



## Top Tips for Preventing Eye Injuries

### 1. Identify workplace hazards.

Eye injuries can be caused by many different hazards. Conduct a safety walk-through of your business to locate areas and tasks that may create eye injury risks.

### 2. Select appropriate eyewear.

Eyewear must protect against the specific hazards employees will encounter and be properly fitted to the individual. Purchase multiple types of eyewear, including prescription lenses, task-specific lenses, frames, and types of glass.

### 3. Provide regular training.

Use training as an opportunity to highlight eye injury statistics, workplace hazards and emergency response, and demonstrate how and when to wear eye protection, how to properly care for eyewear, and how to reach and use different types of eyewash stations.

### 4. Remove ineffective eyewear.

Replace eyewear that scratches easily, is not anti-fog (if applicable), fits poorly, or is uncomfortable for employees. Set up a schedule for inspecting eyewear for cracks or loose frames and throw away damaged personal protective equipment (PPE).

### 5. Use signage to promote PPE compliance.

Place posters and signs near machinery, chemicals, and in common areas such as break rooms to highlight hazards, eyewear requirements and proper emergency response.

### 6. Provide emergency treatment options.

Make sure eyewash stations, eye drops, eye wash, and gauze are available and accessible. There are various forms of emergency eyewash treatment (primary, secondary, plumbed, and self-contained). Knowing when and where each is applicable is important for proper use.

## Eye injuries in the workplace are all too common.

This Eye Safety Toolbox Talk should be used to start meaningful discussions about eye safety and educate employees about potential workplace risks, ways they can best protect themselves from injury and proper emergency response.

The Toolbox Talk includes:

- Top Tips for Preventing Eye Injuries
- Eye Safety Checklist
- Fast Facts about Eye Safety
- Eye Safety Quiz

Record the participants of your training session and structure it using the content in any order you prefer. Provide copies of the content to each employee so that they can review it after the discussion. Then revisit the content when new employees are hired, job functions change or a refresher is needed.

Talk Given By: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
Company: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name	Signature



## Fast Facts About Eye Safety

### Incidence and Impact of Eye Injuries

- Each day, about 2,000 U.S. workers have a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment, according to the Center for Disease Control.
- Nearly 1 in 10 eye injuries require one or more missed workdays.
- Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20 percent will cause temporary or permanent vision loss.
- The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) found that more than 40 percent of injuries studied occurred in manufacturing, with more than 20 percent in construction.
- The financial burden of eye injuries is costly – more than \$300 million per year in lost production time, medical expenses, and workers compensation.

### Causes of Eye Injuries

- Nearly three out of every five workers with injuries to the eye were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.
- Almost 70 percent of the accidents resulted from flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye, with most of the objects being smaller than a pin head.
- For the rest of eye injuries studied by the BLS, one-fifth were caused by contact with chemicals. Other accidents were caused by swinging objects, such as ropes, chains or tools.

### Preventing Eye Injuries

- According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 90 percent of eye injuries can be prevented through the use of proper personal protective equipment (PPE).
- About 40 percent of injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection when an accident occurred, but it was the wrong kind of eye protection for the job.

### Treating Eye Injuries

- Even after a thorough review of safety procedures and the proper use of PPE, accidents can still happen. Eyewash stations must be within 10 seconds of eye hazards, and be able to flush both eyes simultaneously for 15 minutes.
- First-aid kits and cabinets should be stocked with eyewash, gauze and tape to address eye injuries.

## ✓ Eye Safety Checklist

Follow a simple checklist to ensure your work- place has the following proactive and reactive solutions in place to deal with eye hazards and injuries.

### Proactive Solutions

- ☐ Protective eyewear (both prescription and non-prescription)
- ☐ Training courses (instructor-led, DVD, online and hazard assessment)
- ☐ Safety signs and posters
- ☐ Full-service eyewash program that preps and maintains eyewash units

### Reactive Solutions

Eyewash station(s) First-aid cabinet with:

- ☐ Eye drops
- ☐ Eye wash
- ☐ Gauze
- ☐ First-aid tape
- ☐ OSHA recordkeeping forms



## Test Your Knowledge

### TRUE OR FALSE

1. **You can rub your eye to remove small particles and objects that may cause harm.**  
**ANSWER: False.** Even objects that are not visible to the naked eye can pose a serious threat and you should never rub your eye to try and remove them. Instead, flush eyes at an eyewash station.
2. **Workplace eye injuries can cause permanent damage.**  
**ANSWER: True.** Of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20 percent will cause temporary or permanent vision loss.
3. **Many eye injuries are caused because workers are wearing the wrong type of eye protection.**  
**ANSWER: True.** About 40 percent of injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection at the time of their injury. However, the eye protection wasn't the appropriate type for the job and its hazards. All protective eyewear should be selected based on the hazards present and properly fitted to the user.
4. **You don't need eye protection if you're simply passing through a work zone.**  
**ANSWER: False.** You should always wear eye protection in a work zone to reduce the opportunity for injury.
5. **Eye protection should be matched to the hazards onsite.**  
**ANSWER: True.** There are many different types of eye protection and they should appropriately match the particular hazards workers will face.