



The Safety Zone

The Newsletter of the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust

It's no joke

Office hazards go way beyond paper cuts

It's tempting to think that all of your safety and health concerns are limited to a few areas. But it's just not true. Keep reading for important information about an office hazard that could have tragic consequences.

We know that office workers who toil indoors, seated, talking on the phone or typing aren't subject to many of the hazards production or construction workers face. But they are at risk for falls, and you need to be vigilant to eliminate them.

The Albert Einstein College of Medicine at Yeshiva University cites data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) suggesting that falling is not only the most common office accident, but also is responsible for the most disabling injuries. Office workers are two to two-and-a-half times more likely to suffer a disabling injury from a fall than other workers.

Remind your office staff of the risks, and offer these tips for prevention:

- Look before you walk, and make sure the walkway is clear. And never walk while using a cell phone.
- If you're done with a drawer, close it immediately.
- Don't stretch to reach something while seated. Get up instead.



- Report hazards, including loose carpeting and electrical cords, to someone who can have them fixed.
- Clean up spills (even if you didn't cause the spill), pick up objects from the ground, and stay vigilant to fall hazards.
- Use a stepladder, not a chair, to reach something overhead

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news & notes

SICK TO DEATH

John Howard, PhD, director of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, says there is an enormous burden of occupational illnesses on the workplace and society. "For every injury that results in a fatality, there are 10 work-related illness fatalities."

Figuring out the cause of an injury is easy - the cause is right there. It's not as straightforward when it comes to occupational illness fatalities; often they have multiple causes, not to mention that occupational illnesses are a higher cost than occupational injuries.

It is estimated that up to five percent of cancers are caused by workplace exposures. However, data availability is limited, as these cases are often underreported or not reported at all because most are not recognized by physicians, says Howard.

Peg Seminario, AFL-CIO, director of safety and health, cites data that occupational illnesses account for approximately 49,000 deaths annually, making work-related disease the eighth leading cause of death in the United States. She also says there was greater focus on occupational diseases in the 1970s and 80s than there has been in more than 20 years.



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AHAWCSIT



Happy holidays on the highways

Stay safe on the road

According to the U.S. Bureau of Transportation Statistics, during the Christmas/New Year's holiday period, the number of long-distance trips (50 miles or more) increases by 23 percent, compared to the rest of the year. Most long-distance holiday travel, about 91 percent, is by personal vehicle, such as by car.

Motor vehicle accidents are a leading cause of accidental injury and death in the United States, and accident rates always increase with holiday travel. Avoid these four dangerous driving behaviors:

1. **Speeding.** This includes exceeding the speed limit and driving too fast for conditions. Anytime visibility is reduced or road conditions are slick, you need to slow down.
2. **Aggressive driving.** The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) labels using excessive speed, tailgating, failing to signal lane changes, running red lights, and passing on the right as examples of aggressive driving.
3. **Inattention.** OSHA reports that distracted driving is a factor in more than 4,000 vehicle accidents a day. You can't make safe decisions if your mind and eyes are not completely focused on the road when you drive.
4. **Drowsiness.** OSHA reports that fatigued or drowsy driving may be a factor in more than 100,000 crashes each year. Be especially careful during the late night, early morning, and midafternoon hours, when drowsy driving crashes are most likely to occur; and take periodic breaks to nap, stretch, or otherwise maintain your alertness.

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Got News?

Do you have news that needs to be circulated or have a subject you would like for us to address? Let us know by emailing the newsletter editor at tcreel@arkhospitals.org.

AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust Program is administered by Risk Management Resources (RMR), a division of BancorpSouth Insurance Services, Inc. www.bxsi.com. In March 2003 the AHA Workers' Compensation Self-Insured Trust was established. The program provides workers' compensation coverage to AHA members.

Risk Management Resources, the administrator for the program, assists members in the areas of claims management, safety and loss control. Tina Creel, Vice President of AHA Services, Inc., is the Group Manager of the Trust and provides oversight of the day-to-day operation of the Trust.

The Board of Trustees provides oversight of the overall operation of the Group Trust.

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