



## **PARTNERS IN SAFETY**

**Working With Employers to  
Maintain a Safer Workplace**

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## **OUR MISSION**

NYSIF's mission is to guarantee the availability of workers' compensation and disability insurance with the lowest possible cost to New York employers while maintaining a solvent fund. Since its inception in 1914, NYSIF has fulfilled this mission by competing with other carriers to ensure a fair marketplace while serving as a guaranteed source of coverage for employers who cannot secure coverage elsewhere. NYSIF strives to achieve the best health outcomes for injured workers and be an industry leader in price, quality and service for New York State employers.

NYSIF is the largest workers' compensation carrier in New York State and among the top 10 largest workers' compensation carriers in the nation, insuring approximately 191,000 policyholders, with more than \$1.48 billion in in-force premium and approximately \$19 billion in assets. A self-supporting insurance carrier, NYSIF operates without taxpayer funding. In 2022, NYSIF also began offering coverage to select out-of-state workers for New York-based companies.

NYSIF also provides disability benefits coverage for off-the-job injuries. In 2018, NYSIF added paid family leave as a component of its disability benefits product, providing New Yorkers with job-protected, paid time away from work to care for their families.

## **PARTNERS IN SAFETY**

NYSIF recognizes its obligation to assist New York State's employers in maintaining safe working conditions. We consider ourselves to be your partner in safety – we can work with you, your management team, supervisors and employees to address your critical workplace safety issues.

NYSIF is pleased to provide this booklet to help you establish and maintain a safer workplace. But we offer much more. Our experienced Risk Control Consultants can identify your key loss drivers and work collaboratively to help you address them by implementing or enhancing your workplace safety program.

No one can afford to ignore safety in the workplace. Accidents can mean lost production time, damage to plant and product, as well as the expense of hiring and training new workers. These factors decrease profitability and place an unnecessary burden on your business. An effective safety program is a critical factor in lowering insurance costs and assuring the best protection for your valued workers.

Your savings and your workers' safety are our common goal.

## A CULTURE OF SAFETY

**Safety begins at the top.** A strong commitment by management and consistent dedication to the enforcement of safety procedures are the foundation of an effective safety program.

If **management's attitude** toward safety is indifferent, then supervisors and line workers will also be apathetic. This principle applies to all businesses and institutions, no matter how large or small.

**Your commitment to safety** should be expressed in a clear, simple policy statement to all employees. The policy statement should be conspicuously posted, delivered to individual workers and discussed with them at meetings.

For more than a century, NYSIF has provided you, our valued policyholders, with unsurpassed safety services, security through guaranteed asset protection and savings. We value our partnership with policyholders who embrace a savings-through-safety philosophy.



## YOUR SAFETY POLICY

Management commitment and a written safety policy are effective tools in promoting a safe workplace. **Your safety policy should:**

- **State** that all executive and supervisory personnel will be responsible for workplace safety.
- **Indicate** that a safe workplace can be achieved by eliminating hazards and providing all employees with proper training in safe work practices
- **Make clear** that policies and procedures will be established and enforced to insure the maintenance of a healthful and safe workplace. These tools will **support supervisors' safety efforts** and encourage worker participation in the safety program.
- **Meet your company's specific needs;** no one policy is suitable for all circumstances, but the purposes it serves are common to nearly all businesses.



Do you need assistance in formulating a safety policy statement? Please visit the NYSIF Risk Control Resource Center, which is available at **no additional cost** to all NYSIF policyholders with an online account. <https://ww3.nysif.com>.

## THE SAFETY DIRECTOR

**One individual should be responsible for the direction and control of an effective safety program in your organization.** They should be a member of, or report directly to, top management.

In **larger companies**, this is often a director of employee relations or human resources, who, in turn, may employ a safety director to directly supervise safety activities.

In **smaller companies**, suitable management or supervisory personnel may assume the role of safety director.

In **very small organizations**, the owner may need to add the role of safety director to their responsibilities. In other cases, a business owner may delegate the responsibility to a competent supervisor, but this should be the lowest level considered.

