



Give Exhaust Fumes The Air

It doesn't take thousands of vehicle engines spewing exhaust to poison indoor air; just one vehicle may do it, if the work environment is not properly ventilated with fresh air. Even short term exposure to engine exhaust gases can be hazardous. If workers complain of tiredness and headaches after a few hours in exhaust-fouled air, it could be a sign of exhaust-fume poisoning. Test immediately if dangerous concentrations of exhaust fumes are suspected. Headache, nausea, fatigue, and eye irritation from poisoned air can affect a worker's judgment and lead to unsafe job performance.

During winter, when natural ventilation is restricted, offset the buildup of hazardous concentrations of carbon monoxide and other toxic exhaust gases by increasing the ventilation. Good ventilation is the process of introducing clean air into a closed space so it can mix with the inside air and dilute the contaminants. Another method to avoid hazardous gas buildup is to insure that engine exhaust gases are not released into the work area. This can be done by installing exhaust control devices on vehicles or by using blowers to force air outside the work area.

There are no simple answers to space ventilation. Since each space varies in size, shape, and function, there is no single set of rules that applies to every situation. The decision for selecting the most appropriate method of ventilation should be

based on: the size and shape of the space, its previous contents, the existence of natural drafts, the number and location of any openings, and the nature of any contaminant-producing tasks that may be performed in the space.

When working in closed spaces, workers should be aware of inadequate oxygen or the presence of asphyxiates, toxic gases or vapors in the air. They should be especially aware in confined spaces, storage rooms, dead ends of aiseways, and in cold storage rooms, where dangerous concentration of fumes can build up quickly. It is wise to check the air periodically. Check even large indoor work areas to make sure there is enough fresh air to dilute exhaust gases. It takes a lot of air to dilute exhaust gases from a single vehicle operating full time.

Giving exhaust fumes the air can make it safe for the worker who must be indoors where vehicles operate. Good ventilation produces a safe level of oxygen so everyone can breathe easy. □



Hands On Safety

Next to your eyes, your hands are probably the most important part of your body when it comes to doing your work. They're involved in almost everything you do. Yet many of the things you do with your hands are done without any deliberate thought. Your hands have no fear. They'll go anyplace they're sent and they only act as wisely as the person they belong to. So before you use your hands, think of their safekeeping.

Here are the most common types of hand injuries and what you can do to prevent them.

Traumatic injuries often occur from the careless use of machinery or tools. Hands and fingers get caught, pinched or crushed in chains, wheels, rollers or gears. They are punctured, torn or cut by spiked or jagged tools and edges that

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This State Contract Agency Safety News is produced by the Safety and Health Services Department of State Fund to assist clients in their loss control efforts. Information or recommendations contained in this publication were obtained from sources believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is only advisory and does not presume to be exhaustive or inclusive of all workplace hazards or situations.

Hands On Safety

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shear or chop. Safety precautions should include using shields, guards, gloves or safety locks; handling knives or tools with care; and keeping hands, jewelry, and clothing away from moving parts.

Contact injuries result from contact with solvents, acids, cleaning solutions, flammable liquids, and other substances that can cause burns or injure hand tissue. To protect against these injuries, read product labels and Material Safety Data Sheets, use the right glove or barrier cream, and wash your hands frequently.

Repetitive motion injuries happen when tasks require repeated, rapid hand movements for long periods of time. Change your grip, hand position or motion. If possible, rotate tasks to give your hands a rest.

You can protect yourself from hand injuries by remembering the following basic safety rules.

- Recognize hazards
- Think through each job before you do it
- Follow safety rules
- Avoid shortcuts
- If an accident happens, seek prompt treatment
- Report injuries to your supervisor

Healthy hands are built to last a lifetime. Injuries can last a lifetime too. Be aware of your hand placement and take precautions to guard them. □



THE EXPERT'S CORNER

ERGONOMICS:
IGNORING IT MAY COST YOU

Poor ergonomics may be costing your company more than you think. The workers' compensation cost alone of injuries can be staggering. Shown below are average claim costs for several injury types. This is based on extensive data from the California Workers' Compensation Institute that reflects 70% of all California workers' compensation carrier claims reported from 1996–2000. These figures have not been adjusted into today's treatment costs, so they are likely to be understated.

These amounts are often dwarfed by indirect costs and productivity/quality costs. The indirect costs of an injury are reported to be 1.1 to 4.5 times the injury costs (Fed/OSHA Safety Pays) and include the following:

- Time lost by supervisors and managers to assist the injured employee, investigate the injury, complete workers' compensation paperwork, and select and train a replacement worker. Also included is production downtime, lost time of the injured employee, overtime to cover for the injured employee, etc.

