

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

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## Contents:

- August 1 – Looking Back, Thinking Ahead
- August 2 – Who's Responsible for Safety
- August 3 – Develop a Healthy Safety Attitude
- August 4 - Chances You Can't Afford to Take
- August 5 – Take Safety Personally
- August 6 – Making Zero Accidents Our Goal
- August 7 - It's Our Own Responsibility
- August 8 - On Your Own Time
- August 9 - Stay Safe at the Wheel
- August 10 - The Force is Against You
- August 11 - Close Encounters of the Dangerous Kind
- August 12 - Slips and Falls
- August 13 - You're the Loser
- August 14 - Safety Appeal
- August 15 - Safety is Up To You
- August 16 - Golden Rule for Safety
- August 17 - The Art of Getting Along
- August 18 - Think
- August 19 - Backing Up Safely
- August 20 - Job Briefings
- August 21 - Circle of Safety
- August 22 - A Word About Safety
- August 23 - What is Safety
- August 24 - Hazardous Waste Around you Home
- August 25 - Use the Correct Hand Tool
- August 26 - Safe on Your Time
- August 27 - Falls Cause Serious Injuries
- August 28 - Are You a Distracted Driver
- August 29 - Keep the Sting out of Summer
- August 30 - Storms
- August 31 - Know Your Enemies – Workplace Hazards

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Looking Back, Thinking Ahead

August 1

Looking back can be either safe or dangerous, depending on the particular circumstances. If you take too long a look back while driving, you could run into something ahead of you. But looking back while backing out of a parking place is using safe driving procedure.

There is one way in which looking back can have a very helpful impact on promoting safety on the job. Can anyone tell what that way is?

Taking a look back at a close call or a near-miss accident can really qualify as thinking ahead, because what you're doing is trying to figure out what went wrong yesterday so that you can keep it—or something worse—from happening tomorrow.

Many job injuries occur because repeated near misses beforehand were not heeded. Sparks fly whenever a certain power tool is turned on, but there hasn't been a fire ... so far. Boxes fall from the top of a storage rack whenever it's bumped into—but no one has been hurt ... yet. These examples are typical of the kind of near-miss that keeps being repeated until one of two things happens: someone corrects the hazardous situation, or someone is hurt—perhaps seriously.

In a number of fields, success regularly involves looking back at earlier events. One example is the game films a coach studies on Monday morning, or the film director's screening of the previous day's rushes. Reviewing the data on how well a product has been selling is essential before making a decision to step up or tone down the promotion efforts. I'm sure you can think of other examples. This certainly isn't intended as a recommendation for "living in the past," like people who are always mourning "the good old days." But I will insist that it's appropriate, and smart, to talk to your supervisor about a past incident you think points to a need for change in order to assure the safety of people and property. An occasional review of job procedures is also a worthwhile investment of your time and attention. It's helpful to find out whether you are continuing to do your job or run your machine in the safest way. If you've gotten a little lazy or a little lax, on the other hand, it's good to know that too, so that you can get back on the right track.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Who's Responsible for Safety

August 2

The answer to that question is that a great many agencies and individuals bear some degree of responsibility for the safety of workplaces and workers.

Both state and federal laws spell out responsibilities of employers for the safety of their employees. And agencies such as federal OSHA, or one of the state safety and health organizations, are responsible for inspecting to see that employers are complying (and penalizing those that aren't).

What many people, perhaps some of you, don't realize is that these same laws assign safety responsibilities to employees, too. They are expected to:

- Comply with all applicable OSHA standards
- Follow the employer's safety and health rules and regulations
- Wear/use the prescribed personal protective equipment
- Report hazardous conditions to their supervisor
- Report any job-related injury or illness to the employer and seek treatment promptly

It all boils down to the fact that we are all responsible for the safety of ourselves, our fellow workers, and the workplace in general. Top management is, I am, and so are you, and you, and every other one of you.

There are always some workers who seem to be very serious about their jobs and yet take safety lightly. They seem to think accidents happen only to "the other guy." so they take shortcuts, bypass machine guards, leave their safety glasses hanging around their necks, and so on. Often, this rashness catches up with them eventually. Admittedly, it doesn't always do so, but is the gamble worth it?

Responsibility is surely not new to this group. Many of you hold responsible positions in the community—with PTAs, scouting, junior athletic teams, and other civic and church projects. You're not required to take part in any of these activities, but you feel a certain sense of responsibility to do your share.

It's very much the same way here. There's no law that you have to give a new employee some helpful advice, make safety suggestions, or volunteer to serve on the safety committee. But doing these things in addition to following the rules and regulations is a way of demonstrating that your sense of responsibility is alive and well.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Develop a Healthy Safety Attitude

August 3

You know your job. You have the ability to do it well. But do you have the attitude required to do the job both well and safely?

There's no hiding attitude from others. If you have a poor attitude about safety, you may be able to hide it from yourself, but it will show up in everything you say and everything you do. Some workers seem to have the attitude that safety rules were made to be broken—especially when no one is looking. Even those who are hard-working, exacting, and conscientious about every other aspect of their jobs can have a poor safety attitude. They take shortcuts not because they are lazy, but because they want to get the work done more quickly.

Other workers think that not complying with the rules won't cause too much of a problem if they perceive that a risk is small. They take chances, and this leads to accidents.

These individuals don't take safety seriously— until it is too late. These are the people who say, "Don't worry. I've done it this way lots of times —right before they fall flat on their faces.

Most of us don't intend to walk around with a bad safety attitude—or even realize it when we have one. We think that our last couple of accidents simply "happened" to us. Luckily, attitudes are not permanent states of mind—they can be changed. Here's how you can carry through with a good—even great—attitude concerning safety:

- Keep your mind focused on the job at hand. Put aside for the moment any personal problems that have been bothering you so that you can watch for hazards and accomplish what you have set out to do.
- Tell yourself that you will not let nearby noises or conversations bother your concentration and prevent you from doing the job safely.
- Don't give in to pressure from your co-workers to be unsafe. You don't have to join in horseplay, take shortcuts, or participate in coverups. Instead, take the lead in behaving in an adult and responsible manner.
- Report all accidents and near accidents—even though they may seem unimportant at the time.
- Try to understand why an accident occurred, to help you avoid making the same mistake twice.
- Practice the techniques you have learned for lifting and other methods of doing the job in a safe fashion.
- Practice good housekeeping. Keep your work area free of clutter. Clean up spills.
- Be considerate of your co-workers. Don't do anything that would endanger them. In fact, go a step farther and remind co-workers about safety. Say something when they forget to put on equipment to protect themselves or when they ignore the rules.
- Take the time to remind your family about staying safe at their jobs, in school, or in the home.

After following all these suggestions for a short while, you will have developed a proper safety attitude, one that others can and will respect and even try to imitate. But even better than that, you'll feel good about yourself and will be able to do productive work and stay safe at the same time.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Chances You Can't Afford To Take

August 4

What is safety? Every one of you could give an answer of some sort, but let's rely on an authoritative source and consult Mr. Webster. His dictionary indicates that being "safe" means being "secure from the threat of danger, harm, or loss."

So why should following or enforcing safety ever be a problem? Isn't everyone interested in being free from danger, harm, or loss? Why on earth would anyone, through negligence or disinterest, expose himself or herself—and others—to those threats?

Perhaps it's partially because it can be difficult to recognize certain situations as potential accident producers. Danger is obvious in many situations, but not all of them. For example, suppose you have occasion to use a stepladder. You see that one leg is completely broken off, but the ladder can still stand. An accident is obviously a potential, though not inevitable, outcome if the ladder is used.

Suppose the leg is not broken, but only cracked. The danger is not obvious, but an alert person, recognizing that there is a possibility of an accident anytime a ladder is used, will inspect the ladder, discover the crack, and tag it for repair.

There is no accident.

But maybe there would not have been an accident anyway. How can you tell when you have prevented an accident that would otherwise surely have happened? You can't.

Visualize another situation. Dwayne is eating lunch on the stair steps and leaves his soda can there. A little later, Teresa comes along and sees the cup. If she picks it up, does this mean she is preventing an accident? Maybe it wouldn't cause a slip or trip anyway, but there's no way of knowing.

There's one thing we can be sure of knowing, though. The odds are a lot more favorable for safety when the cracked or broken ladder is avoided and the drink can is removed from the stairs. Using flawed equipment may or may not cause an accident. Avoiding it will not.

