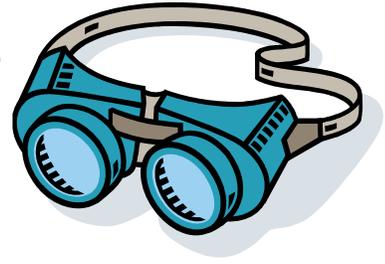


Workplace Hazards: Protecting Your Eyes and Ears

Each day more than 2,000 people suffer eye injuries at work. And noise pollution is one of the most common occupational hazards in the American workplace. You only have one pair of eyes and ears. Take care of them by following some simple precautions.



Why is Eye Safety So Important? The workplace is a leading cause of eye trauma, loss of vision, disability, and blindness. Of the 2,000 employees each day who sustain job-related eye injuries, 10 to 20 percent will be disabled due to temporary or permanent loss of vision. Proper eye protection could have reduced the severity of or prevented the injury in about 90 percent of these cases. Eye injuries can range from minor burns, cuts, and bruises to total blindness. Welding equipment, as well as other sorts of power tools and machinery, pose a big threat. Chemicals such as acids and adhesives can splash into the eyes and cause serious damage. And particles from hammering or grinding can easily fly into the eyes. The cost of such injuries is enormous, both for the worker and the American public, which covers nearly \$4 billion a year in Workers' Compensation claims and lost productivity.

Wear Proper Eye Protection - The first step to preventing any injury in the workplace is to be aware of the hazards. If possible, eliminate those hazards or reduce them by using proper eye protection. There's a wide variety of safety eyewear including safety glasses, goggles, face shields, welding helmets, and full-face respirators.

In the event of an eye injury, know where the eye wash fountain is so you can clean your eyes as quickly as possible. Get your eyes examined on a regular basis to ensure your vision is good enough to do your job safely. And, as always, use common sense.



Noise pollution in the workplace - Is your workplace so loud that you have to raise your voice to be heard? When you leave work and are in a quieter environment, do your ears feel plugged or do you hear a mild ringing or other unnatural noise? If the answer is yes, your hearing may already be at risk.

Excessive noise levels over a long period of time will damage your hearing so gradually and painlessly that you may not notice until it's too late. Sudden explosive sounds, such as gunshots, can also cause immediate damage. Approximately 30 million Americans are exposed to hazardous noise at work. For many this has resulted in permanent hearing loss.

Protecting your hearing - You can protect yourself from such hazards to minimize the risk. Wear hearing protection devices, such as ear plugs or ear muffs. Don't wait until it's too late.