The productivity and quality losses associated with poor ergonomics can be staggering as well, adding another 2 to 10 times the workers' compensation costs (Auburn Engineers). Examples include:

- Poor workstation design can add extra motions. Reaching, bending, and twisting are not only harmful on a repetitive basis, but they are also time-consuming.
- Difficult tasks often result in high worker turnover rates. High turnover leads to higher reject rates and added training costs.
- Poor tool design or selection can cause harmful postures and excessive forces, leading to improper assembly and slowed production.
- Excessive forces, repetitions, and poor postures can lead to fatigue. Fatigued workers produce less and make more errors.

Clearly, the cost of poor ergonomics goes far beyond the injury cost and taking steps to improve ergonomics is within employers' control and in their financial interest.

In the end, employers are faced with a choice to either live with a poorly designed workstation or correct it. While neither choice may appear very attractive, the cost to live with it is likely to be much higher than you think. □

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Injury	Cost all claims	Cost lost time	Cost w/surgery
Low Back Strain/Sprain	\$10,783	\$17,107	\$85,350
Shoulder Strain/Sprain	\$11,901	\$14,094	\$51,733
Wrist Strain/Sprain	\$13,948	\$16,073	\$48,898
Carpal Tunnel Syndrome	\$20,912	\$25,508	\$46,982

Tailgate Topic

Practice Good Housekeeping

Almost everyone prefers cleanliness and neatness to filth and clutter. But whose responsibility is good housekeeping? It's everyone's responsibility. Good housekeeping is an essential part of every safety program. When a workplace is clean, orderly, and free of obstruction, work gets done quicker, safer, and more efficiently. Workers feel better, think better, do better work, and increase the quantity and quality of their work.

Good housekeeping isn't just cleaning up once a week or even once a day. It's the result of cleaning up all the time. It includes respecting "wet floor" signs and immediately cleaning up spilled liquids and grease or dropped food. It involves keeping tools and equipment clean and in good shape and returning them to their proper place when not in use. It means sweeping or picking up broken glass properly and keeping hoses, cables, and electric wires bundled when not in use. It also means closing open cabinet or file drawers and protecting sharp corners or removing protruding nails.

Good housekeeping leads to lower accident rates. Fewer injuries occur when workspaces are clear and clean. Cleared areas reduce tripping, slipping, bumping, being struck by, and caught-between hazards.

Good housekeeping practices lead to increased production. If activity areas are clean and orderly, workers can do their jobs more efficiently without unnecessary delays. Production runs smoothly if workers can quickly find and get to materials and supplies. Keeping floor spaces unobstructed allows workers freedom of movement, better traffic flow, and easy access to equipment, orders or supplies. Poor housekeeping can also cause fires, help spread them, impede the effort to put them out or prevent the safe exit from a fire.

Finally, good housekeeping contributes to higher employee morale and decreased turnover. It's a fact that a clean and orderly workplace lessens worker frustration, increases comfort, makes work more enjoyable, and improves worker attitude. Putting things where they belong doesn't waste time — it saves time. Once good housekeeping practices are in place, it takes less time and effort to keep things that way. So, make good housekeeping a part of your work day. □



Temas de Seguridad

Practique la buena limpieza

Casi todos prefieren la limpieza y el orden a la suciedad y el desorden. ¿Pero de quién es la responsabilidad de tener una buena limpieza? Es responsabilidad de todos. La buena limpieza es una parte esencial de todo programa de seguridad. Cuando un lugar de trabajo está limpio, ordenado y libre de obstrucciones, el trabajo se realiza con más rapidez, más seguridad y más eficiencia. Los trabajadores se sienten mejor, piensan mejor, hacen mejor trabajo y aumenta la cantidad y la calidad de su trabajo.

La buena limpieza no es solamente limpiar una vez por semana o incluso una vez al día. Es el resultado de limpiar todo el tiempo. Incluye respetar las señales de "piso mojado" y la limpieza inmediata de los derrames de líquidos o grasa o de alimentos caídos. Se trata de mantener las herramientas y el equipo limpios y en buenas condiciones y el volver a colocarlos en su lugar cuando no se usen. Significa barrer o recoger correctamente el vidrio quebrado y mantener las mangueras, los cables y los alambres eléctricos enrollados cuando no se usen. También quiere decir cerrar los cajones de los archiveros que se abran y proteger las esquinas afiladas o quitar los clavos que estén salidos.

