LOSS CONTROL NEWSLETTER

March 2020

Keep an Eye on Impact Hazards

Do you know the best type of eye protection against impact hazards at your worksite? Before you begin a job that exposes you to risks, consider which type of eye protection will provide your eyes with the best defense.

The majority of impact injuries to the eye are caused by flying or falling objects, such as chips, fragments, particles, sand, dirt or sparks. These objects can cause punctures, scratches and bruises. Work operations like chipping, grinding, masonry, riveting, woodworking, drilling and sanding can generate these hazards. To protect against impact injuries, always wear safety glasses, safety goggles or even a face shield depending on the type and severity of exposure to hazards.

SAFETY GLASSES

Safety glasses are designed to shield the eyes from frontal impact by flying fragments, objects, large chips and particles. Side shields provide impact protection from left or right angles. Safety glasses without side shields are unacceptable eye protection for impact hazards. Frames can be fitted with impact-resistant vision corrective lenses. But safety glasses alone do not protect against impacts from under or around the glasses.

SAFETY GOGGLES

Safety goggles form a protective seal around the eyes. This prevents objects from entering under or around the goggles. The frame must fit properly to your face to form the correct seal. Safety goggle lenses are designed and tested to resist moderate impact and may incorporate prescription lenses mounted behind protective lenses if you need vision correction. Goggles are also available with different levels of ventilation.

SAFETY SHIELDS

A face shield protects the entire face and is used with safety glasses and goggles. When worn alone, face shields do not protect employees from impact hazards. Use face shields in combination with safety glasses or goggles, even in the absence of dust or potential splashes, for additional protection beyond that offered by glasses or goggles alone.

Follow these guidelines and you can save your sight from the dangers of workplace impact hazards.

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.

Chemical Label Differences

Most containers of hazardous chemicals must be labeled with information that identifies the hazards and how to protect yourself against exposure. In many workplaces, you might see two types of chemical labels that could cause confusion:

Hazard Communication (HazCom) labels, which are Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) compliant and feature pictograms inside of small diamonds with red borders and additional written information.

National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) labels, which feature multicolored, large diamond shapes with numbers and letters inside colored boxes within the diamonds.

Both are compliant, but there are some critical differences you should recognize:

1. The HazCom labels inform workers about the hazards of chemicals in the workplace under normal conditions of use and foreseeable emergencies; and the NFPA labels provide information for emergency personnel responding to a fire or spill and those planning for emergency response.

2. The HazCom labels typically do not include the hazard severity number system (1 most severe to 4 least severe) used in section 2 of safety data sheets (SDSs); and the NFPA labels always include an NFPA-unique numbering system (0 least hazardous to 4 most hazardous) that is NOT used in the SDS number system.

3. HazCom labels describe both acute (short-term) and chronic (long-term) health effects; and NFPA labels describe acute health hazards only.

Increase in Random Drug Testing

Workers who perform safety-sensitive functions in the trucking, warehousing and other motor carrier transport-related industries should watch for an increase in occupational random drug testing. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) announced in December 2019 that it will double the minimum annual percentage rate of random drug testing for commercial motor vehicle drivers from the current 25% to 50% for calendar year 2020.

That means a covered employer with 100 safety-sensitive employees will have to ensure 50 or more random drug tests are conducted this year. The reason for the increase is FMCSA found that the positive rate for controlled substances in random testing in the agency's 2018 Drug and Alcohol Testing Survey is on the rise from previous years. The minimum random alcohol testing rates are not expected to change.

In related developments, positive drug test results for transportation and warehousing workers increased by double digits over a two-year period, according to testing firm Quest Diagnostics. Quest reported that positive results for transportation and warehousing workers increased by 21% between 2015 and 2017. Marijuana was the most commonly detected substance in all the tests.

There is also growing concern by employers in all industries about worker impairment as more states adopt medical and recreational marijuana laws. However, marijuana use is still illegal under federal law.