

Workplace Hazards: Protecting Your Eyes

Each day more than 2,000 people suffer eye injuries at work. You only have one pair of eyes. Take care of them by following some simple precautions.

Why is Eye Safety So Important?

The workplace is a leading cause of eye trauma, loss of vision, disability, and blindness. Of the 2,000 employees each day who sustain job-related eye injuries, 10 to 20 percent will be disabled due to temporary or permanent loss of vision. Experts believe that proper eye protection could have reduced the severity of or prevented the injury in about 90 percent of these cases.

Eye injuries can range from minor burns, cuts, and bruises to total blindness. Welding equipment, as well as other sorts of power tools and machinery, pose a big threat. Chemicals such as acids and adhesives can splash into the eyes and cause serious damage. And particles from hammering or grinding can easily fly into the eyes. The cost of such injuries is enormous, both for the worker and the American public, which covers nearly \$4 billion a year in worker's compensation claims and lost productivity.

Wear Proper Eye Protection

The first step to preventing any injury in the workplace is to be aware of the hazards. If possible, eliminate those hazards or reduce them by using proper eye protection. There's a wide variety of safety eyewear including safety glasses, goggles, face shields, welding helmets, and full-face respirators. Your boss should choose which one for you to use depending on the particular hazards in your workplace. If he hasn't, ask him about it. Don't wait until it's too late.

In the event of an eye injury, know where the eye wash fountain is so you can clean your eyes as quickly as possible. Get your eyes examined on a regular basis to ensure your vision is good enough to do your job safely. And, as always, use common sense.

Think, work and live safe!!