



“TOOLBOX TALKS” SERIES



EYE PROTECTION

Eyes: Use them—don’t lose them!

- according to the Centers for Disease Control, about 2,000 U.S. workers each day have a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment. About one-third of these injuries are treated in hospital emergency departments, and more than 100 of these injuries result in one or more days of lost work.
- construction workers have one of the highest eye-injury rates of any profession.
- particles of dust, metal, wood, slag, drywall, cement, etc. are the most common sources of eye injuries.
- even minor eye injuries can cause life-long vision problems and suffering. A simple scratch from sawdust, cement or drywall can cause corneal erosion that is recurrently painful.
- hammering on metal (which gives off metal slivers) and the rebounding of the ordinary nail are two of the most common causes of vision loss in construction workers.

Potential Eye Hazards

- hammering, grinding, sanding and masonry work that may produce particles
- handling chemicals can lead to splashes in the eye
- wet or powdered cement in the eye can cause a chemical burn
- welding leads to exposure to arcs and flashes (intense UV radiation) for welders, helpers and bystanders
- dusty or windy conditions can lead to particles in the eye
- eye injuries can result from simply passing through an area where work is being performed
- coworkers around or above you may generate a hazard

Three-Part Eye Safety Strategy

- 1 - Use engineering controls (best) such as machine guards that prevent the escape of particles or welding curtains for arc-flash protection
- 2 - Use administrative controls (good) such as making certain areas off-limits unless that is your work-assignment area, or providing safe passageways around active work zones
- 3 - Use the proper protective eyewear (required, but doesn’t remove all risk). All safety eyewear must have “Z87” or “Z87+” marked on the frame and, in some cases, the lens.

Let’s talk about our policy regarding when eye protection must be worn

- what are the processes for enforcement
- how and where safety glasses can be acquired
- how to get replacement safety glasses
- what to do when eye protection that usually provided is missing

