



# LOSS CONTROL NEWSLETTER

June 2019

## Protect Against Falling Objects

Each year, there are more than 50,000 “struck by falling object” recordable injuries – that is one injury caused by a dropped object every 10 minutes!

Injuries can range from bruises and broken bones to death. Falling object injuries can even be caused by a small, lightweight object dropped from a considerable height.

With safe work practices, however, these injuries are preventable. Everyone at the jobsite has a responsibility for their safety and the safety of others, especially if working from heights.

### Prior to working from heights:

- Have the area below cleared and post necessary warning signs. Rope off or barricade the area.
- If possible, verbally warn those below that you are about to begin an overhead job and make sure they hear you.
- Use toeboards, guardrails, screens and/or paneling to make sure objects do not fall off of scaffolding or platforms. You can also use nets or canopies to catch any falling objects.

- Keep materials far enough from an edge, hole or opening to prevent them from falling to a lower level.
- Stack materials securely to prevent them from sliding, falling or collapsing.

### While working from heights:

- Do not carry tools or materials up a ladder. Use a tool belt, a hand winch line, containers or buckets lifted by a line.
- If you use a tool belt, make sure pockets, pouches and slots are the correct size and shape to keep tools from falling out. The belt should be made of a sturdy material and reinforced for the points of tools. If possible, tether the tools to the belt with lanyards. Tools with sharp edges or points should be guarded to prevent injury to you and workers below. Never use a tool belt as a safety belt.
- Make sure any load being lifted is secure and balanced, and that no one is working under it.
- Practice good housekeeping and properly store tools and materials that are not in use.

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# Chemical Spotlight: Sulfuric Acid

## Falling Objects continued

- Do not carry tools in your pockets, as they could fall out when you bend over or reach.
- Never throw materials or tools.
- Never sweep material off the edge of the working surface.
- Do not work, or allow others to work, under obviously unsafe conditions.

## Working on the ground or below:

- Always wear your hard hat and protective footwear.
- Observe restricted areas where overhead work is being performed. Do not cross the barriers, even to take a shortcut.
- Pay attention to what is going on around you, particularly when cranes and other equipment are being used to hoist materials in the air or you are working near overhead bricklaying, painting or conveyor belts.
- Do not walk near roofs after a snowstorm or ice storm.

Following these rules and using safety equipment may not only prevent accidents, but also make any accidents that do occur, despite all precautions, less severe.

Sulfuric acid is a clear, odorless, water-soluble liquid with a pH of less than 0.03. The appearance of pure sulfuric acid is sometimes described as “syrupey” or “oily.”

Sulfuric acid is widely used in many industries, notably in the production of other chemicals such as phosphoric acid for use in fertilizers. There are also several household uses for it, including drain cleaners and car batteries.

The variety of uses for sulfuric acid depend on how diluted the chemical is. If you are diluting sulfuric acid for any reason, it should be done with extreme care. It is extremely important to add the acid to water, rather than water to the acid, due to the heat released during the reaction.

Sulfuric acid is nonreactive and stable under normal conditions. However, it is highly corrosive to metals and should be stored away from any material that it is incompatible with, such as carbides, reducing and oxidizing agents, and nitrates. When sulfuric acid is stored improperly, hydrogen gas can form, posing a risk for an explosion in closed containers.

Sulfuric acid will cause severe skin burns and serious eye damage. However, the effects and severity of injury will vary depending on its strength (i.e., how diluted it is). Protective eyewear and clothing should be worn when working with the chemical.

Work should be done in a well-ventilated area and near an eyewash station and safety shower. In case of contact, eyes or skin should be flushed for at least 20 minutes.

The inhalation of any vapors or aerosols can cause serious lung damage. Great care should be taken to ensure the vapor concentration is below the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) defined exposure limit: 1 mg/m<sup>3</sup>.

Sulfuric acid can be useful and has a variety of industry applications, but extreme caution should always be practiced when using this chemical.

If you have any questions or need assistance regarding workplace safety, please contact your independent insurance agent or the Auto-Owners Loss Control HelpLine at 855.586.5388, or send an email to [LossControlSupport@aoins.com](mailto:LossControlSupport@aoins.com).

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