Carry this over to other situations in which workers may tempt fate by taking chances. That's what's happening every time you turn on a power tool without checking to see that it and its wiring are in good condition. That's exactly what's happening when anyone removes or sidesteps a machine guard—even for 'just these few operations.'

These are chances you can't afford to take, if your goal is your own safety and that of your co-workers.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Take Safety Personally

August 5

With all the emphasis on safety programs, safety training, and safety rules, it's easy to forget that when you come right down to it, safety is a personal matter. Let me explain a little.

When I see Betty operating her die press with her safety glasses hanging around her neck, I may very well holler at her in less than musical tones to get them up where they belong. And when Jack attempts to bypass the machine guard on his press, I'll address him in no uncertain or gentle terms. Should either of them take my comments personally?

The answer is both "no" and "yes." It's "no" in the sense that I'm not attacking either of them as a person, only criticizing a particular behavior. But it's "yes" because the reason is concern for their personal safety.

And when each of you makes safety his or her own personal goal, this will be a safer workplace for all of us. It takes the same kind of responsibility you accept and exercise when you're driving. You know you have brakes, and you have them regularly checked, but in heavy traffic or bad weather you don't rely totally on the brakes—you make it a point to drive more slowly and be even more watchful than usual. In the same way, even when your machine guards and safety glasses are in place, you can't assume that means you don't have to exercise care and caution. A Successful Formula When you take safety personally and add a generous portion of positive thinking, you have a good formula for safety success. By positive thinking, I mean a combination of attitude and objectives. It means first of all believing that your actions count and can prevent accidents and preserve safety. Then it means knowing the difference between safe and unsafe actions and being determined always to choose the former.

Here are some expressions of positive thinking with regard to safety:

- I am responsible for my own health, safety, and well-being.
- I am also my brothers' and sisters' keeper in the matter of safety on the job.
- Accidents can and will happen unless I do my part to prevent them.
- There is always a best—safest—way to do any job, and that way is the only right way to do it.
- It is only common sense to follow the work rules and practices designed to promote the health and safety of myself and my co-workers.
- Before starting any job, I will check carefully to be sure there are no hidden hazards that require special protective measures.
- When protective equipment is called for, I will wear it; when special procedures are required, I will follow them.

If there's one thing I hope you'll take out on the floor with you from this session, it's this: In our ongoing battle against accident and injury, two of our most powerful weapons are positive thinking and taking safety personally.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## **Making Zero Accidents Our Goal**

**August 6**

Imagine a workplace that never had an accident again a workplace where employees never suffered another injury. An impossible dream? Maybe not. At one company I know, the safety director told the workers that only a zero accident frequency was going to be tolerated. Rather than considering themselves successful if there are only a few accidents, every accident is going to be considered a failure. "It's a matter of attitude," the safety head told them. And, this is what the workers had to say.

An office clerk: "The secret to an ongoing zero accident record is personal commitment and communication. It's ultimately everybody's responsibility because safety is personal. Other people can affect your safety as well though. And you can affect someone else's. So we have to look out for one another, too."

A machinist: "The crew members have been here a long time and we know each other. We know that we can take the time to do the job the safe way. Before I came here, I had my eyes injured a number of times using metal machinery. You won't catch me running a machine like that anymore without my safety glasses on. I just won't do it. And I yell at the others to put theirs on."

A welder: "Anybody who does something wrong in the shop gets jumped on by the rest of us. But it's never done maliciously or to downgrade that person. We police one another, not out of spite, but because we care for one another. Everyone needs to be involved in safety. If you exclude someone, they'll get hurt. We also don't hesitate to tell management what to do safetywise. Some people say, with our record, we're due for an accident. We're not due for one. We're never due for one."

A service technician: "Cooperation between management and employees is key. Safety has to be a partnership. We have to have employees who are safety-conscious and that means having employers who are committed. There is no one recipe for success. Safety must be the consciousness of everyone in the company. It helps if everyone gets along and the 'mood' is positive."

A mechanic: "The secret to a good safety record is being aware. You have to think about it every day. And you can't get too confident about what you're doing, because then safety can be side-stepped. I used to think that safety was the responsibility of the company. I've learned that safety is a two-way street the worker has to be involved in safety because it's the worker who ultimately might get hurt. But the worker needs the go-ahead from the top to do the job safely."

These are the actual words of the workers at a company that is aiming for a no-accident goal. The safety director there says, "Everyone has to buy into the idea that our goal is a zero accident frequency before it will have meaning."

We can have a zero-accident goal here, too, if we all put our minds to it and make it a commitment. Why not make a no-accident record your own personal aim? You know your job and you know how to be safe. You know as much as the workers whose words you just heard. Stay safe today, tomorrow, next week, and a week from now. Accidents don't "just happen." They don't have to happen at all.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## **It's Our Own Responsibility**

**August 7**

What with all the government safety regulations as well as company policies and procedures, it's easy to forget that safety is primarily a personal responsibility. Workplaces can be covered with warning signs, safety posters, and bulletin boards. Safeguards can be installed on each piece of equipment. We can attend training sessions and be told of safe ways to do work, but none of these things can ensure freedom from accidents unless we want to prevent them. It's up to us! Unless we realize that our own actions determine whether accidents happen—and until we accept responsibility for these actions—injuries will occur.

Who puts tools and equipment into motion and controls their movements? Who but ourselves can control the placement of our bodies, the movement of our arms, legs, and eyes, and—most important—the activity of our brains?

One's ability to control his or her own actions carries with it the responsibility not to let these actions harm co-workers.

Being Accountable!

Machines do not reach out and bite. Tripping hazards don't grab a person's feet. Hand tools don't slice and jab into flesh by themselves. Yet, judging from the statements people use to describe their injuries, one would think that the tools and equipment they use were alive.

It's apparent that the people who make such statements are not fully aware that they are accountable for their own actions and must accept the responsibility for them. Little can be done to prevent their accidents and injuries until they do accept this responsibility. Many accidents are prevented, it is true, when OSHA standards and the boss's requirements are met. But when each individual employee brings an acceptance of personal responsibility and accountability into the workplace every day, everyone's risk of injury drops dramatically.

Consider a cargo handler who steps into the cab of a tractor, slips, and scrapes a leg against the door—causing a deep cut requiring stitches. Investigation reveals that the nonskid surface on the cab floor was badly worn and slippery.

What caused this accident? An irresponsible individual would lay the blame on the physical condition of the tractor and might ask, "Why wasn't the cab floor reported for repair?" A person who accepts responsibility would have reported it.

Hard luck, the conduct of other people, inadequate tools, and unfavorable conditions are just a few of the favorite reasons immature, irresponsible people use to absolve themselves of personal accountability when things go wrong.

Accepting responsibility for our own actions, on the other hand, is a sign of maturity. It means we believe firmly that it's up to us to do everything we can to prevent accidents. No one else can accept our safety responsibility for us.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## On Your Own Time

August 8

Safety is important not just to you and your family but to your employer as well. It's part of my job to help you to develop a safe attitude, so that safety will become ingrained part of your job, day in and day out.

But off-the-job safety is important, too. What you do on your own time is your own business, but since we're all part of a team, it's only natural that we're concerned about each other's welfare both on and off the job.

At work, you're part of a safety network that extends into many areas. There are rules and regulations to follow and supervisors who work at keeping the safety program going. Off the job, though, you're on your own. You can leave safety glasses off when you're remodeling the kitchen, and you can balance a ladder on a box when you're painting the peaks on your house.

You probably wouldn't hear a word out of anyone, but it would take a pretty immature person to deliberately leave safety at work. Still, there are times when we all get a little careless.

The highways are prime areas of concern for safety away from work, since vehicle-related accidents are the prime cause of fatalities both on the job and off—in the home or public place. I won't attempt to go into all the aspects of traffic safety here.

They're emphasized almost everywhere, and we've had training sessions devoted to vehicle safety. But I certainly caution you to cool it on the road. Be patient getting out of the parking lot, and always watch the other driver.

To some degree, most of us are do-it-yourselfers around the home, and this is where a lot of people are injured. Be careful when using a ladder, for example, being sure it's in good condition and you climb safely.

When using tools, pick the right tool for the job. If a tool is in poor condition, don't use it. Most of you have power tools, and you should be sure that they're properly grounded with a three-pronged plug or double insulation. And stay off wet surfaces when using electric power tools.

The weather is something we can't do much about. Yet it affects our safety, so we have to take precautions against it. Don't overexert yourself when shoveling dirt, for example—a shovelful can weigh more than you may think. And don't work too long in the hot sun. This can catch up with you fast, particularly if you've worked hard all week at your regular job.

