



San Diego Services

MAY WEEK 1

Safety as Far as the Eye Can See

Eye protection is essential when you work in the construction industry. Each year, thousands of workers suffer eye injuries on the job and some lose their sight as a result. Fortunately, you can prevent eye injuries by selecting and wearing the proper eye protection.

As a construction worker, you need to make a habit of wearing eye protection on the job. You never know when a stray spark, some sawdust, a piece of wire, or a sliver will fly at your face, so you should **always** be prepared. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that 70% of eye injuries are caused by flying particles or objects. Forty percent of these injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection. The problem is that these workers were probably wearing improper eye protection such as sunglasses or eyewear without side shields.

When selecting eye protection, **think** about the kind of work you are going to do so you can **pick** the correct type of eye protection for the job:

- Will the work create flying objects or fragments that could cause impact injuries? If so, you need to wear either spectacles with side shields, goggles, a face shield, or a combination of the three.
- Will you be working with chemicals that can splash or spray in your face? Then you'll need chemical goggles

designed to form a protective seal around your eyes to prevent chemicals from making contact with your eyes. You might also need a face shield.

- Will you be involved in tasks that produce intense heat or optical radiation like welding, brazing, or working near lasers? In this case, you should wear goggles or safety spectacles with special-purpose lenses and eye shields, and possibly a face shield depending on how intense the heat or radiation is.

If you are unsure or have questions about the right kind of eye protection to use, ask your supervisor or safety director. Once you've chosen your eye protection, **wear it!** It won't protect you if it's in your pocket or lunch bucket.

Remember that eye protection comes in different sizes and styles. Find the right kind to protect yourself from hazards you face around a jobsite. Make sure your eye protection fits correctly and is comfortable to wear. Protect your eyes. You only get one pair during this lifetime!

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SAFETY REMINDER

Sunglasses are not safety glasses unless they are manufactured to ANSI Z.87 specifications.

NOTES:

SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

S.A.F.E. CARDS* PLANNED FOR THIS WEEK:

REVIEWED MSDS #

SUBJECT:

MEETING DOCUMENTATION:

JOB NAME:

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SUPERVISOR:

ATTENDEES:

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Weekly Safety Meetings

Safety Training for the Construction Industry

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Select Edition

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MAY WEEK 2

Sound Advice

Construction sites are noisy environments and that noise can have a direct impact on your hearing and your life. Sources of noise for construction workers include tools and heavy equipment; things like cranes, hand drills, hammers, back hoes, jackhammers, chain saws, and air compressors. Repeated exposure to excessive noise on the job can lead to permanent hearing loss. Because the damage to your hearing happens gradually, by the time you notice it, irreversible damage has already occurred. You may have a problem if you notice that sounds are muffled or distorted.

Noise doesn't just hurt your hearing. If you experience hearing loss, you are exposed to additional threats of injury or death on a construction site because your ability to communicate with co-workers and the effectiveness of audible warning signals like backup alarms are reduced. Hearing loss can also affect your balance and may lead to tinnitus, a continuous ringing sound in your ears. Other problems caused by exposure to noise include fatigue, elevated blood pressure, tension, and nervousness, some of which can lead to heart disease.

You don't have to suffer hearing loss! Learn to recognize when the sound level around you is dangerous and wear personal protective equipment such as earplugs or earmuffs. OSHA has specific rules about how long you may be exposed to a noise level before you must wear hearing protection.

When the noise level is 95 dBA, you can work with no hearing protection for only 4 hours. Keep in mind that the sound level of a ringing telephone is 80 dBA, a hand drill is 98 dBA, a chain saw is 110 dBA, and an ambulance siren is 120 dBA. If you have to raise your voice for someone an arm's length away to hear you, the site may be too noisy and you probably need hearing protection.

One way to reduce noise to your ears is to increase your distance from the noise. When possible, spend your break time away from noisy areas. Wear hearing protection when necessary. There are different types of hearing protection developed for every type of noise. Some let you hear voices and block out other noise around you. Hearing protection should be worn when operating abrasive saws or grinders, impact tools, demolition hammers, core drillers, rock drills, chippers, needle guns, and pile drivers. If you have a question about hearing protection, check with your supervisor or safety department. Protect your hearing both on and off the job so you can enjoy the beauty of music and the voices of your loved ones for years to come.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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A short, intense sound like an explosion can cause immediate and permanent hearing loss.