## SAFETY COMMITTEES

**Many companies with successful safety programs have effective safety committees.** Safety committees may conduct periodic inspections to identify hazards and unsafe working methods, and review accident and inspection reports. They also can make recommendations to help eliminate hazards and correct unsafe work practices.

**Your safety committee should** include managers, supervisors, and representatives from departments such as maintenance. Smaller committees, in which all members can participate, usually are most effective.



**Larger organizations may need more than one safety committee.** A management committee can decide matters of policy. Subcommittees may perform specific functions, such as accident investigations and plant inspections. Your safety committee must have authority. How much will depend on committee membership, its role in the safety program and the extent of its responsibilities.

**Management support is key.** Committees that lack management support are essentially useless. Note that committees need to be established for policyholders covered by the Safe Patient Handling law.

### **Meet Regularly**

**Safety committees should meet regularly.** Infrequent meetings can lead to a loss of interest and deterioration of the safety program. Meetings should have an agenda.

**Rotating membership is important.** This makes good use of knowledgeable workers. By staggering tenure, the committee will always have some experienced members.

**Safety committees should never become involved in matters unrelated to safety.** NYSIF Risk Control Consultants are available to assist in establishing a new safety committee or reactivating a dormant one.

## SUPERVISOR TRAINING

**Supervisors are key to the success of any safety program.** They must receive thorough safety training and have proper motivation. Because they are ultimately responsible for safety in their departments, their full cooperation is vital to the entire program.

**Supervisors must assume authority** and responsibility for enforcing safety rules and regulations. They must understand that safe work practices increase productivity.

**Supervisors must observe all safety rules.** A supervisor's actions do more to motivate employees than words. Supervisors who don't use protective clothing and equipment, or otherwise work unsafely, cannot expect their workers to work safely.

**Supervisors need to receive ongoing education and training** to enable them to teach new employees to perform assigned tasks efficiently.

**It is difficult for supervisors with limited safety experience to establish and maintain safe workplaces. Education and training** can help them develop the techniques necessary to teach safety and properly train employees. **Complete on-the-job training** includes accident prevention techniques, as well as what to do when an accident occurs.

**NYSIF Risk Control Consultants can provide safety training for supervisors and assist you in obtaining materials from our Risk Control Resource Center for your own in-house training.**

**When it comes to safety, a supervisor's actions speak louder than words.**





## **SAFETY TRAINING**

**Safe work habits develop from education, training, continuous observation and feedback.** The backbone of loss control is the daily prevention of unsafe acts and working conditions. All businesses should **plan for, create and maintain safe working conditions.**

**A safe operation** depends upon a combination of safe working conditions, safely performed tasks and appropriate safety training.

- **Teach new workers** (and experienced workers, when necessary) the safe way to perform their job duties.
- **Communication is vital.** It is not enough to simply tell workers what to do.
- **Provide follow-up and feedback** to make sure workers understand and follow through on safe work practices.
- **Positive reinforcement** is an effective way to reinforce safe work practices. The person most effective in this area is your front-line supervisor.
- **Frequent coaching** of individuals or groups of two or three workers often provides more meaningful communication than large meetings.
- **Effective safety training** for employees may consist of **simple five-minute talks or demonstrations**, and more detailed training if hazard exposure and accident experience warrant.

**NYSIF's Risk Control Resource Center offers a wide selection of safety materials, articles and resources online and in print at no additional charge. All you need is a free, online customer account to access these valuable materials.**

# TRAINING CHECKLIST

- ▶ Provide training for all operations or tasks.
- ▶ Emphasize the need for constant awareness, even when performing automated operations.
- ▶ Be sure all employees know when and how to use personal protective equipment (PPE).
- ▶ Post signs specifying operating procedures and hazards.
- ▶ Instruct employees in the use of portable fire extinguishers. Make sure each employee is familiar with your fire safety plan, evacuation procedures, active shooter protocols and any other emergency action plans.
- ▶ Have at least one person, preferably more, trained in first aid on each shift.
- ▶ Be sure workers using motorized equipment are properly instructed in its proper operation and hazards.
- ▶ Promote and enforce good housekeeping.
- ▶ Teach safe lifting practices.
- ▶ Adhere to all applicable standards mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).
- ▶ Document all training.
- ▶ Take advantage of NYSIF's Risk Control Resource Center and Learning Management System to train your employees.
- ▶ NYSIF's Risk Control Consultants can provide in-person and virtual, instructor-led safety training.



