



Workplace Eye Safety

Protect Your Vision on the Job

By Jonna Jefferis

Preventing Eye Injuries

Prevent Blindness America suggests the following for workers:

- **Know where the nearest eye wash station is at their job site and how to use it.**
- **Have regular eye examinations to make sure their vision is adequate to do their jobs safely.**
- **Obtain prescription eyeglasses or goggles if they already have reduced vision.**
- **Wear safety glasses or goggles at all times whenever eye hazards are present.**

In the workplace, most of us are thinking primarily about accomplishing our job-related tasks each day—not about eye safety. But every day in the U.S., about 2,000 workers sustain job-related eye injuries that require medical treatment, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Flying objects, air-blown and wind-blown particles, tools, chemicals, harmful radiation and explosives can damage eyes when least expected.

Studies show that 15% of all eye injuries occur in the workplace, with an estimated cost of \$300+ million annually in medical treatment, lost production and Workers' Compensation claims.

Protective Eyewear

Any employee who works outdoors or with electricity, tools, chemicals, machinery, construction materials or explosives needs eye protection. In fact, the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) requires safety eyewear in all environments where eyes are at risk. With the proper eyewear, up to 90 percent of all eye injuries can be avoided.

OSHA's Web site (www.osha.gov) provides guidance on which type of safety eyewear is most appropriate for different job positions. The most popular and effective are safety eyeglasses and goggles, both of which provide impact protection. Goggles go a step further by adding dust and chemical splash protection. Moreover, they provide a secure shield around the entire eye, guarding it from all directions. A face shield and goggles are mandatory to protect workers from arc flashes,



welding light or chemical splashes. Arc-flash face shields are required to be tested by ASTM (American Society for Testing & Materials) to determine their arc-protective rating. This rating should be visible on the face shield. One way to ensure that safety eyeglasses and goggles provide adequate protection is to be sure they fit properly and are comfortable. Proper maintenance is also important. Scratched and dirty eyewear may hamper vision, cause glare and contribute to accidents. For extra protection, scratch-resistant and glare-reducing lenses are available. You can also purchase safety eyeglasses with prescription lenses.

Impact Resistance

Even riskier than not wearing safety eyewear in a hazardous environment is wearing the wrong kind of eyewear. For instance, regular eyeglasses or sunglasses may shatter on impact. Safety eyeglasses with polycarbonate lenses do not. Although safety eyeglasses may appear similar to normal dress eyewear, they are designed to provide significantly more eye protection. Lenses and frames must be much stronger than regular eyeglasses to meet requirements set by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and mandated by OSHA. To pass the ANSI shatter test, a non-prescription lens must not crack, chip, break or dislodge when a quarter-inch-diameter steel ball is shot at the lens at 150 feet per second.

Davis Vision offers impact-resistant polycarbonate safety eyeglasses for use wherever there are eye-injury hazards, whether on the job, at home or outdoors playing sports. Scratch-resistant and glare-reducing properties are available through your Davis Vision plan for significantly less than average retail prices.



Protection from UV Exposure

A major concern for outdoor workers is UV exposure from the sun, which can cause benign and cancerous growths on the eyelids and eye surface. The more they are exposed over time to bright light, the greater the risk. The American Academy of Ophthalmology recommends selecting sunglasses that block 97 to 100 percent of UV-A and UV-B rays. Keep in mind that the ability to block UV light is not dependent on the darkness of the lens or the price tag. Ideally, sunglasses should wrap around from temple to temple so that solar radiation is entirely blocked out.

Your eyesight is priceless. Regardless of whether you need prescription or non-prescription safety eyewear, the investment made for eye protection will pay dividends, reducing or preventing the risk of a sight-threatening injury on the job.

For more information on vision health and wellness, visit our Web site at www.davisvision.com or contact your local Davis Vision representative for more information on safety eyewear programs available through Davis Vision.