



# Safety News

ISSUE TWO, 2009

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

## Cal/OSHA Inspections

Cal/OSHA inspections are often unannounced. Start planning now to present a competent, organized, and compliant response to a Cal/OSHA inspection. Designate and train staff on how to respond correctly to Cal/OSHA inspectors.

Keep your Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) organized and up to date and make sure employees know what it is and where to get it.

A Cal/OSHA inspection results from a case of imminent danger or catastrophe that caused death or serious physical harm such as a fatal accident or hospitalization of 3 or more employees. Inspections also target high-hazard businesses with loss rates at or above Bureau of Labor Statistics averages. A confidential worker complaint of an imminent danger can also trigger an inspection. However, if the complaint is not considered serious, an employer might simply receive a letter citing the concerns and requesting a written investigative follow-up report with documentation to be returned by a certain date. Note: it's against the law to retaliate against a worker for reporting safety hazards and concerns.

Upon arrival, the Cal/OSHA inspectors will present identification and request permission from a management representative to conduct a site inspection. Instruct your receptionist and/or security personnel who should be notified of the visit.

Inspectors will wait on site about one hour for management contact. They will conduct an opening conference to explain the reason for the visit. Inspection walkthroughs may include your entire facility, or a targeted work area. Inspectors have

the right to walk around the building (accompanied), interview workers in private, and document hazards with photos and measurements.

Be courteous and friendly to the inspector. Limit the inspection focus to only the documents and facility

areas listed in the opening conference. Accompany the inspector at all times, though private employee interviews can be arranged in controlled access conference rooms. Provide neutral, fact-based answers to questions; don't offer opinions or guess at answers. Don't argue with an inspector. Also, don't agree with comments as they may be incorrect. Don't make jokes about health and safety, worksite, or personnel matters. Keep notes, photos, and records during the visit. If the inspector takes measurements or readings, you should take the same measurements and readings simultaneously.

After the walkthrough, the inspector should conduct a closing conference to provide inspection results, next steps, and timelines. Inspectors may request protocols, work procedures, or other documents. □



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## The Expert's Corner

# Going Green With Office Lighting

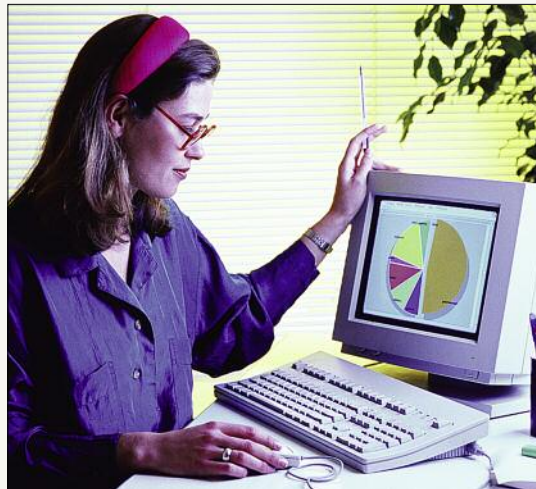
In a standard office, lighting accounts for about 60% of a company's electrical costs. Despite recent efforts to make offices more energy efficient, surprisingly the majority are still overlit for computer work. According to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), about 30 foot candles (fc) of surrounding light for monitor viewing are all that is necessary for healthy computer use. Any more than this can create glare and reflections on the monitor screen, which can result in awkward postures and symptoms like headaches, nausea and fatigue in the user. Yet the typical office ranges from 60-100 fc, far more than is recommended, which results in a correspondingly larger consumption of energy as well.

Some simple steps companies can take to both make their lighting environment healthier for employees and to reduce their energy costs:

If your company hasn't done so already, replace all fluorescent fixture ballasts with

high-frequency electronic ballasts and full-spectrum T-8 tubes. This will substantially reduce your energy costs.

Better yet, replace those ballasts with a dimmable type, so that your entire system can be lowered down to the preferred 30 fc range with ease.



Maintaining a balanced overhead lighting system is important, so simply turning off some fixtures or removing certain tubes are not good options, as these can create hot spots or dark areas and electrical safety

hazards. Some systems are wired so that one wall switch controls the center tube in a three-tube fixture. If yours is set up this way, simply turning off this center tube can effectively reduce consumption by a third and result in an overall reduction in illumination of 20-30 fc.

