

Preparing for Hot Weather

Hot weather is just around the corner. Protecting your workers in hot environments means pre-planning and understanding the hazards.

Certain safety problems are common to hot environments. Heat tends to promote accidents due to the slipperiness of sweaty palms, dizziness, or the fogging of safety glasses.

The frequency of accidents is higher in hot environments. One reason is that working in a hot environment lowers the mental alertness and physical performance of an individual. Increased body temperature and physical discomfort promote irritability, anger, and other emotional states which sometimes cause workers to overlook safety procedures or to divert attention from hazardous tasks.

Workers employed outdoors are especially subject to weather changes. A hot spell or a rise in humidity can create overly stressful conditions.

The following practices can help to reduce heat stress:

- Postponement of nonessential tasks,
- Permit only workers acclimatized to heat to perform more strenuous tasks
- Provide continuous supply of water or athletic type drinks.

Protecting the New Employee

The new employee is much more susceptible to injuries in the workplace. They are in a new environment and have not yet learned how to apply the safety practices you have taught them.

Watch your new workers

Be sure they understand all necessary safety measures before starting to work. If they don't understand - retrain them.

If respirators or other personal protective equipment are required, ensure they wear them consistently and maintain them properly.

Don't allow short-cuts; help them understand and follow safety instructions to the letter.

Make sure they understand and follow the hazard warnings on chemicals. Provide them access to the material safety data sheet on hazardous chemicals.

Ask them about emergency procedures to make sure they are prepared to follow them in the event of chemical spill or fire.

Training employees is an essential part of industry. The newcomer is very important when we consider the extremely high cost of turnover and training. The interest shown a new worker assures the employee that the company sees the worker is human-not a number. By training ourselves to break in a new employee efficiently, we train our people to see our best side and what is expected of them.

10 Commandments of Safety

1. **Thou shalt know what to do in an emergency.** Make sure you cover fire and emergency evacuation procedures. Tell workers whom to call and how to sound the alarm. Walk them through two different escape routes and show them the meeting point.
2. **Thou shalt obey established rules, procedures, and safety signs.** Make it clear that failure to do so is inviting a mishap. Emphasize your commitment to safety and point out that, if necessary, rules will be enforced through progressive discipline.
3. **Thou shalt wear all required personal protective equipment (PPE).** Go over the PPE that's required, as well as the hazards this equipment will protect against. Then communicate that the employee is expected to: Wear it right, Wear it every time, With no excuses.
4. **Thou shalt handle hazardous materials according to instructions.** Discuss specific substances employees are using and go over the labels and MSDSs. Cover the hazards, PPE, safe handling procedures, and emergency procedures in case of a spill. This training is vital for new employees and whenever new substances come into the workplace. Spot checks are also effective.
5. **Thou shalt operate equipment correctly.** Employees should only use equipment for which they've been trained and authorized. They should never take it upon themselves to maintain or repair equipment unless they've been expressly trained and authorized to do so. Instructions should be followed exactly, including no gloves or jewelry around machinery and exact compliance with lockout/tagout procedures.
6. **Thou shalt avoid taking safety risks.** Make it clear that it is never acceptable for employees to take shortcuts, ignore near misses, or engage in horseplay. The cost of these actions can put their own lives at risk.
7. **Thou shalt remove, repair, or report safety hazards as soon as possible.** Emphasize that everyone has a personal responsibility to correct safety problems. Communicate that you expect employees to respond immediately to hazards.
8. **Thou shalt report mishaps promptly.** Make sure employees know: What steps must be taken to report mishaps; what emergency numbers to call for help; and the location and phone number of the mishap. They should also be able to describe what happened.
9. **Thou shalt contribute to work zone safety.** Individual work areas must be kept neat and clean, and all employees should help keep common areas free from clutter and other housekeeping hazards that could result in a mishap.
10. **Thou shalt take training seriously.** Safety training is an important and ongoing process. Expect it whenever new processes or procedures are introduced, and whenever safety performance needs refreshing.