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San Diego Services

MAY WEEK 3

Breathing Easy

Respirators are among the many important pieces of personal protective equipment used at a construction site. A respirator is a safety device that covers at least your nose and mouth; it protects you against air that contains harmful contaminants and allows you to breathe safely in these hazardous environments. Some of the operations around a construction site that require the use of respirators include sand blasting, paint application and removal, industrial cleaning, certain welding operations, coating the insides of vessels, and some of the work done in confined spaces.

When you choose, use, and maintain your respirator properly, you can protect yourself from respiratory hazards including: particles and dust containing silica or lead; vapors and gases like carbon monoxide; biological agents such as mold spores and viruses; physical agents including radioactive particles; and atmospheres that are Immediately Dangerous to Life or Health (IDLH) such as environments that are oxygen deficient.

If the duties you perform involve the use of a respirator, your employer is required to establish and implement a written respiratory protection program with worksite-specific procedures. You should refer to this plan to help you understand and apply the procedures regarding

proper selection and use of respirators. The plan will contain procedures for medical evaluations and fit testing, as well as for cleaning, disinfecting, storing, inspecting, repairing, discarding, and maintaining respirators.

You should receive training to learn the proper use of respirators and the respiratory hazards you may be exposed to at the jobsite. Pay attention and participate. Before you use a respirator in a hazardous environment, make sure you know how to use that specific respirator and that you understand the dangers involved. If you have questions or if there is anything you don't understand, talk to your supervisor.

Remember that improper or incorrect use of respirators can result in exposure to hazardous contaminants, suffocation, permanent respiratory damage, cancer, heart disease, and death. Wearing the wrong respirator for the job or one that does not fit properly can be as deadly as not wearing one at all. If you have trouble breathing or sense that you are inhaling contaminants when wearing a respirator, leave the area immediately.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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If you are properly trained to use respirators, you can enter a hazardous environment and breathe easy!

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MAY WEEK 4

Preventing Hand Injuries

Your hands are among the most complex and fragile tools you'll ever use. Nerves, tendons, bones, and skin work together to allow you to perform a variety of tasks that cannot be performed by any other part of the body. Without the use of your hands, simple tasks such as driving, opening doors, eating, and buttoning your shirt would be very difficult or almost impossible to do. Your skills as a construction worker and your ability to earn a living depend largely on the jobs you perform with your hands.

Yet in spite of how important hands are, workers often forget to protect their hands in order to avoid injury. A hand injury—even a fairly minor one—can lead to loss of motion, loss of agility, and loss of grip. The good news is that injuries to the hands are preventable. The most common causes of hand injuries are carelessness, lack of awareness, becoming distracted from the task being completed, and disregard for safety procedures.

Common hand injuries and excuses for them include:

- ☞ Struck by hammers: *"I meant to hit the nail but got my hand instead."*
- ☞ Pinched between objects: *"I wasn't paying attention to where my fingers were when I put the plywood down."*
- ☞ Cut by sharp objects: *"The knife that I use to strip wires is extremely sharp and I cut towards myself."*

- ☞ Pierced by splinters and slivers: *"I didn't want to wear the gloves my boss gave me."*
- ☞ Burned on hot objects: *"I just finished using a cutting torch and picked up the wrong end of the iron."*
- ☞ Burned by chemicals: *"I know I should wear the chemical gloves, but they're bulky and get in my way."*
- ☞ Caught in moving machinery: *"I just reached in for a second to clear some scrap."*

If any of these excuses sound familiar, it's time to think about safety and focus on preventing hand injuries. Know the hazards involved in every task you perform. Choose the right gloves for the job. It sounds obvious, but pay attention to what you're doing—beware of carelessness and complacency. Don't wear rings, bracelets, or any loose jewelry when working around machinery. Do not remove guards or safety devices on any equipment. Always disconnect the power before you clean, oil, or adjust any machinery.

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SAFETY REMINDER
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All hand injuries require first aid.

Report even minor hand injuries to your supervisor so you can get the necessary medical attention.

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