Another simple energy saving technique in warmer weather is to close the blinds on the south and west facing sides of your building before leaving for the weekend. This will minimize the heat gain your HVAC system must overcome when the system comes back up to speed on Monday. □

*Jeff Tiedeman, an Ergonomics Consultant with State Fund, is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP), and a Board-Certified Industrial Ergonomist (CIE). He has done extensive research on specialized topics related to ergonomics, including illumination in the workplace and seating design, and has written articles and spoken at conferences on these subjects.*

## Protect Your Multi-Lingual Workers

Do you know the language of your workforce? Are you getting important safety training messages and workplace communications across to your limited- or non-English speaking workers? From procedures and policies to critical hazard warnings and emergency instructions, make sure the message is understood by all your workers.

Cal/OSHA requires that employers provide safety training to their workers in a language they can understand. Upon employment,

assess each worker's verbal and written English understanding. If workers are not English-proficient, instruct in their primary language, provide a translator, or have translated materials. If you translate or train in another language, cover the same materials and amount of detail as was presented in English. Use interactive training to get hands-on experience and provide employees a chance to ask questions.

Communication is key in getting information

across to any worker, but a multilingual workforce poses a challenge. If you're instructing non-English-speaking workers, use methods to make sure they understand you. Give clear, simple verbal instructions and list your instructions in the order that you want them done. Ask workers to repeat instructions back to you. Ask them to demonstrate the technique they've been taught. If the job requires technical terms teach workers what the words mean.

*Continued on next page*

# Focus On Young Worker Safety

Summer employment and after school jobs teach young workers responsibility, provide them with extra spending money, and in some cases, supplement family income. To employers, they can be a necessary and valuable addition for work production. But if not properly trained, jobs can put young workers at risk for injuries.

Employers play a key role in creating a safe work environment and preventing injuries to young workers. Employers need to know and comply with child labor laws that apply to their business. The law outlines restrictions regarding the type of job workers under the age of 18 can and cannot do to protect their health and safety. It also sets the hours that youths may work, both during the school year and during the summer. At minimum, employers are required to provide a safe and healthful workplace, give detailed instructions on how to do a job properly; train young workers to put safety first, and provide adequate supervision. Employers should be aware of their responsibility to protect

the youth they employ and to understand the potential for tragedy if laws are not followed.

Young workers have responsibilities too. They should participate in training programs related to their jobs; inform their supervisors when doing a task for the first time; ask questions if clarification is needed, be aware of their physical limitations; and report any hazards to their supervisors. Young workers also have the right to refuse to do a job if it is immediately dangerous to their life or health. With certain exceptions, a youth under 18 who takes a job must have a work permit issued by the school district.

State Fund wants to ensure that introductory workplace experiences will instill in our youths an understanding and awareness of job safety and health that will carry throughout their careers. Find safety publication material for workers, employees, parents, and other organizations by visiting <http://www.dir.ca.gov/YoungWorker/YoungWorkersMain.html> or call the toll-free Worker Information Hotline at (866) 924-9757. □

## Continued from previous page

Safety directions and hazard signs need pictures and words that all workers can understand. And, employers and supervisors should confirm that every worker understands them. If the safety and hazard signs contain only words, translate them in the primary language of your workforce to ensure everyone gets the message.

Workplace documents that must be translated include hazard warning signs, lockout-tagout devices and signs, company safety policies and procedures, equipment manuals, and instruction booklets. Provide material safety data sheets (MSDS) in appropriate languages so your workers know how to properly handle, store, and dispose of chemicals. When you have materials translated, ask a



bilingual reader to review them for mistakes.

Workers should understand the hazards and safety procedures of their particular work location or process. Explain emergency procedures, contact phone numbers, and warning words such as, “fire,” “danger,” and “look out!” Identify bilingual workers that can serve as interpreters on the job site, during training or act as resources

for reviewing written materials. Make sure workers know who is bilingual on site. If you're not sure whether a worker understands the safety or hazard communication, locate the person that can translate for you or the material that can accurately convey the message. □

# June Is National Safety Month

Accidents and resulting injuries take their toll not only with the tragic price of human suffering but also with the monumental costs of economic capital in lost wages, productivity or property, and in increased medical, administrative, and insurance expenses. In an effort to raise awareness about how to stay healthy and safe both on- and off-the-job, the National Safety Council (NSC) has designated June as National Safety Month.

