or destroyed. We don't want that to happen here. That's why you need to be familiar with our Fire Prevention Plan. OSHA requires us to have a plan that contains:

- ◆ A list of all major workplace fire hazards
- ◆ Proper handling and storage procedures for hazardous materials
- ◆ Potential ignition sources (heat, sparks, flames, etc.) and the means we use to control them
- ◆ A list of fire protection equipment (fire extinguishers, sprinklers, etc.) necessary to control each major workplace fire hazard
- ◆ Procedures for controlling accumulation of flammable and combustible waste
- ◆ Procedures for regular inspections to identify potential fire hazards

Up-to-date firefighting techniques and equipment do much to help reduce injuries and property damage in workplace fires. But once a fire has started, no one really knows how it might end. **The goal of our Fire Prevention Plan is to make sure that fires never get started.**

For more information about the plan and about how you can help prevent workplace fires, talk with your supervisor.

Vehicle Inspection Test

Is your vehicle safe to drive?

Circle T (true) or F (false) for these vehicle inspection requirements.

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| 1. Inspect your vehicle about once a month. | T | F |
| 2. You can tell if a tire is properly inflated by giving it a visual check. | T | F |
| 3. When tires are out of alignment, they wear in the middle more than on the edges. | T | F |
| 4. To test brakes, step on the brake pedal—if it only goes half way to the floor, the brakes are OK. | T | F |
| 5. Replace wiper blades when they leave streaks on the windshield. | T | F |
| 6. The only fluid you need to check is your oil. | T | F |

Answers:

- (1) False. Inspect your vehicle at the beginning of each workday.
- (2) False. Use a gauge because tires can lose up to half their pressure without showing it.
- (3) False. When a wheel is out of alignment, tires wear more on the edges.
- (4) False. The best way to test the brakes is to put the vehicle in gear and slowly go forward or backward. Step on the brake; if there is any noticeable delay in braking, have the brakes checked.
- (5) True.
- (6) False. Also check brake, coolant/antifreeze, and power steering fluids.

FIRST-AID SAFETY TIP

Bloodborne pathogens are diseases that spread through contact with blood. The two major bloodborne pathogens are HIV and hepatitis viruses. Public health officials say that approximately 40,000 Americans become infected with HIV every year, and more than twice that number get hepatitis.

Although in a work setting people who work in health care are most at risk, **anybody who administers first aid to a bleeding co-worker could be exposed.** Even though the risk is small, why take the chance?

Say you and a co-worker are unloading supplies when she cuts herself with a box cutter and starts bleeding badly. What should you do to help your co-worker and protect yourself at the same time?

WHAT TO DO:

- ✦ First, have someone call for medical assistance.
- ✦ Then, for your own safety, have your injured co-worker apply direct pressure to her wound until you can get gloves from the first-aid kit. Once you have gloves on, you can apply pressure yourself. Try to avoid getting blood on your clothes or skin. If there's a danger of blood splashing into your eyes, put on safety glasses, too.
- ✦ Once the injured co-worker has been taken away for medical treatment, keep your gloves on and clean any blood spills carefully with a disinfectant.
- ✦ Remove blood-contaminated clothing carefully and wash your hands as well as any other exposed skin thoroughly with soap and water.



Dress to Protect

In terms of safety, PPE is always in style

Using personal protective equipment (PPE) is one of the best ways to protect your body from job hazards by preventing injuries and illness resulting from:

- Impact (head, feet)
- Penetration (head, skin, feet)
- Compression/rollover (feet)
- Harmful dust (eyes, respiratory system)
- Electrical shock (entire body)
- Contact with hazardous chemicals (skin, eyes, respiratory system, internal organs)
- Falling objects (head, feet)
- Flying objects (eyes)
- Extreme heat or cold (skin)
- Light radiation (eyes)
- Noise (ears)

PPE is so important that both OSHA regulations and company rules require its use along with the following steps to ensure that the PPE protects you properly:

Before using PPE:

- Double-check to make sure the PPE will protect against the identified hazard(s).
- Inspect it carefully to make sure it's in good condition.
- Make sure it fits properly and that all fasteners are fastened.

After using PPE:

- Clean it carefully.
- Store it in a safe place.
- Replace any damaged items.

What Would You Do?

Decide how to stay safe in this situation

While on a break, you're glad to overhear a co-worker say how relieved he is that some equipment in your work area is finally back in service. You're sure that it's the same unit that has delayed your work all morning, so you return to work eager to get caught up. But the equipment still has a "DO NOT OPERATE" tag on it. Everything looks back to normal, however, since the machine guards are all back in place and the repair tools are gone.

- Do you assume that the repairperson simply forgot to remove the tag?
- Do you try to start the equipment because everything looks in order?
- Do you check with the co-worker you overheard to verify that this is the unit he was talking about?
- Do you try to find the repairperson or your supervisor and ask him or her?

Summary:

The correct answers to the questions above are "No," "No," "No," and "Yes."

Never assume a tag is in place because of an error or an oversight. Never ignore or bypass the instructions on a tag by trying to start up tagged equipment. Always wait until the repairperson has removed the tag and informed you that the equipment is ready to be used. If you have any questions about out-of-service equipment, speak to your supervisor.

10 STEPS TO HAPPY FEET ON THE JOB

Have you ever noticed that your feet often reflect your level of bodily comfort or tiredness on the job? Since that's so often the case, you need to identify the common foot hazards in your work area and wear the right kind of footwear.

Follow these 10 toe-tapping tips for happy work feet.

1. **Choose protective shoes or boots with low heels**, good traction, and the proper impact-resistance rating for your job.
2. **Shop for footwear with special protective features** when you work around sharp objects, electricity, hazardous substances, hot surfaces, molten metal, or wet or slippery floors.
3. After you find proper protection, **make comfort a priority**.
4. **Shop late in the day** in case your feet swell, and get your feet measured while you're standing.
5. **Pick shoe shapes that conform to the shape of your feet**.
6. **Wash your feet every day** and dry them thoroughly.
7. **Wear a fresh pair of socks daily**, and keep a spare pair at work so you can change socks during the workday if they get wet.
8. **If possible, avoid wearing the same pair of shoes every day**. Rotate between two or more pairs.
9. **Repair or replace worn or damaged protective footwear**—it won't protect you the way it should.
10. **Decontaminate footwear** or foot covers that come in contact with hazardous substances.

