

## Risk Management Safety Bulletin

March 2004

# EYE SAFETY

For many people who go to work, the last thing they're thinking about is eye safety. But, in the blink of an eye, an accident can cause a serious eye injury or blindness. Most workers who've suffered an eye injury wore no eye protection, and of those who did, most wore the wrong kind. If you take proper precautions when using a product and wear recommended eye protection, you can prevent or reduce the severity of an accidental eye injury.

Prevention is the best way to avoid an eye injury. Read the safety instructions for any equipment or product you'll be handling. Follow the precautions and wear the recommended eye protection. Warning signs should be placed near machines, equipment or process areas that require specific eye protection. Anyone working in or passing through areas that pose eye hazards should wear eye protection.

There are several common causes for eye injuries and in all cases consult an eye care professional to make sure you're treated correctly for the injury.

- **Foreign particles** such as dust, dirt, and metal or wood chips can get into your eye can cause damage; even an eyelash can cause a painful eye irritation.
- **Bumps and blows** to the eyes can cause minor to severe eye injury.
- **Cuts** in or around the eyes could be very serious and jeopardize vision.
- **Chemicals, fumes or hot steam** can cause great damage to the eye.
- **Light burns or sparks** can cause injury that may not be felt until hours later.

It is a good practice to wash your hands often and keep them away from your eyes. Know the proper first aid response for an

eye injury so that you don't cause further damage and know where emergency phone numbers are located.

Protective eyewear is only effective when it's cared for and worn correctly. If you use protective eyewear, clean and store it properly. Scratched, broken, bent or ill-fitting eyewear should be replaced.

Eye safety is no accident. Protect your eyes from injury by following all safety instructions, correctly wearing and caring for your eye protection equipment, and seeing your optometrist for regular eye health exams. Nothing can replace the loss of an eye and a minute is all it takes to destroy your eyesight. That's the same time it takes to make sure that your eyes are properly protected.

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## *June is National safety month*

Unintentional workplace injuries and deaths are of great concern. Stricter safety and health laws and public awareness have provided safer work environments, but injuries continue to occur.

"National Safety Month" was set aside to focus on on- and off-job injuries and the resulting toll on workers and their families, in terms of lost wages and medical expenses. Employer costs are incurred from the loss of productivity or property and from increased administrative and insurance expenses.

### HELP KEEP THE WORKPLACE SAFE

**Do your part!**

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