## EMPLOYEE COOPERATION

**Employee cooperation is vital to the success of your safety program.** These measures can help motivate your staff and empower your program:

- **Set the tone for a good safety culture** by establishing a safety policy. Reinforce it by maintaining a safe place to work.
- During safety training, **explain what to do, how to do it, and why** workers must do a job a certain way. This helps workers understand the need for rules or procedures.
- **Prominently display safety posters** related to your operations as reminders to encourage workers to act safely.
- **“Keep Out” and “Caution” signs** should explain the reasons for the precautions. “Keep Out—High Voltage” or “Caution—Hard Hat Area” are more descriptive and informative.
- **Involve employees and solicit their suggestions** when making or revising safety rules.
- **Show employees how working safely** is in their own best interest. Explain how unsafe acts can cause pain, suffering, loss of income and a threat to their – and their family’s – well-being.
- **Channel employees’ abilities** toward accident prevention. Select employees for safety committees and first aid training based on their ability to lead and communicate effectively.
- **Involve all workers** in your safety program. Solicit and seriously consider their opinions. **Welcome and discuss** their suggestions. **Encourage** them to recommend ways to simplify operations or eliminate hazards.
- **Explain to each worker** that safety rules and regulations are designed for their personal protection. People may be different, but they have the same basic concerns – this includes avoiding injury.
- **Earn workers’ respect, confidence and cooperation** by ensuring that supervisors are evenhanded and fair in their treatment of all employees.
- **Further secure employee cooperation** by having supervisors maintain good relationships with workers and communicate the importance of safe work practices and conditions.



**Show employees how unsafe acts could cause pain, suffering, loss of income and threaten their family’s well-being.**

## **ACCIDENT REPORTING**

**Report and investigate all accidents** and near-misses promptly to determine the cause. **Properly reporting every accident and near-miss** for investigation and analysis provides an opportunity to implement corrective action and prevent a recurrence. **Maintain records** you can analyze to make further improvements. **Establish a procedure that requires staff to report every injury, no matter how trivial.**

All employees must **report every accident or incident**, even when medical treatment isn't necessary. Today's minor injury may become tomorrow's major claim if you don't **pinpoint and correct the cause** of the injury.

**Investigate every accident or incident** as soon as possible. People involved may very quickly forget important facts. Your safety committee, safety director or appropriate technician may also need to investigate accidents involving complex factors.

**A prompt investigation** by the immediate supervisor shows interest in the employees' welfare, presents an opportunity for the supervisor to discuss safety, assists in correcting unsafe acts and conditions, and increases knowledge of hazards and safety.

**eFROI®**, NYSIF's online accident reporting system available at [nysif.com](http://nysif.com), is the fastest, most convenient way to record and notify NYSIF of accidents or file a claim.

**Visit:** <http://www.nysif.com/firstreportofinjury/start>.

**Make an initial investigation of every accident or near-miss as soon as possible. Promptness is essential.**

**NYSIF's 24/7 Accident Reporting Hotline (ARH)** lets you and your employees speak with a registered nurse about a work-related injury. The nurse can offer your employees self-care options or suggest a treatment facility. A call to the ARH also begins a claims report for the injury.

**Call:** 1-844-879-2696

**Visit:** <https://ww3.nysif.com/Home/Employer/WCpolicyholder/AboutClaims/EmployerRole>



# ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION

**Conduct all accident investigations with tact and discretion**, after the injured employee has received medical care. Question them in a relaxed atmosphere away from the work area. Explain that the purpose of the investigation is to help, not reprimand. Do not blame. **Focus your concern on determining the accident cause(s) and preventing recurrence.** Avoid using the word “carelessness.”

Unsafe acts, alone or in combination with unsafe conditions, cause many accidents. If an unsafe act has caused or contributed to an accident, try to **determine the precise nature of the unsafe act.**

## **Cover the following in your accident investigation:**

**Who?** This includes the name, address, department, occupation and length of service of the injured person(s). List anyone who may have caused or been involved in the accident, including any “missing person” whose presence might have prevented the accident (e.g., a helper, flagger, partner in heavy lifting). **Interview witnesses** and those with knowledge of the condition involved.

