

Top Workplace Hazards

Each year, nearly 6,000 workers are killed on the job in the United States. Another 5.7 million are injured -- nearly 230,000 of them are teens. And tens of thousands of people suffer work-related psychological disorders. Don't become one of these statistics. Be aware of the dangers at work. Here are some of the most common occupational hazards and what you can do to protect yourself.

Chemical Hazards

Health hazards can arise from exposure to a wide variety of chemical substances in the workplace. These dangers can come in the form of solids, liquids, vapors, gases, dust, fumes, and corrosives. They can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed into the body. Whether you work in an office building, a manufacturing plant, or on a farm, chemical hazards could pose a serious health risk. It is your employer's responsibility to keep the threat to safe levels and provide appropriate safety protection.

Fire

Any workplace is susceptible to the risk of fire. Know where fire extinguishers are stored and participate in company fire drills. Most importantly, know your emergency escape route. It could save your life.

Over-exertion and Stress

You have the most personal control over preventing this occupational hazard. "Repetitive use injury" is the fastest growing type of injury in the workplace. It is caused by repeating the same actions or maintaining the same position for long periods of time. These injuries involve the hand, wrist, forearm, shoulder, and back. They result from a wide range of occupations, including use of a computer keyboard (often leads to carpal tunnel syndrome), product packaging, sewing, heaving, scrubbing, electronic assembly, stamping, sorting, and carrying. Stress, both physical and emotional, is a major factor.

Electrical Hazards

Electrical hazards can be prevented by avoiding the use of worn or frayed power cords. Keep a safe distance (at least 10 feet) from energized power lines. Ensure that power tools and electrical equipment are grounded and in good working order before use.

Accidental Falls and Flying Objects

Falls from high places are a common hazard in certain jobs, such as construction. Use a personal harness or install guardrails or a safety net to minimize injury. Protect yourself from flying, falling, or collapsing objects by wearing a hard hat or other safety gear.

Confined Spaces

Explosion, poisoning, asphyxiation, and extreme temperatures are hazards associated with working in confined spaces, such as a sewer, tank, vault, or other compartment. Ensure your area is properly ventilated and reduce the risk.

<http://www.safety.com/articles/top-workplace-hazards.html>