

GET PROPER SLEEP

SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Every March, most Americans welcome the switch to daylight saving time because of the longer days, but also dread losing an hour of sleep after they move their clocks forward. Now a new study shows that losing just an hour of sleep could pose some dangerous consequences for those in hazardous work environments. This impacts us not only when we change to clocks, but anytime we don't get the sleep we need.

According to the September 2009 issue of the Journal of Applied Psychology, which is published by the American Psychological Association.

“One hour of lost sleep may not seem like a lot. But our findings suggest it could have an impact on people's ability to stay alert on the job and prevent serious injuries,” said the article's lead author, Christopher Barnes, PhD. Barnes and co-author David Wagner, PhD, were both doctoral students in organizational behavior at Michigan State University when they conducted this research.

On average, there were 3.6 more injuries on the Mondays following the switch to daylight saving time compared to other days, and 2,649 more days of work were lost as a result of those injuries. That's approximately a 68 percent increase in lost work days. In their analysis, the researchers controlled for weekends and holidays. Work experience did not appear to play a role in the number of injuries suffered.

So, today as we go out to work, take a moment and realize that statistically you may not be at the top of your game. Your awareness of hazards may be down. Take extra time today in evaluating the tasks to be done prior to doing them. Take a minute and do a safety check to ensure you don't become one of these statistics.

GOOD HYGIENE

SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Most of us learned the basics of good personal hygiene from our mothers when we were children. She started us on good hygiene with the simple rule of washing our hands before we ate. As we have grown older, some of us may have drifted away from our mother's wise advise.

In today's chemical laden workplaces, being even more conscientious about hygiene is the smart thing to do. Even though washing our hands is a simple and logical task, it's still commonly overlooked. What is on your hands gets ingested. How many times have you seen fellow workers smoke a cigarette while their hands were covered with paint or grease? How about the workers who eat their lunch without washing their hands? Not one of us would intentionally eat paint, or dip our cigarette into the paint bucket. Even so, that is basically what is happening when you eat your sandwich or smoke a cigarette without washing your hands.

In addition to tobacco, smokers may be inhaling toxic substances that have been placed on the cigarette from their hands. Remember, when paints, solvents or most any chemical is heated or burned, its chemical makeup is changed.

Cleaning your skin with solvents is never a good practice. Mechanics who use a solvent to clean their hands are setting themselves up for a case of dermatitis or possibly becoming sensitized to the chemical or solvent. Before using the solvent to clean with, think "what is the purpose of a solvent?" A solvent's purpose is to cut grease. When it is used without protection such as gloves or barrier creams, it is degreasing the protective oils from your skin.

Clean clothing is a part of good hygiene. Maintaining good personal hygiene includes the clothes worn to work. A worker wearing oily, greasy clothing, or clothes that have toxic chemicals spilled on them, is likely to experience irritating rashes, boils or other skin problems. Work clothing should be changed daily. A daily shower and clean clothing reduces the chances of skin problems. Remember, dirty clothes and skin carry chemicals to your home and family.

First-aid begins with cleanliness. When we get a sliver, a nick, or a cut we typically go to the first-aid kit. We grab an adhesive bandage, quickly put it on, and go back to work. Several days later we wonder why the small injury is inflamed and infected. Don't ignore small injuries like these. The wounded area should be washed with soap and water before the bandage goes on. Possibly an antiseptic should be placed on the wound as well. This simple trick you first learned from your mom, helps to keep the wound from becoming contaminated.

To also help prevent a small injury from getting to be a serious health hazard, keep your tetanus booster current. A small needle stick every 10 years is a small price to pay, in the prevention of infection.

Good personal hygiene all boils down to common sense. A daily shower, followed by clean clothing, and frequent washing of hands...particularly before eating or smoking, goes a long way in keeping you healthy and safe.

SECURITY ALARM TIP

SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Tell your spouse, your children, your neighbors, your parents, your Dr.'s Office, the check out girl at the market, everyone you run across. Put your car keys beside your bed at night.

If you hear a noise outside your home or someone trying to get in your house, just press the panic button for your car. The alarm will be set off, and the horn will continue to sound until either you turn it off or the car battery dies.

This tip came from a neighborhood watch coordinator. Next time you come home for the night and you start to put your keys away, think of this:

It's a security alarm system that you probably already have and requires no installation. Test it. It will go off from most everywhere inside your house and will keep honking until your battery runs down or until you reset it with the button on the key fob chain. It works if you park in your driveway or garage.

If your car alarm goes off when someone is trying to break in your house, odds are the burglar/rapist won't stick around... after a few seconds all the neighbors will be looking out their windows to see who is out there and sure enough the criminal won't want that.

And remember to carry your keys while walking to your car in a parking lot. The alarm can work the same way there.

This is something that should really be shared with everyone. Maybe it could save a life or prevent a sexual assault.

My Mom has suggested to my Dad that he carry his car keys with him in case he falls outside and she doesn't hear him. He can activate the car alarm and then she'll know there's a problem.

It would also be useful for any emergency, such as a heart attack, where you can't reach a phone.

THANKSGIVING FIRE PREVENTION SAFETY

SAFETY TOOL BOX TALK

Thanksgiving Day has more than double the number of home cooking fires than an average day according to the U.S. Fire Administration. In fact, each year more than 4,000 fires occur on Thanksgiving Day. “Unattended cooking is the leading cause of thanksgiving Day home fires, and it's easy to understand why,” said Red Cross preparedness expert Heidi Taylor. “People can easily become distracted and lose track of what's happening in the kitchen when they are enjoying spending time with family and friends.” To help prevent home fires this Thanksgiving, the Red Cross suggests the following tips:

- Keep potholders and food wrappers at least three feet away from heat sources while cooking
- Wear tighter fitting clothing with shorter sleeves when cooking
- Make sure all stoves, ovens, and ranges have been turned off when you leave the kitchen
- Set timers to keep track of turkeys and other food items that require extended cooking times
- Turn handles of pots and pans on the stove inward to avoid accidents
- After guests leave, designate a responsible adult to walk around the home making sure that all candles and smoking materials are extinguished

Even with the best preparation and precautions, accidents can happen. Thanksgiving is high time for cooking related burns. Minor burns can be treated easily if you remember to save the butter for the rolls and not a burn. For a superficial burn, cool the area by running it under cold water until the heat eases and then loosely cover the burn with a sterile dressing.

NEW YEAR'S SAFETY TIPS

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While staying safe on the road for New Year's Eve revelers must be a high priority, it's certainly not the only safety issue that you may confront as you ring in the New Year. However, with a little care and foresight, you can protect yourself from some of the more common New Year's risks. Follow the tips below, and your biggest challenge on New Year's may be that whole resolution thing.

FIREWORKS

When it comes to explosives, follow the same rules on New Year's Eve that you would any other time of the year: Leave it to the experts. The best way to enjoy fireworks is to watch a public exhibition from a safe distance. If you feel you must light your own fireworks never allow children to handle or light any kind of fireworks.

FIREARMS

It is a tradition for some to shoot firearms up in the air. This is a very bad idea, especially in populated areas as what goes up, must come down. In 2002 for example, a 9-year-old boy was killed while celebrating Independence Day in Buena Park near Los Angeles from a stray bullet shot into the air.

Have a safe New Year!