**When?** Time can be a significant factor. Hazardous tasks begun near the end of a workday may lead to accidents due to weariness or haste.

**Where?** Location is very important, both for correcting conditions and noting areas of accident frequency.

**What? Note the task** the worker was performing at the time of the injury, the equipment being used and how the injury occurred. **Equipment:** Indicate the machine, tool, surface, etc., involved or associated with the accident. Identify specific parts of machines or equipment (e.g., gears, flywheels, blades). **Injury Type:** Include how the injury occurred (e.g., struck by or against an object, fell on same or a lower level).

**How? Unsafe condition:** What unsafe condition caused or contributed to the accident? Unsafe conditions may include “machine guard missing,” “slippery floor,” “broken rung on ladder.” **Unsafe act:** What specific act or behavior caused or contributed to the accident?

**Consequence:** Describe the injury and injured body part.

**Correction:** Has corrective action been taken and, if so, what is the correction? If not, what corrective action is needed?

## **COMMON AREAS OF HUMAN FAILURE**

- ▶ Prescribed safe-work methods not followed
- ▶ Proper personal protective equipment not worn
- ▶ Rules or regulations disobeyed
- ▶ Properties of chemicals not known
- ▶ Machine guards defective, inoperative
- ▶ Practical jokes and pranks allowed
- ▶ Heavy material lifted improperly
- ▶ Wrong tool used for the job
- ▶ Worker physically unfit for the job

**Make copies of the injury and investigation reports** and give them to the person responsible for safety. This person must be sure an adequate investigation has taken place and corrective action has begun to **prevent a recurrence** of the incident. Your safety director or safety committee should follow up to make sure corrective actions have been taken.

**Maintain and analyze all your accident records.** Frequent falls, for example, may indicate a need to study your floor surfaces or improve housekeeping. A high incidence of eye injuries may indicate a need to require protective goggles or eye shields. **Review safety training** or supervision where a number of unsafe acts have occurred. **Analysis helps identify your key loss drivers.**

**Analyzing your accident experience** is a good way of revealing the weak spots in your safety program. **Failure to act on these warnings can lead to costly accidents.**

## **MEDICAL ATTENTION**

When an accident occurs, it's important to **act immediately to minimize the consequences.** A rapid response is essential. Prompt treatment of any sudden injury or illness is crucial. **First aid supplies must be readily available,** and **all work shifts should have an adequately trained person designated to render first aid.**

**Treat the injury properly.** Injuries needing more than first aid should be referred to a medical doctor or a nearby emergency room.

***In New York State, an employer must honor an injured worker's free choice of physicians and medical facilities for emergency treatment. Continuing medical treatment is available through a large number of Workers' Compensation Board-certified physicians and facilities.***

**First aid training courses** and materials are available through the [\*\*American Red Cross\*\*](#) and the [\*\*National Safety Council\*\*](#). An approved first aid program staffed by trained workers is essential if your business lacks qualified medical staff on premises or is far from hospitals or clinics.

**Supervisors and experienced employees** who are dependable make good candidates for first aid training. Some employees may have already received training from former employers, auxiliary police or volunteer fire departments.

**First aid supplies** should be readily available and should be kept under the care of a supervisor or designated provider. Do not dispense first aid supplies for self-administration by workers.

**First aid providers** should be aware of what to do and what they cannot do. **Get prompt professional help** for all injuries or illnesses that are beyond the scope of the first aid caregiver.

### **Bloodborne Pathogens**

Designated first aid providers must **follow the OSHA Bloodborne Pathogens Standard** (29 CFR 1910.1030) to protect themselves and the patient when handling blood and bodily fluids. Personal protection (gloves, masks, one-way breathing airways) must be available in each provider's first aid kit.

## MENTAL WELLNESS

**Mental wellness can have a significant impact on workplace safety and employees' well-being.** Dedicating time to mental wellness shows employees that you care and brings supervisors, managers and employees together in support of a healthier, happier work environment.