Off-the-job safety should really be second nature if you practice it in earnest at work. So keep an eye out for hazards whether you're on the golf course or in your boat, or driving around town.

National statistics show that accidents away from work account for 70 percent of all deaths and 55 percent of all injuries to workers. So the toll in suffering and the loss in manpower runs high away from the job.

You are all valuable employees, and each of you fits into our overall operation and the overall manpower picture in the country. Your contribution to the economy would be difficult to replace if you were injured either on or off the job. Add to this the fact that you're priceless to your family, and it's easy to see why a 24-hour safety effort is necessary.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Stay Safe at the Wheel

August 9

The first rule of driving is safety. Whether driving for your employer or for yourself, never take chances that may prove to be unsafe. And if there are passengers in your vehicle, don't forget, you are responsible for their lives as well as your own. Stay calm and alert while you are at the wheel. If you become sleepy or don't feel well while driving, pull over and stop at the first available chance. Courtesy while driving is another name for safe behavior. In addition to having a respect for others on the road, obey the speed limit and all other laws. Allow plenty of distance between your car and other vehicles and always signal your intentions at the appropriate moments. If a tailgater tries to force you to speed up, slow down and let that vehicle pass. Most importantly, remember: alcohol and driving do not mix.

Neither do drugs and driving—including medication that may make you sleepy. If you are in an intoxicated condition or even in an emotional state that will affect your judgment—such as extreme anger—never, never, never get in on the driver's side of the car.

While driving in a normal state, however, there are still hazards that may be difficult to negotiate.

Here are a few fairly common emergency situations and how you can handle them:

- If your brakes should fail when you try to use them, stay calm. Pump the pedal; this may restore the brake. If it does not, you can use the parking brake, but don't jam it too hard because on a curve this can cause a spin. You can also try downshifting to slow the car. If all else fails and the situation is extreme, sideswipe a curb, guard rail or some other stationary object, rather than hitting another car head on.
- A collision with an oncoming vehicle is one of the most dangerous types of accidents you can have. Your best chances of survival are in dodging to the right. Even if you will hit something along the road or another car going your way you are more likely to survive than in a head-on crash.
- Another frightening possibility when driving is that your accelerator might get stuck. If this occurs, you should try to unstick the peddle by pulling up with the toe of your shoe. If there is a passenger beside you, ask that person to try to pull the accelerator up. Do not take your eyes off the road to try to free the accelerator. If the peddle doesn't release, shift into neutral or press down on the clutch. Pull over, stop, and shut off the ignition.
- Blowouts are a pretty common type of vehicular accident. If a front tire should blow out, the car will pull to the side that the blowout is on. Try to steer against the pull. Don't put on the brake. Instead, hang on to the wheel and try to stay in your lane. Slow down a little at a time and pull off the road.
- If you are forced off the road into deep water, escape through the window as quickly as possible. If power windows have short circuited and you are stuck inside, try the door. Keep pushing against water pressure until water begins to fill the compartment and the pressure equalizes. The door will then be easier to open.
- Everyone has stories about going into a skid, particularly in nasty weather. In this situation, never put your foot on the brake. Instead, take your foot off the gas and turn the wheel into the skid. This should help you regain control. Be ready, however, for the car to skid in the opposite direction. Again, turn the wheel into the skid and to straighten the car.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## The Force is Against You

August 10

The answer to seat belt safety lies in the physics of acceleration. When you slow down an object, we say the acceleration is negative, but it is more commonly called de-acceleration.

If an object is going 60 mph (88 ft/sec) and it is brought to rest in 4 feet, the average acceleration needed to accomplish this can be calculated as follows:

$$(\text{final velocity})^2 = (\text{initial velocity})^2 + 2 \cdot \text{acceleration} \cdot \text{distance}$$

Since the final velocity is zero, the initial velocity is 88 ft/sec and the distance is 4 feet, we can solve for the acceleration.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{acceleration} &= ((0-(88)^2)/2)/4 \\ &= 968 \text{ ft/sec/sec} \end{aligned}$$

A "G" acceleration is usually used to compare acceleration rate to that caused by gravity on a falling object. A G in this measurement system is equal to 32 ft/sec/sec

So our object will endure  $968/32 = 30$  G's of acceleration.

The human body has been shown to survive some severe G accelerations if the restraining force is distributed over the surface of the body. 30 G's **may be within the realm of survival**. Stopping from 60 mph in 4 ft is roughly what happens to a stunt man falling into a giant airbag which stops him in 4 ft after falling from a 120 ft building.

Let's say you're in a car traveling 60 mph and it goes off a wet road and collides head on with a concrete barrier. Newer cars are designed so that the front end will collapse over the entire distance of the hood, effectively stopping the passenger compartment over a distance comparable to our 4 foot example above. As soon as the bumper hits the concrete, the front end of the car starts to act like a spring, compressing in length and allowing the passenger compartment to come to rest just short of the concrete.

If you have your seat belt and shoulder harness on, your body will be brought to rest over that same distance, and you stand a chance of survival. If you don't have your seat belts on, your body will continue to move at a speed of 60 mph (a body in motion tends to stay in motion) and you will hit either the windshield or the dashboard at that speed.

If your body is stopped from 60 mph in 6 inches (assuming the windshield or

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

dashboard stretches even that much, you will endure  $((0-88)**2)/2/0.5 = 7744 \text{ ft/sec/sec} = 242 \text{ G's}$ .

**With that kind of G's, you will be dead from massive internal injuries.**

So why aren't seat belts and shoulder harnesses good enough? They aren't very wide and are often poorly located when the accident happens.

For example, using the classic  $F=m*a$ , you can get an idea of the force on your body. Suppose you weigh 150 lb, and 96 lb of that is in your lower torso and legs restrained by the seat belt. If you are slowed at a rate of 30 G's, the seat belt will apply a force of  $(96/32 \text{ "slugs"}) * 30 * 32 \text{ ft/sec/sec} = \text{almost } 3000 \text{ lb!}$  This is undoubtedly enough to break some bones.

This restraining load is very narrowly placed on your body. **Race car drivers are aware of this, and use wide, multipoint belting systems that try to hold their entire bodies in the event of a collision. (See, NASCAR is not all that bad)**

Of course, the biggest reason why air bags have been used is that people are dumb enough not to wear their seat belts.

The air bag deploys in a fraction of a second, based on a sensor in the car or bumper that detects the collision. The air bag helps bring the passenger to rest over a controlled distance and time, keeping the restraining forces lower and spread over more of the body. Your body feels less G's, and the forces on your body are less likely to cause local damage like a seat belt would.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Close Encounters of the Dangerous Kind

August 11

We all know that falls are one of the major causes of injury in America's workplaces. Another is what we call "struck-by" accidents—referring to all those situations in which any part of our body collides with an object or another person. The force of that collision, of course, determines the severity of any resulting injury.

It can be a little scary to realize how many "opportunities" there are for such accidents in an average workplace. For example:

- Trip over an object protruding into a walkway, and there will be a painful encounter between you and the floor. You may even have a broken arm or leg.
- Run into someone coming the other way around a corner or through a door, and a black eye or other bruises may well be the least serious outcome.
- If it's a moving vehicle you meet, even a handcart or loaded dolly, you'd be lucky to escape with a few bruises.
- Walking under a scaffold, crane, or conveyor is really tempting fate; doing so without a hard hat is absolutely begging for trouble.

[Note: This is a good place to ask for other examples of dangerous encounters that could occur—or perhaps have occurred—at your facility. Then seek suggestions of ways to avoid such occurrences, either before or after you have provided some examples.]

An employer can do a great deal to prevent, or at least minimize, such occurrences—for example, placing mirrors at blind corners, and windows in solid doors. The beepers on backing vehicles is another "built-in" safeguard. So is the alarm that signals the overhead passing of a loaded crane.

These measures won't protect you, of course, if you ignore the alarms or don't bother to look where you're going.

By the same token, the company's safety rules can't keep you from harmful encounters unless you follow them. For example:

- Wear your hard hat as required.
- Keep your own work area and all aisles clear.
- Heed all warning signs and signals.
- Never move a load you can't see over.
- Clean up small spills promptly; report larger ones.
- Report floor defects, wobbly stair rails, "dead" light bulbs.

