

Ten ways to Prevent Eye Injuries at Work

7/01/05

According to Prevent Blindness America (PBA) nearly one million Americans have lost some degree of their sight due to an eye injury. More than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. That's more than 700,000 eye injuries each year. About 1 in 10 of these injuries require one or more missed workdays to recover and 10 and 20% will cause temporary or permanent vision loss. **Experts believe that 90 percent of these tragic eye injuries could have been prevented with the right eye protection.**

Here are 10 ways that you can help prevent an eye injury in your workplace according to PBA.

Assess For Eye Hazards

You must look closely at all Plant operations and inspect all work areas, access routes, and equipment for hazards to eyes. This will identify operations and areas that present eye hazards. Review your OSHA logs and eye injury reports as part of this assessment. Complete and document an eye hazard assessment.

Conduct Vision Tests

Poor vision can cause accidents. Add vision testing as part of your routine employee physical exams.

Provide Proper Eye Protection

Select protective eyewear that is designed for the specific task or hazard and make sure it meets OSHA standards.

Require 100% Adherence to Rules

Require 100% compliance for eye protection in all operation areas of the plant. A broad program prevents more injuries and is easier to enforce. One that targets certain departments, areas, or jobs is difficult to enforce.

Get the Proper Fit

It's important that eyewear fits properly and is comfortable. Have someone on site that is trained to fit and make the necessary repairs. Require each worker to be in charge of his or her own gear.

Plan For An Emergency

Train employees in first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Place eyewash stations that are easy to get to, especially where chemicals are used.

Educate, Coach and Teach Eye Safety

Make eye safety and proper eye protection an important part of your training program and orientation of new hires.

Must Support Program From the Top

Management support is shown by always wearing the proper protective eyewear. This management support is key to having a successful eye safety program.

Review and Update As Needed

Always review incidents promptly and update your accident prevention policies accordingly. Your goal is no eye injuries or accidents.

Put It In Writing and Communicate

Once your program is created, put it in writing. Review the requirements at least annually. Display a copy of the policy in work areas and employee gathering areas. Include a review of the policy in new employee orientation.