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Weekly Safety Tip

August 1, 2022



Responding to heat stroke, heat exhaustion

Heat stroke and heat exhaustion are the two most dangerous heat-related illnesses, according to OSHA. The body cools itself naturally by sweating, but when heat and humidity are high, sweating may not be sufficient. This is when problems occur.

Body temperature can rise to dangerous levels, OSHA states, if actions such as drinking water or resting in a shaded area or an air-conditioned room aren’t taken to cool down. Employees at risk for heat-related illnesses include outdoor workers (although certain indoor jobs can be hot enough to result in a heat-related illness), workers performing heavy tasks and workers wearing bulky protective equipment.

Heat exhaustion occurs when a body responds to loss of water and salt due to excessive sweating. Symptoms include headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, irritability and thirst. If you believe a co-worker is experiencing heat exhaustion, have the person lie down in a cool, shaded area and provide plenty of water to drink. You also can cool the worker with ice packs or cold compresses. Take the worker to the emergency room if symptoms don’t improve – or worsen – within an hour.

Heat stroke occurs when the body can’t regulate its core temperature and stops sweating, leaving it unable to rid itself of excess heat. It can lead to death, so heat stroke should be considered a medical emergency. Signs of heat stroke include fainting, confusion, seizures, hot and dry skin, and a high body temperature. Call 911 if you suspect heat stroke. While waiting for emergency medical responders, OSHA recommends the following actions:

- Ensure the affected worker is in a cool and shaded area.
- Give the worker water as soon as possible.
- Loosen his or her clothing and remove outer clothing.
- Fan air on the worker and place cold packs in his or her armpits.
- Place cool water, ice packs, cool compresses, or ice on the worker.
- Stay with the worker until help arrives.

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/14528-responding-to-heat-stroke-heat-exhaustion>



Lights out. Now what?

Your home may lose power for any number of reasons, including storms, wind damage and lightning strikes. If the lights go out, do you know what to do?

To best handle a power outage, Ready.gov says to:

- Have a stocked emergency preparedness kit that includes flashlights, extra batteries, first aid supplies and cash. (Go to [Ready.gov](https://www.ready.gov) for more on what to include in your kit.)
- Visit your city’s government website to learn about your area’s emergency plans.
- Fully charge your cellphones when bad weather is in the forecast.
- Know where the manual release lever of your electric garage door opener is and how to use it.
- Have frozen, water-filled containers ready to help keep food cold in the event of a power outage.
- Have a backup plan in place if you rely on any battery-operated or power-dependent medical device.

During a power outage:

- Don’t use candles, which can cause a fire. Use a flashlight instead.
- Don’t open your freezer or refrigerator. An unopened refrigerator can keep food cold for about four hours, while an unopened freezer can keep food frozen for up to two days.
- If the temperature is high, do your best to remain cool. Go to a shopping mall or, if your area has one, a cooling center. Drink plenty of water, even if you don’t feel thirsty.
- If it’s cold, layer on clothes to stay warm. Never use your oven as a source of heat. If the power is expected to be out for a long period of time, leave the home and go somewhere that has working heat.
- Have a generator? Never run it inside your home or garage, and keep operating generators at least 15 feet from your home or your neighbor’s home.

<https://www.safetyandhealthmagazine.com/articles/22762-lights-out-now-what>

Support a culture of safety excellence

Why should establishments develop and implement a safety and health program?

Although worker deaths and injuries have decreased 60% and 40%, respectively, since OSHA's creation in 1971, and improvements to worker safety and health have been made, more than 5,000 people still die on the job every year, with another 2.7 million people suffering a severe work-related injury.

To combat the steady number of workplace injuries and illnesses, OSHA recommends employers implement a safety and health program to complement existing regulations to help keep employees safe and promote a culture of safety excellence. Further, as global labor markets continue to tighten, important financial benefits can be gained by keeping workers safe and productive, including minimizing costs associated with increased downtime.

Implementing a safety and health program is no simple task, but it has many benefits. In addition to helping reduce the number of workplace injuries and illnesses, this type of program offers five key advantages.

