

# Supervisor Safety Alert

What Line Supervisors Need to Know About Safety

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## ANSI updates eye and face protection standard

The American National Standards Institute (ANSI) has updated the American National Standard for Occupational and Educational Personal Eye and Face Protection, ANSI/ISEA Z87.1-2015, which provides guidelines for eye and face protection devices including safety glasses/goggles, face shields, and welding helmets.

The updated version emphasizes the need to maintain requirements that reflect safety standards used in other countries, including the ability of the equipment to withstand impacts, and the level of protection that welding helmets provide. It also addresses evolving technologies and new safety hazards that may be produced by these technologies.

"The 2015 version reflects a proactive and continued effort to focus on a performance based approach to the standard, versus a design restrictive approach, so that emerging technologies and new hazards can be

effectively considered," said J.P. Sankpill, general manager of MCR Safety's U.S. Safety division and chairman of the Z87 Committee which updated the standard.

Safety eyewear is widely used by workers in the U.S. in thousands of manufacturing and processing facilities, laboratories, and other workplaces. Several key changes to the standard reinforce the importance of selecting equipment based on specific hazards against which protection is needed, a concept first introduced in 2010 as part of the standard's reorganization. "Z87 Committee members remain committed to ensuring that the standard includes information that can assist safety professionals and workers in making informed decisions in selecting appropriate eye and face protection," noted Sankpill.

Sankpill says that a way to ensure this is done is to be familiar with the protector



markings and the corresponding performance requirements given in the standard in order to evaluate the capabilities and limitations of a particular device based on the manufacturer's claims. OSHA's requirements for eye and face protection at 1910.133 outline an employer's responsibilities and equipment selection. OSHA incorporates ANSI/ISEA Z87 into these requirements.

The updated standard is available from ANSI.

# Forklift near misses: Must operators be removed until retrained?

OSHA requires operators of powered industrial trucks, such as forklifts, to receive refresher training and evaluation if one of several specific “triggers” occur (e.g., the operator is involved in a near miss or an incident). For supervisors this requirement can create some scheduling difficulties. As such, you maybe wondering if the operator can still operate the equipment while refresher training is being scheduled. What if it was a minor near miss?

## Some flexibility allowed

According to an OSHA Letter of Interpretation, there is no absolute requirement that an operator cease to work immediately following an incident. This allows employers flexibility when considering the severity of the incident that triggered the need for retraining.

OSHA says that requirements provide a performance-oriented and cost-effective approach to refresher training. The type, amount,

and timing of refresher training depends on several factors, such as the equipment and terrain characteristics, nature of the unsafe act, and the potential for an accident or other incidents of unsafe acts or violations to occur or reoccur.

But remember, that aside from OSHA requirements, from a standpoint of training effectiveness, workers usually respond better if the refresher training is presented as close to the incident as possible.

# Make sure your workers aren't wearing “extra” PPE

It's hard enough to get workers to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), but compliance may be even tougher if employees wear “extra” PPE. Their rationale may be that they want to be sure they're protected, but this practice really points to a misunderstanding of the PPE selection process.

Some examples of “extra” or inappropriate PPE could include requiring the use of:

- Gloves while operating or working near hazardous rotating machine parts.
- Metatarsal guards during light-duty material handling jobs.

- Respirators when employee exposures are well below permissible exposure limits.
- Impervious chemical protective clothing for jobs involving exposure to nuisance dust or incidental contact with greasy parts.

## What you need to know?

As a supervisor, you should be able to recognize when workers are wearing too much or inappropriate PPE. Even if you aren't directly responsible for PPE hazard assessments and equipment selection, you should understand how changes in work activities can change PPE requirements and be able to do something to address inappropriate PPE use.

You may need to merely notify the safety department when you have PPE concerns, but understanding OSHA's requirements for the selection of PPE will help you recognize potential problems.

## OSHA requirements for PPE selection

The general procedure for selection of PPE is to:

- Become familiar with the potential hazards and the types of available PPE and what it can do.
- Compare the hazards with the capabilities of the available PPE.
- Select PPE which ensures a level of protection greater than the minimum required to protect employees from the hazards.
- Fit the user with the PPE.
- Give the user use and care instructions.
- Reassess the workplace hazard situation as necessary by identifying and evaluating new equipment and processes, reviewing accident records, and reevaluating the suitability of previously selected PPE.



# Toxins: Don't let workers take them home

Unfortunately, what happens at work doesn't always stay at work. In the case of hazardous substances, this can jeopardize the health of workers and their families. The problem occurs when workers carry hazardous substances home from work on their clothes, bodies, tools, and other items. Workers can unknowingly expose their families to these

substances, causing various health effects.