SUMMER RISK MANAGEMENT

Summer in Hampton Roads...this phrase conjures up images of barbecues, volleyball, swimming, and fun in the sun. Okay, maybe not so much sun, but summer is the time to take advantage of good weather and to take a break from the often-relentless pace of work. We need to stand back from the pressures of the mission for just a few moments to relax with family, friends, and other unit members. But...as is so often the case, behind the pleasant imagery of this “fun in the sun” scene lurk many hazards; some are minor, others catastrophic.

Last summer, we experienced numerous mishaps during the 101 Critical Days of Summer. So, this year we need to take more time and implement the Risk Management concept in our off-duty activities as well as at work. YES, off-duty stuff can and must be considered in the RM concept just as on-duty operations do. So, as we plan these summer events, we should rely on the same process we use to conduct our military operations...Risk Management.

IDENTIFY THE HAZARDS

Lets look at the hazards associated with a simple picnic:

- Weather (heat, thunderstorms, wind, and humidity).
- Location (near water, desert, forest, urban).
- Wildlife (bugs, snakes, poisonous plants, and other friendly critters).
- Activities (water activities, sports, mountain climbing, and games).
- Attendees (military, family members, children, open to the public).
- Menu (barbecue, store-bought, cooked on site, refrigeration, **alcohol**).
- Many others, situation-dependent.

ASSESS THE RISK

Then assess the impact of each hazard in terms of potential loss and severity:

- Injuries and damage due to severe weather, sunburn, etc.
- Incidents involving water, heat injuries, dehydration, POVs, etc.
- Animal bites, insect-borne diseases, skin irritations, and bothersome pests.
- Drownings, sprains, broken bones, overexertion, slips, trips & falls, etc.
- Relative health of attendees, allergic reactions.
- Food poisoning, barbecue burns, flammable liquids, increased susceptibility to heat injury due to alcohol consumption.

ANALYZE RISK CONTROL MEASURES

Once you have identified the hazards and assessed the associated risk, you should decide on some controls, which can be employed to reduce or mitigate the hazards:

- Start with a good, thorough safety briefing to all participants. (You know how your spouse and kids enjoy your safety briefings)
- Check the weather and plan accordingly. Don't take chances with summer thunderstorms. Plan for shady areas and cover in case of inclement weather. Insist on the use of suntan lotion and hats.
- Make sure people don't wander off into the water or woods.
- Use insect repellent. Get familiar with the type of local critters you may encounter and what you should do if one shows up. Talk to the medical folks about this.

- Ensure sports are played by the rules and are supervised.
- If alcoholic beverages are present (and they usually are), watch drinkers for signs of overindulgence.
- Watch young children closely.
- Consider elderly people or anyone with known pre-existing medical conditions.
- Know the rules of safe barbecuing and follow them. Have a fire extinguisher handy.
- Be careful of food, particularly meats; ensure they are continuously refrigerated prior to cooking, and that they are cooked thoroughly. Pre-cook chicken if possible.

MAKE CONTROL DECISIONS

Accept the risk, avoid the risk, reduce the risk, or spread the risk. Do not make dumb decisions.

RISK CONTROL IMPLEMENTATION

Once you select appropriate controls, use them! A plan is only good if it is followed.

SUPERVISE AND REVIEW

As always, the situation is subject to change quickly. Monitor the situation and adjust as necessary to keep things under control. Summer is a great time to have fun and we all deserve a break every now and then. From now on, use risk management to make your summer fun memorable, and safe. No one wants a summer outing to turn into a tragedy!



LAWN AND GARDEN CARE Hidden Hazards



The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) reminds consumers to practice safety and common sense when working in their yards and gardens. About 230,000 people each year are treated in hospital emergency rooms for injuries relating to various lawn and garden tools. Each year, about 75 people are killed and about 20,000 are injured on or near riding lawnmowers and garden tractors. One out of every five deaths involves a child. CPSC estimates that most of the deaths to children occurred when a child was in the path of a moving mower. "We want to do everything possible to prevent you and your family from becoming one of these statistics," said CPSC Chairman Ann Brown. "Part of our job is to make sure that the lawn and garden equipment consumers use is safe, but consumers must do their part to care for their own safety."