You can easily see that you yourselves must shoulder a great deal of the responsibility for keeping your various encounters in the workplace safe and productive. And keep in mind that both the company and your co-workers count on your doing so.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Slips and Falls

August 12

Once upon a time, not too long ago, a new janitorial helper at an industrial plant started scrubbing some stairs and the nearby floor with water and a cleaning agent. An observant passing worker realized that, soon, dozens of workers would hurry down those steps en route to their coffee break. Alertness and quick action averted a potential disaster.

There were two things "wrong with this picture": (1) the stair and floor cleaning should have been done after work hours—or, in a three-shifts-a-day plant, pedestrian traffic should have been detoured during the cleanup (the action that was taken in the instance described); (2) workers shouldn't have been in the habit of rushing to their coffee break.

Speaking in broad terms, there are three ways you can suffer a fall on your job—and possibly suffer from the fall. You can lose your balance; you can trip over a floor defect or something improperly left or dropped in a walkway; or you can fall from a position in which you are being supported above the floor or ground.

### Avoiding Slips

To avoid slips and resulting falls, be on the lookout for foreign substances on the floor. Watch for deposits of water, food, grease, oil, sawdust, soap, or debris. Even small quantities of these substances, sometimes almost too small to see, can be dangerous.

When you come into the plant from outdoors in rainy or snowy weather, wipe your shoes thoroughly on a doormat—not just to keep the floor clean but to prevent wetness of your shoes from making you slip and, perhaps, fall. Another point about walking safely: Don't turn too sharply when changing your direction.

### Preventing Trips:

pedestrian traffic, extension cords across paths of travel, tools not put away, and holes or unevenness in the floor.

It will help keep passageways clean if you make sure trash or waste goes in the trash barrel. There are enough waste receptacles here that taking this safety step shouldn't take more than a few steps.

Walk where you're supposed to walk. Don't take shortcuts; especially don't take shortcuts through machinery areas. Hold onto the handrails when walking on stairs or traveling on steeper-than-ordinary ramps. If material or equipment is stored on stairways or ramps, move it or report it promptly.

Horseplay—just plain goofing off—can be fraught with danger. It can cause a trip, stumble, or fall by distracting a worker's attention from moving safely.

### Foiling the Long Fall

To avoid those long falls that can cripple for a lifetime or even prove fatal, you should pay close attention to the rules of ladder and scaffolding safety. We have pamphlets and other information devoted especially to proper use of such equipment.

When you need to climb, use a ladder—the proper length ladder. Don't climb on machinery, stock, crates, or boxes. Be sure that the ladder is in good condition. When using a straight ladder, keep the distance from the ladder's base to the wall at one-fourth the distance from the base to its point of support. Don't reach

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

too far from a ladder. Use a safety belt if both hands are to be occupied. Never stand above the third step from the top.

When using scaffolds, check carefully for defects and proper installation. When metal scaffolding is assembled, the maker's instructions should be accurately followed. The standing and work surfaces should be kept level and clean. Toe boards help prevent tools from falling and lessen the danger of slipping. If possible, work with someone well versed in scaffolding safety.

Falls are one of the major causes of occupational injuries—including fatal ones. We do our best to prevent situations that can lead to falls—and to provide equipment that will protect you in case of a fall. But you must do your part, too, by being aware and careful.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## **You're the Loser**

**August 13**

Cost of living, inflation, and taxes—these are the topics we are all concerned about. They're topics that creep into every conversation at home and at work because they deal with money.

But it is funny how many people express concern over living costs and then ignore a very important factor in keeping costs at a minimum. I'm talking about safety. If you think that safety doesn't have much to do with the cost of living you'd better listen to this:

On the job accidents cost the US economy about 3.4 Billion dollars every hour of every workday. The people who compile these statistics go on to say that this adds up to 6.8 Billion dollars per year.

The total includes 1.5 Billion dollars in lost wages, 3.8 Billion dollars in lost production, and 1.5 Billion dollars in medical expenses and that is just the measurable part of the costs.

This is a substantial drain on the economy and we all pay for it in our rolls as taxpayers, wage earners and consumers. But each of us as an individual is a big loser when we're injured. This is why safety should be important to cost-conscious people. It's not the only reason for being safe, however it may be the only reason some people understand.

Safety is part of doing a good job. You can't get hurt and still do a good job. When an injury occurs, there's something wrong, and the injured person is the first to find out about it. That's in the form of pain and suffering.

You might ask, if this is true, then why do some people ignore safety rules? There are many good answers to that, but we'd all have to be psychiatrists to understand them. However there are some that are quite obvious.

Many people are likely to break safety rules that they consider unimportant or contrary to their philosophy of life. This might be based on an over-inflated sense of self-importance.

People who disregard safety rules may also be reckless both on and off the job. They're confident that accidents always happen to the other guy. They have manufactured a false sense of security.

As previously noted, there are many good reasons for being safe, but it all narrows down to just one—you. You either play it safe or trust your luck. There is no in between. You either make safety a part of your job or you become a chance taker. A chance taker's working career can be very short.

## **August 2011 Daily Safety Focus**

Hazards exist in many forms. We attempt to keep them at a minimum around here and our goal is to send you home in good condition at the end of each workday. However we can only do it with your cooperation. You are important to this job or you wouldn't be here, you're also important to your family and your community.

So don't be a loser. Treat safety with the respect it deserves. When you lose at the game of chance taking, you lose BIG.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Safety Appeal

August 14

We all have a natural tendency to want to be safe. Put another way, psychologists say that normal individuals possess certain desires through which safety becomes appealing. These desires include:

- Avoiding personal injury
- Avoiding personal loss
- Reward seeking
- Striving for leadership
- Excelling
- Preventing injuries to others
- Avoiding making an unfavorable impression
- Avoiding punishment

It's easy to recognize that all of these things do have safety appeal. However, let's take a look at two of the more obvious ones, the desire to avoid personal injury and the desire to avoid personal loss.

Personal injury and personal loss are things we all want to escape, but many of us do little on our own to help avoid accidents that cause them. There are things that can be done on the job to help prevent painful incidents, particularly those caused by unsafe acts.

First of all, no matter how good you are at your job or how long you've been around, don't take safety for granted. Always keep your personal guard up. When you let it down, you are exposing yourself and others to accidents.

Second, take time to be safe. Don't take a chance that an accident won't happen this time. Taking shortcuts or not taking time to use a safety device is a quick way to get involved in an accident.

A third way to avoid unsafe acts is to form good working habits. There is a right way to do every job, and the right way is always the safe way. Accept the fact that accidents don't just happen to the other guy, or at least be realistic enough to acknowledge that you are the other guy to everyone but you.

The awful truth is that accidents play no favorites. They can happen to anyone.

Take a few minutes to look ahead. Try to visualize your name on an accident report. It could happen, but it doesn't have to if you take the simple precautions we have outlined.

**The people who compiled the list of personal desires that can be used to promote safety also suggested that there are certain character traits that can be stimulated to make us safety conscious.**

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

Some of these traits are selfishness, ambition, compassion, pride, and a sense of responsibility, loyalty, imagination, and patriotism.

I guess we all have to be a little selfish, at least to the extent of wanting to keep ourselves safe, but certainly not at the expense of others. A sense of responsibility to our families should certainly be an incentive to do our utmost to stay safe and do a good job.

Pride and ambition, when applied in the right way are also commendable traits. Pride in our work and a desire to get ahead fit in well with being safe. We can't keep a job and get the things we want out of life if we're injured and unable to work.

Our safety program depends on everyone, so be sure to hold up your end of the effort. Be observant. Regularly attempt to spot hazards in advance. Anyone can spot a hazard after it has injured someone.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

Safety is up to you

August 15

Each of us is responsible for his or her own safety. We can tell you and warn you, but you must be the doer. You are the one in the work area and that is where the accidents can take place unless you play it safe all the time. If you do, there will be no accidents, they just won't happen.

Workers' mishandling their jobs causes most accidents. In other words, a worker who does things that he or she should not do or who doesn't do things that he or she should, causes accidents.

If you check through one hundred accident reports, you will find the same ratio—the person who got hurt could have prevented at least nine out of ten accidents. Usually he or she just failed to use good common sense. They did not do as well as they knew how to do, and didn't follow the safe work practices they knew or should have known.

It is easy to keep from getting hurt, but it is also easy to get hurt. In some situations, it is easy to lose a finger or a hand or even be killed. Handling a hammer the wrong way can mean a smashed finger or thumb. Cutting towards you can mean a sliced hand or possibly a more serious injury.

Lack of care in placing and using a ladder can result in a broken leg or arm or even a neck. Failure to watch your walking habits can get you some nasty falls. We could continue all day with such examples, and you could too!

