

The "C-Change" Initiative:

1. Change behaviors.
2. Challenge ourselves to re-think how we work.
3. Certify the results on a daily basis.



Toolbox Talk

Week of January 4th 2010

Hand and Eye Protection Awareness

January is hand and eye protection awareness month at JJW and we begin our series of tool box talks on this subject to raise awareness and focus attention on hazards and injuries consistent with our work. Our goal is to eliminate these injuries through awareness, hazard recognition and proper PPE selection. This week, we will begin with eye injury awareness

Each day more than 2,000 U.S. workers receive some form of medical treatment because of eye injuries sustained at work. More than 800,000 work-related eye injuries occur each year. Historically, construction workers have one of the highest eye injury rates due to the nature of their work. In 70% of cases, the injury was caused by contact with an object or equipment. In 26% of cases, the injury was caused by exposure to harmful substances or environments. Last year alone, JJW's hand and eye injuries accounted for nearly 37% of all injuries sustained in 2009. We are extremely fortunate to have a premier eye treatment center right in our area. Should an injury occur, our personnel receive the absolute best care. But that care does come with a price. Beyond the cost factor, blindness is permanent and modern medicine has yet to successfully replace an eye. With that in mind, eye protection and prevention of injuries is an absolute must for all of our employees.

Key Points

- Construction workers have one of the highest eye injury rates
- Particles of dust, metal, wood, slag, drywall, cement etc. are the most common source of eye injury to our workforce
- Even "minor" eye injuries can cause life-long vision problems and suffering—a simple scratch from sawdust, cement, or drywall can cause corneal erosion that is recurrently painful

Flying metal chards from mushroomed head chisels and the rebounding of the ordinary nail are two of the most common causes of vision loss in construction workers

Potential Eye Hazard Examples

- Hammering, grinding, sanding, and masonry work that produce flying or airborne particles
- Working on lines that contain chemicals may lead to splashes in the eye
- Wet or powdered cement in the eye or skin can cause a chemical burn
- Welding leads to exposure to arc flashes (intense UV radiation) for welders, helpers, and bystanders
- Dusty or windy conditions can lead to particles in the eye
- Eye injuries can result from simply passing through an area where work is being performed
- Coworkers around or above you may generate the hazards

The "C-Change" Initiative:

1. Change behaviors.
2. Challenge ourselves to re-think how we work.
3. Certify the results on a daily basis.



How can we reduce the eye hazards on the job?

- Use engineering controls (best) such as machine guards that prevent the escape of particles or welding curtains for arc flash protection
- Use administrative controls (good) such as making certain areas "off limits" unless that is your work assignment area or create walkways out of active work zones
- Use the proper protective eyewear as required (it still doesn't remove all risk)
- Perform a risk assessment of the work before it starts
- Ensure everyone on the job wear the required PPE.
- Remind worker to take the initiative to upgrade PPE when conditions change or warrant better protection.
- Be aware of changing conditions either natural or manmade and be prepared to adapt!
- Ensure you have the right PPE for all tasks on the job and make it readily available.

Next week, we will look at PPE requirements to meet ANSI standards, selections, and alternatives that assist in protecting our workers vision.

Protect your eyes. They're the only things that separate you from total darkness...forever.