### Set the Tone

As a company leader, you can set the tone for a supportive, mental health-friendly work culture.

- **Educate workers** about mental health issues and take action to foster a supportive workplace culture.
- **Provide employees** with mental health conditions with the support they need to perform their best. This may include reasonable accommodations such as flexible work arrangements and scheduling, leave to assist in accessing treatment, a workplace mentor, more frequent breaks.
- **Support employees** who have or may develop a mental health condition. Some employers do this through an employee assistance program (EAP). EAPs assist employees and family members experiencing personal difficulties that might impact job performance. If your organization does not offer formal EAP services, you can take steps to make all employees aware of mental health providers in their communities.
- **Assess** your employer-sponsored health care plans to ensure they provide coverage for behavioral health/mental health treatment.
- **Make resources available** for emotional health all the time, instead of waiting to offer them when someone is having a hard time. Consider adding a mental wellness section to your weekly or monthly newsletter/ bulletin or your company's intranet.



**It is important to note** that it is not your job to diagnose, ask or speculate about an employee's mental health. Your role is to supervise and ensure employees meet performance requirements—and address problems when they do not. Providing support and referring employees to assistance for underlying issues is an important strategy for doing so.



**NYSIF has launched an initiative to raise awareness of mental wellness as an important component of workplace health. Interested companies can access and download an action plan at [ww3.nysif.com/wellness](http://ww3.nysif.com/wellness) that will help you plan your own “Mental Health Awareness Week” and view other resources to learn more about how mental health concerns can impact workplace morale and productivity.**

## WORKING CONDITIONS

The following safety concerns are common to most businesses. **Attention to them could help you lower your accident frequency.**

### Machine Guarding

Machinery is a frequent source of injuries. **Machine guarding can protect workers** from contact with moving parts, mechanical and electrical failures, splashes and chips, and human error. Two primary areas require attention: **points of operation** and **mechanical transmissions**.

**The best guards are original** rather than added devices. An original factory-installed guard is better than one improvised later. **Guards and automatic feed systems**, when available, that totally enclose moving parts, provide maximum protection.



### Lockout/Tagout

**This OSHA-mandated regulation is a lifesaver.** Severe accidents can occur when an operator changes a die, oils a machine or otherwise adjusts a machine not completely deactivated, as when a mechanic tries to repair a machine still receiving energy.

By placing machines into a **“zero energy state”** through a lockout device, you prevent the possibility of unexpected mechanical movement. There must be no electricity, oil or air or water under pressure that might cause a machine to move unexpectedly.

### Housekeeping

**Obstructions in aisles, or on stairs or other walkways** cause many accidents. Grease or other liquid spills are avoidable dangers and should be cleaned up immediately. All trash should be placed in containers, with oily rags in closed cans. Put materials and tools away when not in use. Do not use aisles as storage areas and do not block fire exits.

### Lighting

**Lighting should be adequate** for the tasks performed in all work areas and common areas. Poor lighting often causes accidents.

### Ventilation

**Proper ventilation is essential** for both accident and health considerations. Use appropriate ventilation and filtration systems where toxic gases, vapors, fumes or dust exist.

### Electrical

**Electrical outlets, switches and junction boxes** must be properly covered. Portable tool plugs, unless double insulated, should have ground connections. Outlets, tools and extension cords must comply with regulations concerning ground fault interrupters.

## Flammable Liquids

**Store all flammable liquids properly** in grounded storage tanks. Use only approved portable containers that, when being filled, remain grounded through a bonding wire to the storage tank. This includes plastic containers.

**Avoid accidental mixing of chemical substances** that may lead to a possible toxic reaction or explosion. **Use appropriate clothing and face shields** designed to protect against flame, radiant heat and chemicals. Smoking must be prohibited.

## Fire Extinguishers

**Fire extinguishers should always be in sight** and within reach. **Inspect them regularly** and always keep them fully charged.

**Use the right extinguisher for the specific fire hazard: Class A:** for ordinary combustibles like wood, paper and cloth; **Class B:** for flammable liquids and grease fires; **Class C:** for electrical fires; **Class D:** for metals such as sodium and magnesium.

