



Safety Reminder – Staff Safety

Your staff is an extremely important asset that must be protected from injury in order to maintain your effective operations, control your insurance costs, ensure positive morale and because no one wants their staff, youth or clients to get hurt. A safe staff provides safe programs and helps create a culture of safety throughout the organization. A safety culture helps the organization provide its mission effectively and efficiently.

Training and Orientation:

Training is an essential part to preventing injuries and promoting staff safety. An initial safety orientation sets the groundwork for future training and safe practices. Ongoing position-specific training ensures that safety remains a priority for staff and they can perform their duties effectively. Supervisors should be trained on both their position-specific safety duties as well as how to encourage others to follow practices and procedures. Supervisors need to nurture the organization's safety culture through regular support, recognition and even behavior modification when appropriate.

Back Injury Prevention:

Back injuries are among the most common injuries in the US workforce today. They can compromise an organization's morale, effectiveness and finances now and in the future. Back injury prevention through training of proper procedures and lifting techniques can help organizations keep their staff healthy and also control workers' compensation costs.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recommends the following techniques to help prevent back injuries:

- Exercise to strengthen your back and reduce stress
- Lose excess weight
- Maintain good posture
- Plan your lift
- Position yourself correctly for the lift
- Lift with your legs, not your back
- Set the load down correctly
- Get help, if needed

Slips & Falls:

Slips, trips and falls are among the leading types of accidents for many businesses. They can account for many general liability claims and the majority of workers compensation costs. Slips are primarily caused by a slippery surface and can be compounded by wearing the wrong footwear. While these types of accidents are common, they can be prevented through training, good housekeeping, signage and care. The following tips will help your organization prevent these common injuries.

General tips:

- Floors are free from standing water, grease or dirt build-up
- Floors, stairways and exits are clear at all times
- Repairs on all leaking pipes, water fountains, coolers, or any other object releasing liquid are made promptly
- Spills are cleared immediately
- Loose tiles and other flooring problems are promptly corrected
- Lights are clean and functioning
- Railings, handrails and permanent ladders are inspected regularly
- Trash is removed promptly
- Walkways, sidewalks, and parking lot areas are cleared from snow and ice
- Entry way is clean with mats out during wet seasons or periods
- Warning signs are posted in "Wet" areas
- Cords, cables, and hoses are kept above floor level or secured
- Flooring materials are appropriate for activity
- Running is limited to appropriate program activities
- Equipment in the gymnasium (bleachers, volleyball standards, etc.) is stored and organized

Staff injury prevention:

- Be on the lookout for unsafe conditions which may lead to slips and falls
- Watch out for foreign substances on the floor
- Clean footwear thoroughly when entering the building
- Use handrails on stairs or ramps
- Ask for help when a load is heavy or bulky, or use the elevator
- Practice ladder safety
- Remember safe lifting techniques
- Remember safety and accident prevention is everyone's job

Ladders:

The recent statistics from various US government agencies suggest that workers abuse and misuse ladders in the workplace as a rule rather than an exception. According to the US Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), there are more than 164,000 emergency room-treated injuries in the US, relating to ladders, each year. Many of these accidents can be avoided. Ladders are one of the simplest most easy-to-use tools available to staff.

The first step in preventing ladder-related accidents is selecting the right ladder for the job. Portable ladders are generally designed to be used by one person and have the strength to support the user, their tools, and supplies they can carry. Type I and Type II ladders are generally the most appropriate ladder for use and maintenance work at nonprofit organizations.

After selecting a ladder for purchase and use, it is important to ensure good condition for the life of the ladder. A regular maintenance and inspection plan will help to prevent damage and failure of a ladder. Ladders should always be visually inspected before each to ensure they are in good condition and free of dirt or grease that may cause a fall.

The proper selection and maintenance are the first two parts of preventing ladder related accidents and injuries; proper use is the third. The following tips are good usage practices:

General Ladder Use

- All metal ladders should have slip-resistant feet.
- Do not place a ladder in front of a door that is not locked, blocked or guarded
- Keep your body centered between the rails of the ladder at all times - Do not lean too far to the side while working
- Do not use a ladder for any purpose other than that for which it was intended
- Never leave a raised or open ladder unattended
- Always face the ladder when ascending or descending; maintaining 3 points of contact

Extension Ladders

- Use a ladder that is the proper length for the job. Proper length is a minimum of 3 feet extending over the roofline or working surface. The three top rungs of a straight, single or extension ladder should not be stood upon.
- Use the one-to-four (1:4) ratio when using a ladder. To do this, place the ladder so its base is one foot away from what it leans against for every four feet in height to the point where the ladder rests.
- Position all ladders so that both side rails have secure footing. Provide solid footing on soft ground to prevent the ladder from sinking
- Never lean a ladder against unsafe backing, such as loose boxes or barrels.
- Use a wooden or fiberglass ladder in the vicinity of power lines or electrical equipment. Do not let a ladder contact live electric wires.
- Be sure all locks on extension ladders are properly engaged

Step Ladders

- Do not step on the top step, bucket shelf or attempt to climb or stand on the rear section of a stepladder.
- Be sure that a stepladder is fully open and the divider locked before you start to climb it.

Look for More:

Safe-Wise Consulting has additional staff safety training materials and general information available in its resource library; including the following:

- Staff Safety Orientation Checklist
- Prevention of Slips and Falls
- Lifting Safety Training (English & Spanish)
- Workplace Fire Safety

The Resource Library is updated on a monthly basis.

More safety information is also available from the [Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\)](#).