It's the ordinary things that cause most of the injuries. Notice that in every case, the responsibility for acting in a safe manner and avoiding injury lies with the individual. If he or she lives up to his or her own responsibility no one would get hurt.

Why do people get hurt in such ways? No doubt each accident victim has a different version or excuse, but I'll bet the real reason is nearly always the same. The poor guy just never figured out what a bad injury would do to him or her.

If a fellow who fell off the ladder, breaking his leg, had figured out what it would cost in money and suffering they would have played it safe. Every injury cost money, suffering, discomfort and inconvenience. So let's play it safe. There is no profit in accidents.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

**Golden rule for safety**

**August 16**

**Nearly everyone has heard of the golden rule. However, very few people apply it in their daily living.**

**You may not agree when we say: “To practice the golden rule, even in small measure, makes us happy and helps us in our business, as well as in our general daily life”. Nevertheless, it is the most practical rule in the world. In serving others, we serve ourselves. People like to deal with those who believe in and practice the golden rule. Try it and see!**

**Now, no doubt someone is already saying, “what does this have to do with safety”? If each of us would follow a golden rule pertaining to safety and actually live with this golden rule, our safety record would indeed improve.**

**One version of the golden rule might be stated as “work as safely with others as you would have them work with you”. Another might say, I will follow the safety rules as I would have them followed.**

**Whenever you approach safety from this angle, you are right back to our often-discussed subject of safety attitudes. A golden rule for safety is another way of developing a better mental attitude.**

**Here are a few of the safety attitudes we need to know and live by:**

- **An accident can always happen to me at any time, when I take a chance.**
- **Accidents can always be prevented.**
- **To work safely is a mark of good sense and skill.**
- **We can always take the time to work safely.**
- **If I always practice safety, my co-workers will follow my lead.**

**Safety is everyone’s responsibility. It is a commandment within itself. It is based on deliberation, not upon instinct. It must be followed, whether you are at home, on the road, or at work.**

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

**The Art of Getting Along**

**August 17**

**Sooner or later, man, if he is wise, discovered that life is a mixture of good days as well as bad days. Victory and defeat give and take. We have learned that it doesn't pay to be a sensitive soul and that we need to let some things go over his head like water off a duck's back.**

**We have learned that everyone has burned toast for breakfast now and then and that we shouldn't take the other fellow's grouch too seriously. That carrying a chip on our shoulder is the easiest way to get into a fight. We learned to ignore those who agitate us into unenviable positions.**

**We have also learned that passing the buck always turns out to be a boomerang and it never pays. We come to realize that the business or the world could run perfectly well without us. It doesn't matter who gets the credit so long as the business operation is successful. We have all learned we are only human and that it doesn't hurt to smile and say good morning, even if it's raining outside.**

**We have learned that most of the other fellows are as ambitious as we are, and they have brains that are as good if not better than our own. That hard work, not cleverness is the secret to success. We sympathize with the youngster who is just entering the industry because we remember how bewildering it was when we first started out.**

**Most of us don't worry if we make mistakes because experience has shown that if we always give our best, it's usually enough. Very few men get to home plate alone and that it's only through cooperative effort that we move on to better things.**

**Finally we learn that bosses are not monsters trying to get the last ounce of work out of them for the least amount of pay, but are usually fine men who have succeeded through hard work and want to do the right thing. That our fellow workers are not any harder to get along with on one job than another is and that getting along is about 98 percent our own behavior.**

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

Think

August 18

If you were asked to define “safety” in one word, what would be your reply? Would you define safety as alertness, Always ready for the unexpected? Would you define safety as skill, the art of being ultra-adept? Would you define safety as experience, asserting that the veteran never gets hurt?

Would you define safety as cooperation, the ability to exercise patience and get along with your fellow worker? Or after deliberation, would you finally define safety by using the single word “think”?

Perhaps Alertness, skill, experience and cooperation could be associated with safety, however these are subservient to the word think and must be construed as secondary definitions.

A well-known business executive has made the word “think” synonymous with success, and as in other phases of industry, the application of the meaning of the word is also very necessary if we are to reduce the number of accidents and injuries.

As has been so often stated, ninety percent of all accidents are attributed to unsafe acts on the part of the worker, and failure to think before acting constitutes the cause of practically all accidents in this category.

A lineman doesn't put cover-up on an energized line he is working near for the purpose of expediency, an injury is the result. The lineman had not given thought to the original purpose of the cover-up and has suffered the unfortunate consequences. Another individual, again for the sake of saving time, fails to don safety goggles for a project “that will only take a minute.” Again, injury results because of failure to think of the possible negative results.

A truck driver is involved in an accident because he knew he had the right of way but failed to think that perhaps the second party involved would not recognize this established right.

Many accidents can be averted if we will discipline ourselves to give full thought prior to the application of our actions.  
Think safety—then, act safely.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Backing Up Safely

August 18

Some members of the animal kingdom are able to see what's going on behind them without turning their heads. The human animal can't do that. Therefore, we face an extra challenge when we have to drive in reverse. Most backing-up accidents occur at speeds under five miles per hour. But they still result in significant damage to vehicles and other property, may even cause serious injury, and are sure to wreck the driver's safety record. Reviewing and following safe backing practices can reduce such accidents. I have a list of 12. How many do you know and practice?

1. Plan and drive your routes to avoid backing wherever possible. This may mean a few extra steps to get from the vehicle to the worksite, but walking is good for you.
2. If you pass the place you are looking for, beware of drifting back. Your slow progress when looking for the right address might be the reason that the car behind you pulled up so close. If you have a clear view of what is behind, check the mirror, turn around, and then put the vehicle in reverse. If there is a remote possibility of a blind spot, get out and look before you have an accident.
3. When obligated to back up, make absolutely sure there is nothing behind, and then back up immediately. Do not look and then wait for a while before backing up, because conditions could change.
4. Use all mirrors when backing—right, left, rear, and the overhead too if there is one. You can't see any of the mirrors if you are hanging out of the driver's door to see what is behind you. Besides, you could damage the door if it strikes an object.
5. If it is necessary to back up some distance, travel slowly and stop part way, then get out and check your safe progress.
6. If you are driving a big truck, and there is help available to assist you in backing, **use it**. Have the guide stand to the side and give a hand/arm signal because a vocal signal may not be heard. Never let the guide get directly behind the truck. If that does happen, stop until the guide is alongside. Remember that safe backing up is still your responsibility as the driver, even if you have a guide.
7. Park where you will not have to back up to get out of a parking spot. Always pull away from a parking place in forward gear, if possible.
8. If you miss your turn at an intersection, don't back around a corner to change direction. Instead, drive on and around the block. The extra few minutes might save someone else's car from damage.
9. If you have to park in a driveway, back in if possible, so that when leaving, you can drive forward rather than backing into the street.
10. When backing over a sidewalk and into a street, stop at the sidewalk and make sure there are no small children playing close by. Stop again at the curb to make a last check on traffic before backing into the street.
11. Remember that, when backing, a turn of the steering wheel turns the front of the vehicle in the opposite direction. While backing, the front wheels should be in line with the back wheels until objects on each side have cleared the front bumper.

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

12. Before backing into an unfamiliar area, get out and look for stakes, holes, and sharp objects.

These commonsense precautions came from assorted drivers with good safety records after driving many miles—both forward and backward.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Job Briefings

August 20

- Company personnel must ensure that the person-in-charge (i.e., supervisor, foreman, team lead, etc.) conducts a job briefing with the employee(s) assigned to perform the work prior to the start of the job.
  
- A job briefing must be conducted in the following manner:
  - The person-in-charge is responsible to provide a job briefing to personnel assigned to a specific work application.
  - The job briefing must be conducted prior to the start of each assigned job.
  - The job briefing must address, at a minimum, the following elements (refer to Appendix A for additional information):
    - Hazards associated with the job;
    - Work procedures involved;
    - Special precautions;
    - Energy source controls; and
    - Personal protective equipment (PPE) requirements.
  
- Number of Briefings (Frequency): Job briefings must be conducted in the following frequency:
  - One job briefing must be conducted if the job that is to be performed is repetitive and familiar to the employee.
  - Additional job briefings must be conducted if the job that is to be performed is not familiar to the employee or if the scope / condition of the job has changed significantly (i.e., could affect the safety of the employee).
  