Take the following precautions to prevent injuries from lawn and garden equipment:

1. Be sure you know how to operate the equipment.

2. Know where the controls are and what they do.
3. Don't remove or disable guards or other safety devices.
4. Dress appropriately for the job. This includes:
 - a. Sturdy shoes with slip-resistant rubber soles.
 - b. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts.
 - c. Close fitting clothes.
 - d. Eye protection
 - e. Heavy gloves
 - f. Hearing protection when needed.
 - g. No jewelry, which can get caught in moving parts.
5. Before starting, walk around the area in which you will be working to remove any objects like sticks, glass, metal, wire and stones that could cause injury or damage equipment
6. Never take a child for a ride on a garden tractor or riding mower.
7. Keep children indoors and supervised at all times when any outdoor power equipment is being used. Young children move quickly and are attracted to mowing activity.
8. Never assume children will remain where you last saw them.
9. Be alert and turn off the mower if children enter the mowing area.
10. Use extra care when backing up or going around corners, shrubs, trees or other obstacles.
11. Never work with electric power tools in wet or damp conditions.
12. For protection against electrocution, use a ground fault circuit interrupter (GFCI). GFCIs come in several models, including a portable plug-in type.
13. Be sure that extension cords are in good condition, are rated for outdoor use, and are the proper gauge for the electrical current capacity of the tool.
14. Before making adjustments or clearing jams near moving parts, unplug electric tools and disconnect spark plug wires on gasoline-powered tools.
15. Be sure that power tools are turned off and made inoperable if they must be left unattended. This will help prevent use by children.
16. Handle gasoline carefully. Remember never to fill gas tanks while machinery is operating or when equipment is still hot. Wipe up spills. Store gas in an approved container away from the house. Finally, never smoke or use any type of flame around gasoline.



Focus on Eye Safety

Every day an estimated 1,000 eye injuries occur in American workplaces. The cost -

plumbers. Over a third of injured workers are operatives, such as assemblers, sanders,

\$300 million per year in lost production time, medical expenses, and workers' compensation.

EYE INJURY FACTS

Nearly three out of every five workers injured were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.

About 40 of the injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection that was not adequate for the task.

EYE INJURY CAUSES

Flying particles. Almost 70% of eye accidents result from flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye. Nearly three-fifths of the objects were smaller than a pinhead. Most of the particles were said to be traveling faster than a hand-thrown object when the accident occurred.

Contact with chemicals causes one-fifth of the injuries. Other accidents were caused by objects swinging from a fixed or attached position, like tree limbs, ropes, chains, or tools which were pulled into the eye while the worker was using them.

WHERE ACCIDENTS OCCUR

-- Craft work; industrial equipment operation. Potential eye hazards can be found in nearly every industry, but that more than 40% of injuries studies occurred among craft workers, like mechanics, repairers, carpenters, and

and grinding machine operators. Laborers suffered about one-fifth of the eye injuries. Almost half the injured workers were employed in manufacturing; slightly more than 20% were in construction.

PREVENTING EYE INJURIES

Always wear effective eye protection. To be effective, the eyewear must be of the appropriate type for the hazard encountered and properly fitted. For example, the BLS survey showed that 94% of the injuries to workers wearing eye protection resulted from objects or chemicals going around or under the protector. Eye protective devices should allow for air to circulate between the eye and the lens.

Nearly one-fifth of injured workers with eye protection wore face shields or welding helmets. However, only six percent of the workers injured while wearing eye protection wore goggles, which generally offer better protection for the eyes. Best protection is afforded when goggles are worn with face shields.

Better training and education. Workers injured while not wearing protective eyewear most often said they believe it was not required by the situation. About 40% of workers with eye injuries received no information on where and what kind of eyewear should be used.

Maintenance. Eye protection devices must be properly maintained. Scratched and dirty devices reduce vision, cause glare, and may contribute to accidents.