**Multi-purpose ABC extinguishers** cover a range of fire exposures in offices and general industrial operations. Provide designated staff with ongoing training in their proper use. **Emphasize safe exiting** rather than firefighting.

## Elevations

**Scaffolds and elevated platforms must have sturdy railings and toe boards.** Keep ladders in good repair. They should have proper footings. Using chairs, boxes or other makeshift risers is an unsafe act and hazardous.

**Keep walking and work surfaces free of tripping hazards.** Industry-specific fall protection requirements by OSHA include safety gear such as harnesses and lifelines.

## HazCom Standard

The OSHA Hazard Communication Standard requires employers to **educate workers about hazardous chemicals** they work with or are exposed to. Workers must know the exact nature of all chemicals used in your business, including maintenance and cleaning supplies.

Employers must promulgate a written program, **train employees in proper work procedures**, label chemical containers correctly, and provide safety data sheets (SDSs). The program also must address safety for visitors.

## Overhead Objects

**Protect workers from overhead falling objects.** Walkways should be guarded by railings with toe boards. Cross-stack stored materials to insure stability. Prevent objects from falling in all work areas. **Falling objects deserve attention even when they miss human targets.**





## PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

**Personal protective equipment (PPE) must be provided to employees** when these hazards or conditions exist:

### **Hearing**

When noise exceeds OSHA limits, you must **provide (and require that employees use) properly fitted ear plugs or other suitable devices**. Be aware of excessive noise affecting workers. Engineering and administrative controls should be implemented to reduce exposure to noise.

### **Skin**

**Provide proper body protection** to prevent exposure to chemicals or contaminants.

### **Vision**

Eyes are vulnerable to injury. **Many tasks require eye protection**. Many eye injuries occur to coworkers not engaged in hazardous work. Even minor injuries can result in sight loss.

**Provide appropriate eye protection** to workers. Enforce 100% compliance in areas where work requires safety glasses and/or goggles. **Goggles should have side shields** to protect against splashes and fragments. Provide face shields for jobs involving flying particles, exposure to chemicals, heat, molten metal or hot liquids.

### **Face**

**Provide face shields** for grinding and chipping operators, and for employees exposed to facial hazards like liquid splashes.



## Head

**Mandate hard hats** for employees performing any work that has an overhead hazard. Choose suitable models. Don't use metallic hats near electric hazards.

## Hands

**Workers need to wear gloves** when handling heavy, rough or sharp materials. Use **nonconductive gloves** near high voltage, metal mesh gloves for cutting and **chemical-resistant gloves** for a variety of industrial exposures.

## Feet

**Safety shoes suited to the hazard** sharply reduce injuries to toes and feet. Workers should **wear steel reinforced safety shoes** in areas where puncture wounds to the foot are a hazard, such as construction or demolition. High heels, sneakers, open-toed or worn-down shoes increase the incidence of accidents.



## THE FOLLOWING PPE CONSIDERATIONS ARE IMPORTANT

- ▶ **Protection should be complete.** Provide the correct and necessary PPE based on the task or job being performed.
- ▶ **Durability** — Choose safety equipment that won't quickly deteriorate during use.
- ▶ **Comfort** — Uncomfortable protective equipment reduces productivity, and workers avoid wearing it. Order proper sizes and test for it.
- ▶ **Worker acceptance** is obtained through proper training and enforcement.
- ▶ **Comply** with American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and OSHA standards for protective equipment when applicable.

# MATERIALS HANDLING

## Guidelines for Safe Lifting, Carrying and Moving

**Safe material handling** can prevent many workplace injuries. Simple safety measures eliminate unsafe acts that cause back injuries, strains and cuts, as well as dropped and damaged items.