- Extent of Briefing: The scope of the prospective job briefing (i.e., the degree of detail) must be conveyed in the following manner:
  - A brief discussion is satisfactory if the work involved is routine and if the employee, by virtue of training and experience, can reasonably be expected to recognize and avoid the hazards involved in the job.
  - A more extensive discussion must be conducted if the work is complicated, is particularly hazardous, or if the employee cannot be expected to recognize and avoid the hazards involved in the job.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Circle of Safety

August 21

Before you get into a company vehicle, you are required to do a circle of safety. How good is the circle of safety you do? Do you just go through the motions? You only do it when someone's watching? Or are you that conscious individual who takes vehicle safety seriously. Only you can answer that question. Let's take a look at what a circle of safety is all about and how to perform one.

As you know when you park a vehicle for any length of time, anything could and usually does happen. That is why a circle of safety is so important. During the circle of safety we are looking for anything that could be leaking from the vehicle. You're looking for anything unusual. You Check tires for any slices or parts missing on the wheel hubs. This would prevent anything unexpected while your driving down the road.

When you get to the back of the vehicle you need to look at the loaded material. Make sure all material is secured and will not fall off the truck and hit another vehicle while traveling down a road. While you're back there check the rear lights, making sure there are working and not cracked. Look all around, what's in the general vicinity, any special conditions, ice or slippery pavement etc? Look around do you see any unusual terrain, potholes, snow banks, hidden traps, oddly parked vehicles, low tree limb, children present, etc. Make a mental note of anything unusual that you do find.

While you walk around the vehicle, check the bin doors making sure they are secured and the latches work properly, look at the windows, are they clean and not cracked? Are the fire extinguisher and first aid kits current? Anything found on the vehicle that needs to be fixed must be addressed prior to that vehicle leaving the spot it is in.

A circle of safety must be done prior to moving any vehicle that has been parked for length of time. The circle of safety should encompass everything on the vehicle along with anything around it. Remember you are responsible for the safety of that vehicle and those around it once you get behind the driver's wheel.

Can you think of the times that you didn't do a proper circle of safety and what could have happened if something was left out of place on the vehicle? Or something was wrong with the tires? Had a fire or injury and you didn't have the proper extinguisher or first aid kit?

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## A word about safety

August 22

You won't find the meaning of "SAFETY" tucked away within that six-letter word. The meaning you associate with the word was shaped and continues to be shaped by many things: Your experience; the work you do; the thoughts you think; the way your parents used the word during your childhood; your outlook on life and on your fellow man. That's the way it is with all words.

Safety, for most people is a "blah" word – drab and colorless. A ho-hummer of a word that turns most people off, a word that deepens apathy instead of spurring action. The word safety doesn't jab the mind, it merely nudges it or curls around it and floats on past.

Safety just doesn't have the zing of "touchdown", or the flavor of a "sirloin" or the appeal of a blond nor the color of autumn. There is no magic in the sight or sound of the word, nothing that mystifies, stirs excitement, cranks up the curiosity, jumps the pulse rate, or opens the adrenal glands.

Ironically, the many things that safety programs are pitted against are couched in terms that do grab us: "Pain", "Laceration", "Mutilation", "Paralysis", "Crippling", and "Death".

But the things that safety works for should also grab us whenever we read and hear the word:

We should SEE people driving happily (and defensively).

We should SENSE the aliveness and able-bodied.

We should THINK of unimpaired earning power.

We should FEEL the joys of keen appetite and a deep night's sleep.

We should REFLECT upon the miracles of vision, hearing, touch and smell.

It's all there, invisible but part of that grab, two-bit, ho-hummed word –safety. If we develop the sense of all those positive meanings, then we can put all our power into the perpetual business of personal safety and the safety of our fellow workers.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

What is Safety

August 23

What is safety? “Is it a man with a title of safety inspector walking around saying do this, don’t do that, wear your hard hat”? What does safety really mean? Is it freedom from danger, injury or damage, or is it protection from harm? The answer is yes to all of these things, but it is much, much more.

Safety is a way of life, and the price is cheap compared to the dividends it pays. When we say it is a way of life, we mean it is not something you should have to stop and think about before starting a job. It should be as familiar to as breathing. It should be a built in part of every living moment.

Strangely enough, most of us make it a part of our existence most of the time—for instance, when we look in all directions before crossing a heavily traveled street. However, to ensure this feeling of security, we have to pay the price and we repeat the price is cheap.

Is it what we have heard for years—practice safety! This means that until we have made safety a part of every move we make in our lives, we need to think...think...think! In any and everything you do, force yourself to think how will I do it so that neither anyone else nor myself will suffer physical pain from a given act.

Consider the hazardous occupations and the hazardous sports. When we as layman see some of these sports on television, we are in awe of the danger we feel must be present. Believe you me it is present!

However you can bet your life that these people aren’t novices. You don’t put a man behind the wheel of an Indy car doing over 200 MPH and expect him to survive unless he’s had years of practice. You can be assured that safety was an integral part of that driver’s training to put him across the finish line safely. Once he has learned to drive that car, he doesn’t consciously think of the safe or unsafe way to drive in a race.

To perform our various jobs safely, we must train ourselves to practice safety without having to consciously think about it. This is the gut part of safety. It takes work to do it, but you and your family and your co-workers will reap benefits if you make safety a part of everything you do.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Hazardous Waste around Your Home

August 24

Hazardous waste isn't a problem just for large industries. Your home is full of hazardous products you must dispose of safely to protect the environment.

When these products are just dumped into a landfill, they can leach into the ground and pollute the water table. They also contribute to air and soil pollution for years to come.

Check out this list of common products which, can be unfriendly to the environment. Batteries, drain cleaners, herbicides and pesticides, paint, motor oil, pool chemicals, polishes, solvents, anti-freeze, pharmaceuticals, stain removers, toilet cleaners, wax strippers, oven cleaners, some bathroom cleaners, bleach, lye, wood stains and preservatives, varnish removers and paint thinner.

### Try safer alternatives:

- Baking soda makes a good scouring powder.
- Vinegar and water cleans windows and smooth surfaces.
- To make an all-purpose cleaner, mix a half cup of ammonia, a half cup of white vinegar, a quarter cup of baking soda and a half gallon of water.
- For a disinfectant, mix a half cup of borax per gallon of hot water.
- For a dishwasher detergent, mix one part of borax and one part of washing soda.
- For a dishwashing liquid, try a natural soap or a phosphate-free product.

### Alternative drain cleaners:

- Use a handful of baking soda and a half cup of white vinegar. Cover the drain tightly for one minute while the mixture fizzes. Flush.
- Put a half cup of salt and a half cup of baking soda down the drain. Follow with six cups of boiling water. Let it sit for a few hours or overnight. Flush with water.
- Pour hot water with a half a cup of washing soda down the drain.
- Use a plunger, a coat hanger or a mechanical snake to clear drains.

### Painting:

- Use old paint as primer.
- Before disposing of oil-based or enamel paint cans, take outdoors and remove the lid to allow the contents to air-dry and harden.
- Allow used turpentine to sit in a closed jar until the paint particles have settled. Pour off the clear turpentine and use again.

### Air quality:

- Instead of aerosol products, use pump spray bottles.
- Make your own air fresheners by boiling or simmering sweet herbs, flower petals or spices. A good mixture is cinnamon and cloves.
- Keep house plants to clean the air in your home.
- Keeping your home clean and aired out will help eliminate odor problems.
- Clean heat registers, air ducts and vents on a regular basis to improve air quality.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## **If you use dangerous products:**

- Don't purchase more than you need.
- Use them up, or give leftovers to someone who can use them.
- Separate hazardous materials from your household garbage.
- Never dispose of hazardous materials in the sewer system, in storm drains, soil or open bodies of water.
- Contact your local government for information on how to dispose of them safely.

The average household has a surprising number of products which can cause damage to the environment. Use them sparingly, and dispose of them with care

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Use The Correct Hand Tool

August 25

Misuse and lack of proper maintenance are the cause of many injuries from hand tools.

**Specific safety rules will vary greatly from one type of hand tool to another, but these general guidelines apply to most:**

- Choose the right tool for each job -- don't improvise. Be sure to use the tool for the purpose for which it was intended.
- Examine the tool before use to make sure it is in good repair. Check for defects such as chips, cracks, dents, worn jaws on wrenches and pliers, mushroomed heads on striking tools and damaged or loose handles.
- If you find a tool to be defective, remove it from service so it can be repaired or discarded.
- Maintain your tools according to manufacturer's directions. Keep them clean, dry and lubricated if required.
- Avoid temperature extremes which may damage tools.
- Keep cutting tools sharp. Surprisingly, dull blades are the cause of many injuries.
- Aim the cut away from yourself and from other workers when using cutting tools.
- Have specific places to store hand tools, and put them back as soon as you have used them.
- Never carry tools in your pockets because they can cause injury – especially sharp tools. Carry them in a work apron, tool belt or tool box. When climbing a ladder, don't carry your tools in your hands. Instead, carry them in a tool belt or hoist them up.
- When passing a tool to another worker, hand it over. Never throw it because you could injure another person and damage the tool.
- Before swinging a tool (such as an ax or sledge) look around to make sure no one is in the way.
- Don't use excess force. Never use cheaters or pipe extensions on tools such as wrenches.
- Never depend on an insulated tool such as a screwdriver to protect you from electrical shock. You must take all other precautions.
- Similarly, never depend on supposedly non-sparking tools to prevent ignition around flammable substances and in hazardous atmospheres. You must be sure to take all other precautions.
- Some tasks for which you use hand tools can contribute to hand and wrist injuries – and even back injuries. These are caused by repeated impact, strain and vibration. There are a number of things you can do to prevent these injuries. Work with your back in a comfortable straight position. Keep your shoulders, elbows and wrists in a comfortable alignment. Do not twist your hands or wrists. Specially designed tools with extra padding can help to prevent some of these injuries.

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

- There is another tool which you should use whenever you are using hand tools. That is your eye protection. Make sure you wear the appropriate safety glasses with side shields, or safety goggles.

Hand tools may look relatively harmless, but they do contribute to many workplace injuries. Use them with care.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Safe On Your Time

August 26

Most of us have heard about the mechanic who is so busy fixing everyone else's car that his own is a wreck in search of a junkyard.

Many workers adopt a similar attitude toward safety once they've punched out for the day. An employee who diligently uses eye and hearing protection equipment at work may wear nothing but shorts and sandals while mowing the lawn at home. Another who would never risk working under the influence of alcohol will take a big chance driving home after a night out at the bar.

"The difficulty at home is we must rely on our self-control to engage in safe behaviors," says Horacio Roman of the Center for Behavioral Safety Research at the University of Nevada in Reno.

Roman says once at home and no longer bound by the safety rules and supervision of the workplace, there are plenty of incentives for rushing a task so people can have more time for relaxation or fun. Driving past the point of exhaustion to reach a vacation destination or not taking a few extra seconds to buckle up are examples of risky off-the-job behaviors that can have fatal consequences.

Of the 97,300 unintentional injury deaths occurring in the United States during 2000, about 45 per cent (43,501) involved motor vehicles. Alcohol played a part in more than a third of the fatal crashes.

Next came falls (16,274), poisonings (10,255), drownings (4,406) and choking incidents (3,515).

"Probably half of those (motor vehicle) deaths could be prevented if people stopped drinking and driving, or if everyone wore seat belts every time they drove or rode in a vehicle," says Dr. David Sleet, associate director of science at the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Unintentional Injury Prevention.

Sleet noted those who don't buckle up are often ejected from vehicles during crashes. "When safe behaviors are mandated in one setting and not in another, you can't expect a lot of carryover," says Sleet. "But if safe behaviors are voluntary, it's most likely those behaviors will be carried over."

According to Roman, various factors can affect our off-the job safety from one day to the next. If someone is nagging at you to clean the leaves out of the roof gutter, but you are tired and would rather flop on the couch, safety can lose out to impatience to get the job done as quickly as possible.

"It comes down to stopping and thinking about all the possible consequences. Am I prepared? Do I have the right equipment and tools? Do I need help?" he says.

Leo Eisner of Eisner Safety Consultants in Santa Barbara, CA, says people are bound by rules and regulations at work, but often "they don't think about the regulations in the same way at home."

For example, Eisner says, "they don't read directions or warnings." As a result, people risk injury or illness by not operating equipment properly or not following directions for safe use of a chemical.

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

About 75 per cent of all unintentional deaths and more than half of all injuries occur off the job. Next time you're standing on the top rung of a rickety stepladder, remember that an estimated 150,000 ladder injury occur in the US each year. And next time you're taking a spin on your bike without a helmet, remember those 100,000 head injuries and 150 deaths could be eliminated each year in the US if people wore bicycle helmets

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Falls Cause Serious Injuries

August 27

Falls are a leading cause of workplace injuries. In fact, falls are second only to motor vehicle accidents as the leading cause of accidental deaths in North America. Surprisingly, most of these falls are from the same level -- the kind of fall you would have if you lost your footing or balance.

While falls are among the most common accidents, they are also among the most preventable. In many cases, you have control over whether or not you are going to fall. If you move carefully and remain alert to hazards, you can stay on your feet.

There are two main causes of a fall. One is the loss of friction between your feet and the floor. This occurs when your shoes or the floor are slippery. The result is that you lose your footing and slip. The other cause of falling is when your feet are halted and the rest of you keeps going. This is what happens when you trip. In either a slip or a trip, your body's center of gravity is displaced, and there is nowhere to go but down.

Here are some ways to prevent falls:

- If it isn't moving, it shouldn't be in a traffic area. Walkways and stairways must be kept free of clutter.
- Keep hoses, cables, and cords out of walkways.
- Watch for, and repair or report, broken stairs, railings, and loose carpeting.
- Use good lighting in walkways and stairways. Turn on the light before entering a room.
- Use the handrail on stairs.
- Don't run on stairways or through work areas.
- Do not carry loads that obstruct your vision.
- Don't lean back in chairs.
- Watch for floor openings, such as uncovered drains or crawl spaces.
- Make sure they are covered and guarded.
- If you must walk on a surface that is slippery or uneven, walk slowly and take short steps.
- Wear non-slip shoes when you might encounter slippery surfaces.
- Clean up or report spills right away.
- Close drawers to prevent someone from tripping over them.
- Watch for newly waxed floors and high gloss surfaces.
- Obey signs such as "Caution - Wet Floor".
- Be careful when you come indoors in wet or snowy weather. Your boots or shoes are likely to be slippery, and there may be wet spots on the floors.

If you do start to fall, these tips could save you from injury:

- Relax, bend your arms and legs, try to gently fall to the floor.
- Catch your fall with your hands to absorb some of the impact.
- Try to roll to prevent bone injuries.

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

- Do not move if you think you might have hurt yourself. Wait for help.

If we're lucky, a fall will hurt nothing more than our pride. But falls do cause many serious injuries and even deaths every year. Take precautions to avoid them.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Take This Quiz to See if You Drive Distracted

August 28

The driver's seat of a car is rife with temptations. You can carry on a telephone conversation, electronically map the route to your destination, nosh on a burger, or sing along with the Supremes. Many think they can handle such distractions without causing a crash. But the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety estimates that distracted drivers cause one-fourth to one-half of the approximately 6 million crashes each year. Do you let distractions drive you? Take this quiz to find out.

### 1. You're merging into highway traffic and the cell phone on your passenger seat rings. Do you:

- Let it ring
- Reach across the passenger seat and turn the phone off
- Answer the phone

**Answer: A** Let it ring. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 600-1,000 motorists died from cell phone-related crashes in 2000. Another NHTSA survey found that 44 percent of drivers have cell phones in their cars, and 70 percent of all wireless calls are made from cars. "Everyone feels that driving is a fairly easy task," says Rick Pain of the Transportation Research Board, a unit of the National Academies. "So much of it is automated that we don't pay attention. We feel that we have the spare capacity to do other things."

Keith Kirchhoefer of Wildwood, Missouri, was hit from behind by a motorist who was on his cell phone. "He admitted to being distracted and subsequently caused a three-car pileup," he says.

If your phone rings while you're driving, let your voice-mail answer the call. If your phone has a "missed call" feature, you can access the caller's number later. If you must answer, pull over to the side of the road first.

While a cell-phone headset enables a driver to carry on a conversation without removing hands from the steering wheel, it also significantly increases the chances of causing a crash because you can't hear traffic as well as you should. "You always put the headset on the ear you hear best from, leaving the weakest ear to listen to traffic sounds," says James Solomon, defensive driving expert for the National Safety Council.

### 2. True or False? As long as you look up every 2 or 3 seconds, you can put a compact disc in the player, put on lipstick, or eat a burger while you're driving.

**Answer: False.** While you may think you can do it all, your brain has limitations. "Any time your mind is taken off the driving task, you and those around you are at risk," Solomon says.

The design of roadway curves and intersections and placement of traffic lights allow only 1 3/4 seconds to recognize such safety hazards as a driver ahead of you slamming on his brakes or a child's ball rolling out into the road, Solomon says. It takes an additional three-fourths of a second to react. "That's plenty of time if you're not eating a hamburger, smoking a cigarette, or reading a book," he says.

### 3. You're not even to the stop sign at the end of the street and already your children are fighting in the back seat. Which is the worst response?

- Pull off the road before you deliver discipline

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

Explain to the children the importance of being quiet while you drive  
Reach behind you with one hand to grab the offender

**Answer: C.** "If you have to do a serious interaction with your kids, it requires all your attention," says Pain. "Don't drive one-handed. If you have to deal with your kids while driving, pull off the road."

A driver's responsibility is no different from that of an airplane pilot, Solomon says. "You carry the same responsibility for your craft, your cargo, and your people on board," he says. "Distractions must be kept to a minimum or put aside."

Before you begin your trip, tell preschool and older children that you expect them to keep the peace, at least until you get to your destination. Bring along toys or books for each child to keep them occupied. "We bring along age-appropriate books and games for each of our three children," Kirchhoefer says. "And we'll stop the car when things get out of hand in the back seat."

4. True or False? The technology installed in your new car must be safe to use while driving. After all, you can find a street address, be warned of a car in your blind spot, or automatically dial 9-1-1.

**Answer: False.** "Any one of those devices by itself is a problem but not a huge crisis," says Pain. "But when you have several working in the car at the same time, you have multiple sources of distraction, and that is a real concern."

While car manufacturers are working to maintain safety even as they offer such distracting devices, there are no guidelines for system design and no way of measuring how distracting they can be, Pain says.

Some of the devices require drivers to look at them 40 separate times to complete a task. That is far too distracting, says Tom Dingus, director of the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute. "If you have to look at something more than three or four times to complete a task, pull over and stop," he says.

## How did you score?

Now take what you've learned on the road. To cut down on distractions, get organized before your journey begins. Plot the best route to your destination before starting the car. Have maps ready so you don't have to reach across the passenger seat to get them out of the glove compartment. Put a compact disc into the player. Insert your next "book on tape" into the tape deck. Clear your mind, and be ready to focus on your most important job during the trip: driving. Remember, no distraction, no matter how urgent, is worth your life.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Keep the Sting Out of Summer

August 29

Ah summer, a time for picnics, barbecues, ... and bees. You can enjoy the outdoors without getting stung. Follow these tips from the University of Delaware:

When cooking outdoors, cover food and beverages so wasps and bees are not attracted to them.

Don't drink directly from open soda cans outdoors, since wasps and bees can crawl inside. Use a straw or pour soda into cups instead.

When eating outdoors at parks and restaurants, don't sit close to trash containers.

Never play near beehives, even if they appear to be empty.

Avoid wearing bright colors -- especially white, blue, and yellow.

Don't wear perfume, scented hairsprays, and scented deodorants. Don't burn scented candles outdoors.

Don't wave your arms and hands to swat bees and wasps away; this may only make them more defensive. Instead, get up slowly and walk away, taking your food and drink with you, until they've flown away.

Bees and wasps are more aggressive in late summer and early fall, when their natural food supply starts to dwindle.

If you're allergic to insect stings, carry a sting emergency kit with you at all times. If you experience shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness, or other abnormal symptoms after a sting and do not have a sting kit, seek emergency medical treatment immediately. Anyone who is stung around the face and throat should receive medical treatment -- even if he or she is not allergic to bee stings.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Storms: Protecting Yourself, Co-workers, and Family

August 30

Residents in many areas of the United States are aware of the hazards presented by thunderstorms. To borrow an expression from Paul Harvey "...but do you know -- the rest of the story." How do you protect yourself, your co-workers, and your family during thunderstorms?

The first step is to know what is happening in your area.

When severe weather is imminent, do you know what to do?

If a **tornado** strike is imminent, take the following action:

### **In Open Country**

Seek inside shelter if it is close by and time permits. If there is not time to escape, lie flat in the nearest depression, such as a ditch or ravine. A parked vehicle is unsafe as a shelter during a tornado or severe windstorm and should be avoided.

### **In Office Buildings**

The basement or an interior hallway on a lower floor of an office building is safest. Upper stories are unsafe. If there is not time to descend, a closet or small room with stout walls (bathroom), or an inside hallway will give some protection against flying debris. Otherwise, get under heavy furniture. Select and mark shelter areas in office buildings.

### **Auditoriums, and Other Large Buildings with Wide, Free-Span Roofs**

Buildings of this type are particularly vulnerable to tornado wind damage due to the large roof expanse upon which the wind force may act and also the relatively large area between roof supporting walls. Basements of these buildings offer reasonably good protection, as do smaller interior rooms at ground level or nearby sturdy buildings.

### **In Homes without Basements**

Take cover in the smallest room with stout walls, or under heavy furniture, or a tipped-over upholstered couch or chair in the center part of the house. Stay away from windows, doors, and outside walls. Protect your head.

When **lightning** (thunderstorms) threatens, get inside a home or large building. Keep away from windows, exterior doors, water faucets, main distribution frame, switch equipment, electrical appliances, etc. If outdoors, with no time to reach a building or vehicle, follow these rules:

Get out and away from open water. Get away from bicycles, motor cycles, and wheeled and track equipment. Stay away from aerial lines, downguys, pedestals, towers, wire fences, clotheslines, metal pipes, rails, or other metallic paths which could carry lightning to you. Stay away from small, isolated sheds or other small structures in open areas. Avoid being the highest object on the surrounding landscape. In open areas, go to a low place such as a ravine or valley. In a forest, seek shelter in a low area under a thick growth of small trees. Don't get under a natural lightning rod such as a tall tree.

## August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

If you are isolated in a field and your hair stands on end (indicating lightning is about to strike), drop to your knees and bend forward putting your hands on your knees. **DO NOT LIE FLAT ON THE GROUND.**

When sitting in or driving a vehicle, you are protected by the shell of the vehicle. Do not touch the door handle or any metal object in the vehicle. Thunder, the sound of lightning, travels at 1/5 mile per second. Count the time that elapses between your first sight of the lightning flash and the sound of the thunder to determine how close the lightning is.

**After the storm** (or other emergency), our priority is to locate family members who were in different locations when the storm struck. Designate a relative or friend in another city or state as the contact following a disaster. Without a contact plan, families frantically search and add to the already overloaded emergency management communications system.

If you don't have a family emergency action plan, take time to develop one. Make certain everyone knows the safest place to seek shelter in the event of a tornado, the rendezvous point to use if lightning strikes the house and starts a fire. Pre-planning saves lives. Reacting at the height of the storm (without a plan) may place you needlessly in harm's way.

# August 2011 Daily Safety Focus

## Know Your Enemies - Workplace Hazards

August 31

If you and your buddies were facing a dangerous, deceptive enemy, you'd want to find out all you could about it and share any information you come up with. The fact is you do have such a treacherous enemy - the workplace hazard. An unnoticed hazard can take your life in an instant, or cause you a lifetime of suffering and disability.

It only makes sense to learn all you can about workplace hazards. Sharing information with your co-workers helps keep all of you safe.

Training and communication are the basis of an injury prevention program in the workplace. We do provide you with the information and training you need to identify and avoid hazards. It is important for you to also seek this information on your own, and to be continually alert to new dangers.

Safety information is shared in a number of ways. One person explains things to another person, individually or in a group training session. Training workbooks, videos and live demonstrations make the information easier to remember. Trainees get to try out procedures and safety equipment under the supervision of an experienced person.

Safety communication continues on a daily basis. Signs and posters are common devices for passing along safety information. They point out hazards such as the possibility of objects falling from overhead or the presence of flammable liquid vapors. They also tell you what to do to avoid injury - wear your hardhat, or don't smoke. Signs also point the way to equipment to be used in case of an emergency - fire extinguishers, first aid kits and exits are some of these.

Labels are another common source of safety information. On a container of chemicals, the label will tell you the contents, hazards and what to do in case of a spill or exposure.

The Material Safety Data sheet is another method of communicating safety information about chemicals. It contains the same type of information as the label, but in greater detail.

Our company's system of reporting injuries, accidents and close calls is another important link in safety communications. This gives your co-workers valuable information about the kinds of hazards lurking in the work area.

If you know or suspect a workplace hazard, report it.

If you have safety information, share it. Keep the lines of communication open to defeat the enemy - the workplace hazard.