1. Improved hazard awareness. One key component of a safety and health program is a "find and fix" approach to workplace hazards, empowering employers to coach their teams on how to identify hazards they may not have recognized otherwise. This can lead to a heightened level of hazard awareness in the workplace and at home.

The "find and fix" mentality also enables employers to establish their appetite for risk and demonstrate a commitment to safety. When workers raise concerns over a hazard that's been identified, it gives the employer an opportunity to move swiftly to correct the issue and improve the safety of the operation.

2. Increased employee engagement. At the most basic level, establishing a program that emphasizes the importance of personal safety and health shows workers that their employer cares about them and their well-being. But the benefits of employee engagement go above and beyond that. Developing and implementing a successful safety and health program requires full participation, and when an organization decides to start on its safety excellence journey, it creates many opportunities for workers to get involved and add value. From getting buy-in on written safety and health programs to getting boots on the ground for safety inspections, a successful safety and health program incorporates workers at every level and from every department within an organization.

Having their voices heard and their contributions acknowledged allows workers to feel valued and can lead to increased engagement.

3. Social and corporate responsibility. Historically, news stories about workplace safety often emphasized the negative, specifically when an incident or death occurred. Although featured stories on companies with successful safety and health programs are less common, they're gaining in popularity.

Consumers are also increasingly socially conscious. According to Markstein and Certus Insights, 70% of consumers want to know how the brands they support are addressing social and environmental issues, and 46% pay attention to these efforts when making purchase decisions.

4. Increased profit margin. A successful safety and health program can nearly pay for itself, as several studies have shown. For example, the average cost of a workers' compensation claim is around \$40,000. And that's just the direct cost. Indirect costs such as increased workers' compensation, insurance premiums and lost productivity often add up to about four to six times as much as the direct cost related to the injury. That \$40,000 injury soon becomes a potential loss of nearly a quarter of a million dollars.

Implementing a safety and health program can help reduce these costs by preventing injuries and illnesses altogether or reducing the potential severity of an injury.

5. Regulatory compliance. OSHA can issue criminal penalties in cases of extreme negligence on the part of the employer in the event of an employee injury or death. Recently, the operator and six management officials of a corn mill were indicted by a federal grand jury – in a case involving an explosion that killed five workers and injured 15 others – on nine criminal counts, including two counts related to willful violations of federal workplace safety standards for grain handling.

These kinds of incidents are preventable. Implementing a safety and health program can help ensure your company follows applicable OSHA regulations to help prevent injuries and deaths and reduce the risk of penalties.

Although a safety and health program provide an effective framework for protecting workers, to be successful in sustaining a companywide culture of safety, these five best practices must be considered:

1. Start at the top. Leadership endorsement of creating and sustaining a culture of safety is integral to success. Commitment to this core value is defined by consistent engagement from business leaders – working hand in hand with the environmental, health and safety staff – to identify safety failures and implement changes to effectively avoid harm. Leaders should regularly conduct safety walkarounds to experience firsthand the challenges that employees may face. Armed with this insight, leaders are in a better position to develop and implement new policies and guidelines designed to protect hardworking employees.

2. Core company value. Although many companies promote a commitment to safety, if the topic isn't included in ongoing, strategic discussions among key stakeholders, this notion of commitment could ring hollow. Company priorities will change over time. Ensuring the safety and security of workers should represent a core company value and be integral to every strategic discussion. Identify opportunities to include safety-related updates, best practices, and lessons learned in an internal newsletter or weekly email communication to keep workers apprised of new guidelines and underscore a company commitment to building and sustaining a culture of safety.

3. Effective transparency. Be clear about existing workplace challenges your teams may face. Engaging associates in this process will help effectively address red flags in a timely and thoughtful manner, ensure swift remediation, and avoid any future missteps related to known issues.

4. Report and analyze. Implement tools to report near misses and leverage data to help continuously improve. Regular safety walkarounds across all locations can help more accurately track and analyze near misses and apply lessons learned to ensure the safety and security of all workers.

5. Reward engagement. Consider safety awards for individual locations based on activity and training. Incorporate related key performance indicators to actively engage workers and encourage participation. Prioritizing and incentivizing training demonstrates a company commitment to creating a culture of safety.