Each of the four weeks in June focuses on a specific safety topic, which includes some of our nation's most pressing safety risks, according to research. The following link to NSC's website <http://www.nsc.org/NSM/> provides detailed information on each week's activities, along with posters and tip sheets for employers, designed to help develop employee safety recognition.

- **Week 1 – Teen Driving**
- **Week 2 – Falls (in the workplace and at home)**
- **Week 3 – Overexertion (in the workplace and at home)**
- **Week 4 – Distracted Driving (primarily from cell phone talking and texting)**

We hope employers will join with the National Safety Council for this National Safety Month and do their part to reduce the number of accidental injuries and deaths not only for the month of June but for all year...every year. □

# Safety Topic

Safety News

State Compensation Insurance Fund

Issue Two, 2009



## Safe Handling Of Food And Beverage Products

**F**ood and beverage handling can involve a variety of actions that, without proper precautions, can lead to an injury or illness. Know the hazards of your job and get safety training on all activities and equipment.

Start by dressing appropriately for your job. Wear close-fitting clothing, cover or secure long hair, and keep loose jewelry in your locker. Because temperatures may vary in hot kitchens, cold refrigeration areas, and in other indoors or out situations, dress according to the environmental conditions and use all recommended protective equipment.

Continual tasks such as cutting, washing, kneading, sorting, or delivering food or beverage products can lead to repetitive motion injuries. Rotate work tasks to prevent overuse of muscle groups and, when possible, take periodic rest breaks to give your muscles and body parts a chance to recover. If standing or sitting for long periods, wear comfortable shoes, use a foot rest or anti-fatigue mat, and periodically change positions.

Practice proper techniques for lifting or moving food and beverage products to prevent strains and sprains. Lift with your legs, keep your back straight, and face the direction you are going. Get help with heavy loads or separate them into smaller, more manageable sizes; use a mechanical lift, cart, or dolly, if available.

Automated or moveable equipment and machinery can pose a risk of cut/caught/crush injuries. Be aware of hand placement, when the equipment or machinery is active; never reach into or around moving parts.

Assure powered equipment is turned off and use lockout/blockout before you clear a jam, service or maintain it. Keep equipment properly guarded, cleaned, sharp, serviced, and stored.



In areas prone to wetness, wear slip-resistant footwear. Keep wet floors to a minimum by installing floor drains and mopping or squeegeeing floors frequently. Non-slip floor coatings and rubber matting reduce water puddling and increase traction.

Handle glass containers with care. Be alert to broken glass when washing, storing, or delivering. Clean up broken glass using safety gloves and a broom with dustpan.

If you are injured on the job, get proper first aid treatment and report it to your supervisor. Anyway you make, bake, or serve it, safety is important in food and beverage handling.

### TOPIC REVIEW

Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Location \_\_\_\_\_

Attended By \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Safety Recommendations

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Please forward to the person responsible for your safety program

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News about Occupational Safety and Health in Trades & Services

Issue Two, 2009

## Employer Education Series

State Fund continues to promote community educational outreach by increasing the quantity and frequency of employer seminars. These seminars are produced and sponsored by State Fund and are open to State Fund policyholders. The seminar topics cover all aspects of worker's compensation and are offered statewide.

As part of State Fund's Employer Education Series, the local State Fund Loss Control departments offer safety seminars dedicated to loss prevention. They feature safety training targeted to specific industries and safety topics of interest to California employers. Various programs in the series are developed in conjunction with State Fund insured Group Programs and external affiliates and partners. Some of these partners are occupational safety and health providers such as Cal/OSHA Consultation Service, the Department of Health Services, and the University of California.

The goal of State Fund's Employer Education Series is to present valuable information from recognized safety and health experts to enable employers to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace injuries, facilitate regulatory compliance, and increase business profits.

The program venues provide the opportunity for attendees to have their workplace safety questions immediately and personally answered by industry experts. The typically half-day seminars are usually held at regional State Fund offices. To learn what programs are scheduled in your area, visit [www.scif.com](http://www.scif.com) and click on Seminars. □

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## Reporting Work-Related Injuries

State Fund's Claims Reporting Center (1-888-222-3211) 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 paperwork 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. □

This Trades & Services 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. Permission to reprint articles subject to approval by State Compensation Insurance Fund.

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