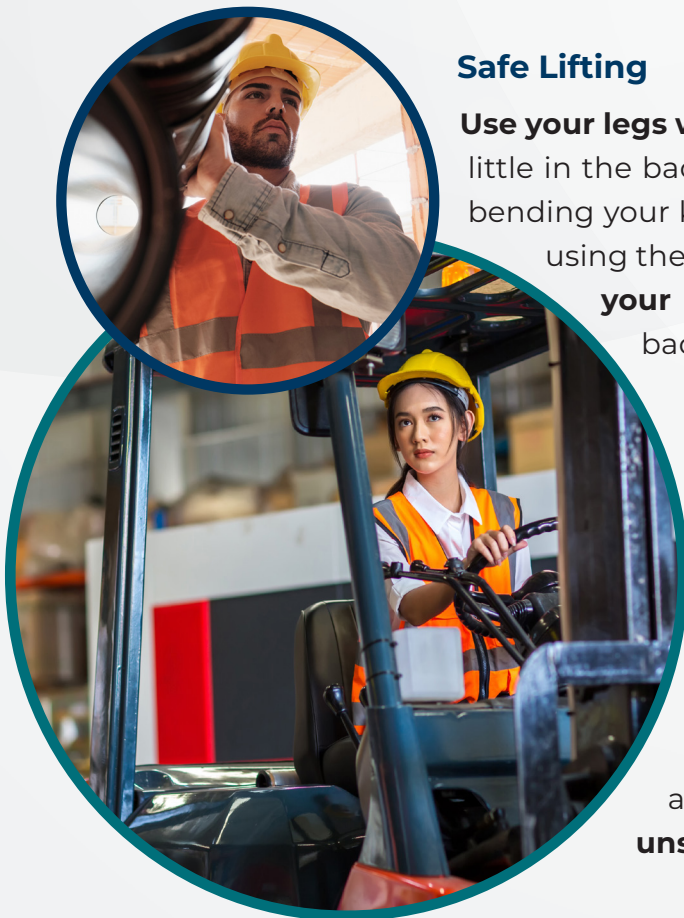
- 1. Plan the lift or move ahead of time.** Know where you will place the item once it's lifted and make sure there's a clear path to that spot. Size up the object and determine how to best handle it. Wear gloves if necessary.
- 2. Know your limits** and get help when needed. A back injury can last a lifetime. It's worth asking for assistance.
- 3. Use devices such as dollies,** hand trucks and pallet jacks to avoid carrying and lifting.
- 4. Avoid overextending your back** by keeping frequently used items nearby.
- 5. Use caution** when carrying items on stairways and ladders. Do not exceed rated load capacity.
- 6.** Rolling ladders should have **wheel brakes that engage when stepped on.**

### Safe Lifting

**Use your legs when lifting!** There is much power in leg muscles, but little in the back muscles. Keeping the back vertically straight, and bending your knees, squat close to the item and grasp it firmly. Lift using the leg muscles, keeping the back straight. **Do not twist your body** to turn or change position—this can lead to a back injury.

### Forklifts

**OSHA has a standard concerning the safe use of motorized forklifts (29 CFR 1910.178).** The standard includes training and skills evaluation, record-keeping, usage guidelines and maintenance for forklifts and similar powered vehicles. **There are numerous safety rules when operating forklifts** and other powered industrial trucks. Proper training and enforcement of safe-operation rules are critical – **unsafe acts are the leading cause of forklift accidents.**



## ERGONOMICS

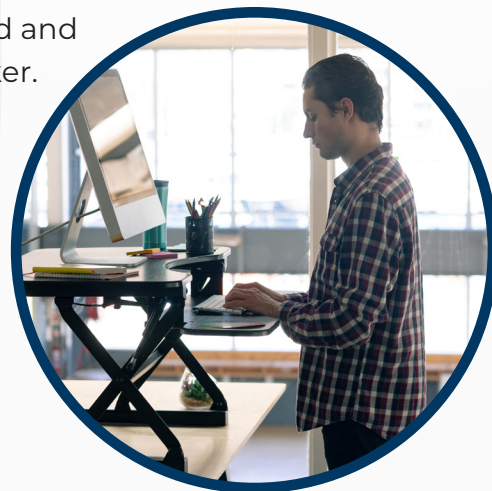
**Ergonomics** generally refers to work-related injuries caused by repetitive motion, twisting and improper lifting.

**Cumulative trauma disorders (CTDs)**, also known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), injure workers in a variety of industries. The most widely known CTD is **carpal tunnel syndrome**.

**Preventing CTDs** requires an examination of the tasks performed and the workplace itself to ensure a proper “fit” between job and worker.