There should be no greater priority than ensuring the safety and security of workers. An effective safety and health program can provide the framework for doing so and serve as the bedrock for a culture of safety excellence.



We are Advocate Aurora Health

3 numbers with a big impact

In an emergency, people often dial 911. Now, there will be a simple three-digit number for anyone in the United States experiencing a mental health crisis.

They can simply reach out to 988.

The three-digit dialing code, available nationwide on July 16, connects callers, texters or chatters to the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline. According to the organization’s website, calling, texting, or chatting 988 will connect individuals to “trained counselors that...will listen, understand how their problems are affecting them, provide support and connect them to resources if necessary.”

There’s a need for a simple way to seek help during a mental health crisis. More than 12 million people have serious thoughts of suicide according to the most recent data from the National Alliance on Mental Illness. In these moments, Dr. Munther Barakat, Director of Behavioral Health Therapy for Advocate Aurora Health, says simple and quick access to help can truly make a difference.

“The three-digit number makes it easy for people to remember and get the help they need,” says Dr. Barakat. “People who are experiencing thoughts of harming themselves should access this number.” Understanding warning signs can be helpful to know when intervention or help is needed. Dr. Barakat says recognizing these behaviors can be early indicators that you or a loved one may be thinking about suicide.

“Often times before people begin to experience suicidal ideations, they’ll experience depressive symptoms including isolative behaviors, disrupted sleep, moodiness and lack of interest,” he says.

Additional warning signs include:

- Increased use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Isolation from friends and family
- Aggressive, impulsive, or reckless behavior
- Dramatic mood swings

Dr. Barakat recommends telling your primary care physician if you experience any of these symptoms. If these symptoms reach a crisis point, he recommends seeking help immediately.

“Resources such as the hotline provide an easy way to connect when people reach a point where they believe they are unsafe. An alternative to using the hotline would be going to your nearest emergency department,” Dr. Barakat says.

If you or someone you know is in an emergency, call The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 988, 800-273-TALK (8255) or call 911 immediately. <https://www.ahchealthenews.com/2022/07/15/three-numbers-with-a-big-impact/>

Is your sunscreen doing more harm than good?

With so many sunscreen options available, it can be daunting trying to pick out a sunscreen that not only suits your skin type but also does not contain ingredients that will negatively impact your health.

A [study](#) found that the ingredients in chemical sunscreens are absorbed through the skin and into the bloodstream at amounts far above the Food and Drug Administration’s (FDA) threshold of concern of 0.5ng/mL. The ingredients in chemical sunscreen were still detected up to three weeks later even after participants rinsed their skin.

Chemical sunscreens absorb into your skin so they can soak up the sun’s damaging rays whereas physical/mineral sunscreens sit at the surface of your skin and reflect the sun’s rays. Both types of sunscreens are commonly sold at popular retailers – so chances are, you probably have used both at least once in your lifetime.

“Chemical sunscreens often contain Oxybenzone/benzophenone-3, Avobenzone/benzophenone, Homosalate, Octinoxate, Octocrylene and Octisalate – all of which are endocrine disrupters,” says Travis Hawks, sustainability specialist with [Advocate Aurora Health](#). “Oxybenzone and octinoxate are not environmentally/reef friendly either.” The sunscreen can come off your body and into the water and kill coral reefs, sicken wildlife and end up in our drinking water.

When these ingredients enter your bloodstream, the chemicals can block or overstimulate hormone production. If your growth hormone becomes blocked, it can result in abnormal growth and development. When hormones are over-or under-stimulated, it can cause your thyroid to become over-or under-active. This can result in symptoms such as weight loss, weight gain, loss of hair and/or fatigue.

“Typically, the safest sunscreens for humans and the environment are physical/mineral sunscreen lotions as they do not absorb into your skin and get into your bloodstream,” says Hawks. Mineral sunscreens often contain zinc oxide which is safer for your health and the environment. Sunscreen should be worn every day which is why carefully selecting sunscreen based on its ingredient is so important for your health.

<https://www.ahchealthenews.com/2022/07/14/is-your-sunscreen-doing-more-harm-than-good/>

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In Loving Memory... Jessica, Kristin and Nick