La buena limpieza conduce a una menor incidencia de accidentes. Ocurren menos lesiones cuando el espacio de trabajo está limpio y despejado. Las áreas despejadas

reducen los tropezones, los resbalones, los golpes, la posibilidad de que algo le caiga encima, de que tire algo y de quedar atrapado entre peligros. Las prácticas de buena limpieza llevan a una mayor producción. Si las áreas de actividad están limpias y ordenadas, los trabajadores pueden realizar sus trabajos más eficazmente sin demoras innecesarias. La producción se realiza sin problemas si los empleados pueden encontrar y obtener con rapidez los materiales y los suministros. Mantener los espacios del piso despejados permite a los trabajadores tener libertad de movimiento, circular mejor y tener fácil acceso al equipo, los pedidos y los suministros. Una mala limpieza también puede causar incendios, ayudar a que se extiendan, impedir los esfuerzos para combatirlos o evitar la salida segura en caso de un incendio.

Por último, la buena limpieza contribuye a que los empleados tengan la moral más alta y reduce la rotación frecuente de personal. Es un hecho que un lugar de trabajo limpio y ordenado reduce la frustración de los empleados, hace más agradable el trabajo y mejora la actitud de los trabajadores. Colocar las cosas en su lugar no es un desperdicio de tiempo; sino que ahorra tiempo. Una vez que se establecen unas prácticas de buena limpieza, se requiere menos tiempo y esfuerzo mantener las cosas así. Así que, haga de la buena limpieza una parte de su día de trabajo. □



Please forward to the person responsible for your safety program

S T A T E C O M P E N S A T I O N I N S U R A N C E F U N D

Reporting Work-Related Injuries

State Fund's Claims Reporting Center (1-866-794-2510) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for policyholders to report injuries as soon as they occur. Agents will do the necessary paper-work to get the claim started and refer the injured to the designated physician or provider.

Within 8 hours of any serious illness or injury (requiring hospitalization over 24 hours, other than for medical observation or where there is permanent employee disfigurement) or death occurring in the workplace or in connection with employment, employers must report the incident to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health. □

Required Employer Responsibilities

California law requires that:

"Every employer...shall post and keep posted in a conspicuous location frequented by employees and where (it) may be easily read by employees during the hours of the workday, a notice which shall state the name of (the) current compensation insurance carrier..."

The notice must also contain information regarding employee rights and responsibilities and must

"...be posted in both English and Spanish where there are Spanish-speaking employees."

Additionally, the law requires employers to advise their new employees, within the first pay period, of their right to workers' compensation including their right to predesignate a personal physician and provide the predesignation form. Failure to comply with these requirements could result in employer penalties or misdemeanor charges.

If you would like free copies, in English or Spanish, of the required posting notice, the brochure explaining an employee's workers' compensation rights or the physician predesignation form, call State Fund's toll-free customer service number at 1-877-405-4545. □

Check out State Fund's Loss Control "Safety Seminars"
<http://www.scif.com/products/default.htm>

Save Money On Safety Products

Brenton Safety, a distributor of safety equipment and products, will provide a 20% discount* off of their competitively low catalog prices to State Fund State Agency clients. To obtain the discount, you must first call Brenton Safety to set up an account at 1-800-733-4333. To view the online catalog, visit the Brenton Safety website at www.brentonsafety.com. To receive a free catalog, order by phone or request assistance, call Brenton Safety at 1-800-733-4333. □

**The discount is not applicable to freight or shipping costs or products manufactured by TSI.*

State Compensation Insurance Fund (State Fund) has contracted with Brenton Safety to provide our State Agency clients the opportunity to buy safety equipment at a reduced rate. State Agency clients are not required to participate in this voluntary purchase opportunity and State Fund will not reimburse State Agency clients in any way for their participation. Brenton Safety is an entity totally separate from State Fund. State Fund is not a party to any agreement between Brenton Safety and a State Agency client to purchase safety equipment and State Fund has no liability therewith. State Fund further makes no warranty as to the safety equipment provided.

"Kaiser On-the-Job"

Kaiser Permanente operates numerous Occupational Health Centers in both Northern and Southern California, which are staffed by physicians specially trained in industrial medicine. This program is known as "Kaiser On-the-Job."

Additionally, State Fund has a contracted proprietary preferred provider network (PPN) of carefully selected clinics and doctors throughout the state who specialize in treating industrial injuries.

The PPN is a network of physicians who have been selected and qualified according to State Fund standards by our district offices. They are conveniently located throughout the state. State Contract Agencies may select one or several of these providers (in the case of multiple locations) and direct the medical care of injured employees to these facilities for the first 30 days of care.

Both these networks of providers are dedicated to delivering prompt, appropriate, and high quality medical care. □

CONTACT YOUR NEAREST STATE FUND CONTRACT OFFICE

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Eureka	(707) 443-9721
Oxnard	(805) 988-8600
Redding	(530) 223-7000
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Or visit our website at:
www.scif.com/statecontracts

Published by
State Compensation Insurance Fund
Safety and Health Services Department
Editor: Judy Kerry
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