## Prevention

Employees can prevent taking toxins home by:

- Using good safety practices to reduce exposure;
- Leaving soiled clothes, tools, scrap, and similar items at work;
- Changing clothes before leaving work;
- Storing non-work clothes away from work clothes;
- Showering before leaving work;
- Laundering work clothes separately; and
- Preventing family members from visiting the work area.

# A supervisor's safety impact runs deep

How much influence do you have over your workers? Consider this: According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, data indicate that employees who refuse to wear hearing protectors or who fail to show up for hearing tests frequently work for supervisors who are not totally committed to hearing loss prevention programs.

And, it's not just with hearing protection where supervisors have a great impact. Studies have also shown that supervisors have a huge impact on issues as varied as the number of future injury claims to the length of time it takes for an injured worker to return to work.

Further, a Cal/OSHA case study of heat-related fatalities that occurred in 2006 found that 63 percent of supervisors had not been educated on how to prevent heat illness. This demonstrates that supervisors play a critical role in the communication of safety and health from management to workers.

## You make a huge difference

Being a supervisor is a tough job that carries with it varied responsibilities, including scheduling,

coaching, ensuring quality, and enforcing work and safety rules, to name a few. But, along with the pains and struggles, comes the reward of making a difference in the safety of your workers. All workers have personal responsibility for safety. And safety managers have ultimate responsibility for directing the safety effort. But, it is supervisors who are in the best position to directly impact the most employees.

## Your responsibilities

Overall, you have multiple responsibilities, but your safety responsibilities should include:

- Supervise and evaluate worker performance.
  - Encourage and actively support worker involvement in the safety program.
  - Provide positive reinforcement and recognition — individually and to the group.
  - Obtain and maintain up-to-date knowledge and skills to detect safety violations and hazards.
  - Maintain good housekeeping in your work area.
  - Ensure the preventive maintenance program is followed
- and that repairs are tracked to completion.
- Conduct frequent inspections.
  - Investigate accidents thoroughly.
  - Hold workers accountable for their safety and health responsibilities. Actively discourage short cuts.
  - Consistently and fairly enforce safe work procedures and rules.
  - Provide continuing on-the-job training (e.g., work procedures, use of PPE).
  - Make sure each worker knows what to do in an emergency.
  - Practice what you preach. Follow safety rules that apply to your area.
  - Refer to higher management any resource problems you cannot resolve.





# Eliminate slip, trip, and fall hazards by engaging your workforce

You may be asking yourself: Why should I be concerned about slip, trip, and fall hazards in my work area? The answer is simple; they can cause employees to miss work and reduce production. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 229,190, slip, trip and fall cases involving days away from work occurred in 2013. The average number of days per case was eleven. Imagine how losing your most productive employee for eleven days could affect the production of your work area.

## What can you do to prevent tripping injuries?

You should always discuss with the company's safety professional your interest in improving safety. They can provide you resources and guidance specific to your work area. Next you should consider how to encourage your workers to reduce slip, trip, and fall hazards. Things to consider include:

- What slip, trip, and fall hazards do I walk by every day?
- What engineering controls are currently in place and how could they be improved?
- What engineering controls could be added?
- What work practices can help reduce these hazards?

One tool available to you is a hazard assessment checklist. With your safety professional, you can develop an area specific checklist. You can include items like; surface defects or changes in elevation, mat and carpet defects, protruding objects, and draws, cords, cables and hoses.

## Once you have identified hazards, how do you engage your employees?

One suggestion is to use repetition. Choose a safety topic every month and talk about that topic all month. Start each shift with a short safety talk. Using tripping hazards as an example, choose four trip hazards that create risk in your work area. Each week choose one risk and discuss it every day. For example:

**Monday** — Ask the safety professional to address your workers and explain trip hazards and how they affect the company. Develop a catch phrase and use it all week.

**Tuesday** — Ask employees to provide examples of trip hazards and how they would fix the hazard.

**Wednesday** — Take a field trip around your work area and show employees' solutions already in place. Make sure to demonstrate how the equipment should be used



or how items should be stored when not in use.

**Thursday** — Provide small incentives or rewards to employees that offer solutions and to employees that have made changes to improve the work area. This could include a token to buy an item out of the vending machine, or five extra break minutes. Be creative!

**Friday** — Review the week and talk about any changes that have occurred or are in the works.

Remember, set the example, listen to suggestions, thank employees, and discuss what worked and what did not work.

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