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Prevent Hearing Loss

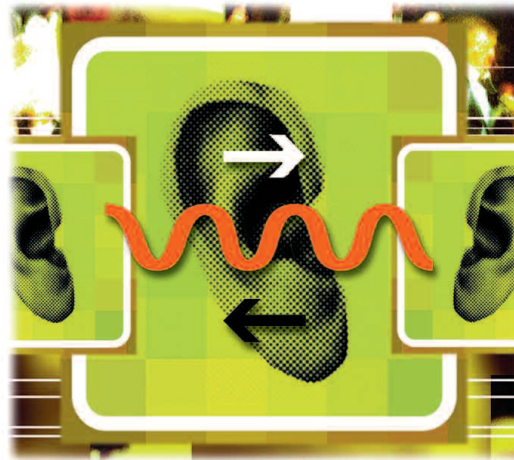
According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), hearing loss accounted for 11% of all workplace illnesses in 2005.

OSHA requires the implementation of an effective hearing loss program for employees who are routinely exposed to noise levels in excess of 85 decibels. Programs include training, frequent testing, and the evaluation of, and requirement to, wear hearing protection devices. OSHA considers it an employer's responsibility to decide what type of protective devices are best; however, it cautions against those that eliminate too much noise, citing the danger of an

employee not being able to hear verbal commands.

In addition to wearing protective devices, noise control is a major factor in preventing injury. Surveying employees can help reveal areas of concern. Testing decibel levels throughout the workplace will help determine where employees are most susceptible to hearing loss. Target noise reduction solutions at these priority areas.

Hearing loss, unlike many other injuries, is very difficult to detect without frequent testing. Testing can be provided on site by a qualified vendor. Failure to do so could result in permanent hearing loss and escalating claims. ■



Be a Mentor

It's a fact: Employees model their behavior after that of their supervisors/managers. If they see management disregarding safety rules, the chances are that they will, too. However, the reverse also holds true. And that's why now's the time for managers to address safety concerns and lead by example.

Becoming a mentor is easy. First, review current requirements and how they're practiced. Second, identify any new safety issues, as well as areas

where additional training is needed. Inspect workstations and request feedback.

Finally, assemble staff and review the rewards of a safe workplace. Have management pledge to lead by example and make sure that they do. Employees will quickly learn that safety is a priority and will develop the habits needed to keep the workplace injury and accident free.

What are you waiting for? Become a mentor today! ■

Hazardous Chemical Training



First, the facts:

1. There are more than 650,000 hazardous chemical products found in more than 3 million workplaces across America.

2. More than 32 million American workers are exposed to hazardous substances in the workplace.

3. In 2005, hazard communication violations repeatedly made OSHA's most-often-cited violations list.

These and other important facts are contained in OSHA's Hazard Communication Standard (HazCom). HazCom says that employees have both the need to know and the right to know about the potential hazards of the chemicals they might be exposed to on the job. Employees can be trained on groups of hazards, such as carcinogens, rather than on each individual chemical. Temporary workers and non-English speaking employees must receive the same hazard training as others.

For more information on requirements for training employees about the risks of chemical hazards and the other work-place hazards themselves, visit the OSHA Web site at www.osha.gov. ■

Form a Safety Committee

Think about the people most committed to the success of your firm. Chances are that they're the hardest working employees, who also have a keen understanding of the factors that directly affect the bottom line. Because these are the people most interested in your firm's success, they're in the best position to help you prevent safety problems.

Starting today, form a safety committee. The team can develop training for staff, appoint safety supervisors, conduct oversight and explore money-saving opportunities

such as workers compensation premium credits.

Your team should review previous accident reports and evaluate progress. Delegate oversight of different departments

to those who know them best, and meet frequently to discuss any potentially detrimental situations.

There are many advantages to forming a strong team of dedicated staff to address the ongoing

safety of your firm's operations. For more information on how to organize a safety committee that's great for your business, call our service team today. ■

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Worker Safety Up

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that 2005 was a safer year for workers than 2004. Although higher in some classifications, the overall number of injuries and deaths among workers decreased. Year 2005 statistics include:

- 5,702 workers died as a result of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- More than 4 million non-fatal occupational injuries and illnesses were reported.
- Of those who were injured or became ill, almost 1.3 million cases involved days away from work.
- The greatest percentage of illnesses and injuries came from the manufacturing sector (20%), followed by the health care and social assistance sector (16%), and the retail trade sector (15%).
- Workplace illnesses accounted for less than 6% of the cases; the



remaining 94% of cases were attributed to injury.

Employer efforts to reduce work-related illness and injury are paying off, reports the BLS. You can be one of the reasons for the improving statistics. Promote and reward workplace safety! And call if you want to review your policy or safety program. We look forward to hearing from you. ■

Fire Safety Quiz

OSHA reports that fires in the workplace kill approximately 200 workers and injure another 5,000 annually.

The Louisiana Workers Compensation Corporation (LWCC) is reminding employers that fire safety education is the key to reducing the more than 7,000 fires per year that occur in office buildings.

Adequate preparation is the first step. Take this short quiz to see if your employees could pass. Then give it to them and see if they do!

- Do they recognize and respond to the fire alarm?
- Do they know the location of all exits from all work areas?

• Have they counted and memorized the number of doors or workstations between where they work



and the closest exit, as they might have to evacuate in the dark or dense smoke?

- Do they know the locations of

fire alarms and extinguishers and how to use them?

- Do they know to escape via the stairs instead of the elevator?
 - Would they crawl on their knees while escaping if smoke is dense?
 - Do employees with disabilities know how to escape?
 - Have you made arrangements for assisting the disabled in an emergency?

Planning and practice are essential for effective response in the event of a fire. Test your employees' readiness and establish a fire safety plan that meets government regulations and protects all your workers and guests. ■

Tips to Avoid the Back Attack

The American Chiropractic Association (ACA) says that millions of Americans suffer back injuries resulting from work-related activities every year. Injuries commonly result from such overextending activities as lifting heavy boxes or other items. Yet many back injuries arise from seemingly non-strenuous activity, such as sitting in front of a computer for a long period in a chair with inadequate support.

OSHA and the ACA offer these guidelines to help minimize the potential for back injuries at work:

- Use the right tools. Make

sure you have a chair that fits your body properly. There should be approximately two inches between the front edge of the seat and the back of your

Many back injuries arise from seemingly non-strenuous activity, such as sitting in front of a computer in a chair with inadequate support.

knees for maximum comfort. It's also important to be looking at a computer screen that's close to eye level, reducing the stress

on your neck.

• Stand up for yourself. Frequent standing and stretching breaks will help reduce the chronic stress of bad positioning that leads to injury.

• Use your hips and knees. When lifting heavier objects, bend at the hips and knees to relieve the strain on your back. Keep your back straight while squatting and hold the item close to your body. If the item is too heavy, get help.

For information on injury prevention programs that have worked for other clients, give your agent a call. ■

**Thank you for
your referrals.**

If you're pleased with us,
spread the word! We'll be
happy to give the same great
service to all of your friends
and business associates.

Owner on Site

A recent report by the RAND Corporation says that small businesses whose employees are working on a single jobsite are among the safest places to work. On the flip side, research shows that small businesses operating multiple jobsites are likely to be among the riskiest.

Why the difference? A single worksite allows owners to spend more time on site, rather than delegating to a hired site manager. On-site owners are more likely to show responsibility in ensuring the safety of workers than are non-owners. Additionally, smaller businesses don't have the same resources to control and manage safety at multiple locations as do larger companies.

Contact our service team for ideas on managing multiple jobsites with limited resources. ■