Often, simple steps like engineering and administrative controls, education, job redesign, new tools and **replacement or adjustment of workstations**, can solve ergonomic problems.

**Proper body mechanics and physical fitness** can also help reduce MSD problems. For claims already filed, it is useful to **perform a trend analysis** looking for injury patterns. Then observe workers as they perform their task.



### HOW TO REDUCE CTDs

Look for these injury-causing conditions and acts that can lead to CTDs.

- ▶ How do workers stand, hold a tool, reach over, lift or bend?
- ▶ Do they perform the same motion repeatedly?
- ▶ Are workers observed in awkward positions or postures?
- ▶ Are desks or workstations at the proper height?
- ▶ Are employees reporting any MSD-related symptoms?

If these injuries are common in your industry, what steps are taken to address them?

By eliminating or mitigating each of the points mentioned above, you can dramatically reduce the risk of MSDs and CTDs in the workplace.

## AIR QUALITY

Engineering is the preferred solution for mitigating fumes, gas, dust or other contamination. If engineering isn't feasible, or during installation of engineering controls, use appropriate respirators. **OSHA's Respiratory Protection Standard (29 CFR 1910.134)** mandates use of protective equipment in various industrial settings.

There are three major classes of respirators: **air-purifying, air-supplied and self-contained breathing**. They are not interchangeable. A particulate filter mask is useless against solvent vapors, harmful gases or oxygen-deficient atmospheres.

**Discuss all complaints about air quality** objectively and note exact symptoms. Ensure proper ventilation and maintenance of air-handling equipment and filters. **Inspect vents and intake air flow parts** for air quality, mold and any other potential cause of what has commonly become known as "sick building syndrome."

**Use respirators with care.** Misuse of respiratory equipment can cause death — immediately or slowly over years. Proper fit is important. Follow manufacturers' recommendations and specifications for proper fit and fit testing.

### **Medical Status, Review**

**A pre-employment physical examination** or questionnaire identifies persons who have respiratory conditions that might inhibit respirator use. For the same reason, **review annually the medical status of employees using respirators**. All employees should have any pre-existing condition documented.

Indoor environmental specialists can help with respiratory problems. The **American Industrial Hygiene Association (<https://www.aiha.org/>)** maintains a list of consultants and specialties, and a list of accredited laboratories. **OSHA ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov))** provides information about its respirator standard.

Respirator manufacturers can provide technical help. Visit the **National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH)** for more information:

[www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/respirators/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/respirators/)

## WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

**Workplace violence** includes robbery, coworker conflicts, employer/employee or supervisor/sub-ordinate conflict and domestic violence spillover.

**An active shooter incident** in the workplace is a special sort of violent act. Since this situation requires special preparation, it is addressed in its own section.

**All workplaces are potential targets** of violence. Therefore, all businesses should proactively manage the threat of workplace violence.

- **Create a strong, clear policy** with zero tolerance of violence, threats and abuse of any kind.
- **Define both acceptable behavior** and consequences for noncompliance.
- **Recognize your company's exposures** and minimize them.

### Internal Threats

- **Employ sensitivity but take prudent precautions** during emotionally charged times such as layoffs and firings, which can trigger violence.
- **Train supervisors, security personnel and all staff** to be aware of potentially violent situations and signs of troubled or disgruntled workers or customers. Employees who deal with hostile clients or who work in health care and custodial care are at high risk.
- **Recognize that violence is a constant threat**, take appropriate precautions and have a response plan.
- **Treat all threats seriously**, no matter what the context.

### External Threats

An effective prevention program should **distinguish between external threats such as robbery risks and internal conflict** because they require different strategies. Homicides are a major cause of workplace deaths. However, most murders in the workplace result from robberies, not coworker or employer-employee conflicts.

**Awareness is the key to crime prevention** in businesses prone to robbery: retail stores, hotels, restaurants, jewelers, gas stations, taxi cabs, car services and others that handle cash.

**Encourage employees to report** all suspicious or dangerous incidents and take the following common-sense precautions:

- **Tell staff to cooperate** during a robbery.
- **Do a security survey.** