

Safety FOCUSED

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Avoiding Workplace Concussions

Concussions are a form of brain injury that occurs when the brain shakes inside the skull, and they are a safety risk at just about every workplace. To protect yourself and your co-workers, it's important to keep in mind some key safety tips.

Prevent Heat Sickness When Working Outdoors

Outdoor workers are especially vulnerable to heat-related illnesses because they spend the majority of the day outside in direct sunlight. Read on to learn tips on how to stay cool and keep safe from heat illnesses.

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A monthly safety newsletter from



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Avoiding Workplace Concussions

Concussions are a safety risk at just about every workplace and occur when the brain shakes inside of the skull. Generally, concussions are caused by severe blows to the head or body sustained from falls, being struck by an object, motor vehicle collisions or other type of impact.

In the event of such force, the spinal fluid that surrounds the brain is unable to act as a cushion, and severe damage to the brain, blood vessels and nerves can occur. In most cases, concussions in the workplace are caused by avoidable accidents. To keep yourself and fellow employees safe, it's important to keep in mind the following:

- Know the signs and symptoms. Doing so can make all the difference when treating an employee. Common symptoms include, but are not limited to, headaches, loss of consciousness, confusion, amnesia and dizziness. Monitor concussion sufferers closely, and don't let them drive home.
- Be aware of tripping hazards and do your part to ensure good workplace housekeeping.
- Wear hard hats, sturdy footwear, fall protection gear or other personal protective equipment if it is a requirement of the work you perform.
- Report any unsafe conditions to your supervisor.

While most people recover from concussions without having to go to the hospital, an employee should be instructed to seek medical attention immediately if he or she experiences loss of consciousness, extreme confusion, nausea or a progressively worsening headache.

Prevent Heat Sickness When Working Outdoors

Hot weather, especially when combined with strenuous physical labor, can cause body temperatures to rise to unsafe levels—leading to heat illnesses. Outdoor workers are especially vulnerable to heat-related illnesses because they spend the majority of the day outside in direct sunlight.

There are a variety of heat illnesses, including heat stroke, heat exhaustion, dehydration and heat cramps. Each of these illnesses vary in symptoms and severity, but commonly cause dizziness, weakness, nausea, blurry vision, confusion or loss of consciousness. To stay safe from the heat when working outdoors, consider doing the following:

- Wear loose, light-colored clothing whenever possible.
- Shield your head and face from direct sunlight with a hat.
- Take short breaks to rest in the shade. If you are wearing heavy protective gear, consider removing it during your break to cool off even more.

- Ease into your work, gradually building up to more strenuous activity as the day progresses. In addition, you should avoid overexerting yourself during peak temperature periods (midday).
- Drink liquids frequently, even if you don't feel thirsty. Experts recommend drinking at least 8 ounces every 20 to 30 minutes to stay hydrated. Stick to water, fruit juice and sport drinks. Try to avoid caffeinated beverages, as they can dehydrate you.

Employees should monitor themselves and co-workers on hot days. If you notice any signs of heat illness, notify your on-duty supervisor immediately.

Most often, heat illness sufferers can be treated by being moved to a cooler area and given liquids. In extreme cases of heat stroke where an employee is unconscious, you will have to call an ambulance immediately.

THE DANGERS OF HEAT STROKE

HEAT STROKE IS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS TEMPERATURE-RELATED ILLNESSES. **HEAT STROKE SUFFERERS CAN EXPERIENCE INTERNAL TEMPERATURES OF UP TO 104° F.**



104°