

Preventing Eye Injuries: Putting Eye Safety in Focus

Eye sight is something nearly everyone of us takes for granted during the course of our day. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Standards (BLS) injuries cost American companies over \$924 million in workers compensation costs and nearly \$4 billion in lost productivity and wages each and every year.

A survey a few years ago by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission found that over 11,000 eye injuries were caused by welding equipment and welding related work, with close to 10,000 injuries caused by commonly used shop equipment such as grinders and buffers.

The potential for eye injury hazards can be found in just about every type of industry today, however the majority of injuries occur in the manufacturing and related service industries such as mechanics, plumbers, welders, and other similar occupations. Eye related injuries are one of the easiest to avoid and protect against. And the changes necessary to help prevent injuries are often available at a relatively low cost, particularly when considered against the potential cost of an injury.

Before selecting what is the best form of eye protection, you should perform a full assessment of both the work environment and the specific work performed for hazards. Be looking for hazards that could be caused by impact, heat, chemicals, dust or dirt as well as job specific hazards such as radiation or lasers. Once you have an idea of what you need to protect against, you can then select the best form of eye protection for your needs. Options range from safety glasses to goggles to even full face shields or a combination of two or more different items. A good safety professional can help you select the best protections available and review the price options with you.

All safety glasses and goggles should be certified by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and bear the Z81.7 certification stamp somewhere on either the lens or the frames. The Z81.7 is your proof that the material used to make your eye protection is able to withstand the impact from a direct hit under common pressures. It may be tempting to purchase eye protection found from a discount retailer on the internet, however buyer beware. Often those items are not made to the Z81.7 standards and will not provide proper protection if the wearer is hit with a high impact projectile.

It is also vital that you ensure that you have a safety policy in place that is enforced at all times requiring the use of eye protection in high hazard areas. A recent survey of eye injuries found that nearly 3 out of 5 employees injured were not wearing eye protection at the time of their injury. The same study found that 90 percent of eye injuries could have been prevented if proper eye protection had been worn.

OSHA standards require that employees be provided and wear the proper eye protection when working in areas where an injury may occur. Help avoid a costly fine by being proactive to assess, provide and ensure that all employees wear eye protection when necessary.

The sales professionals from Maine Oxy, together with Atlantic Safety and Supply can help you in selecting and stocking the best eye protection solutions for your needs. Contact us today to get starting in making sure eye injuries are protected against in your business.

***Disclaimer:** This safety tip sheet is intended to provide basic safety and health recommendations to our customers. While every effort is made to provide timely and accurate advice, it is not a guarantee of total compliance to all applicable regulations. Consult the proper regulatory authorities for any and all specific requirements for your location.*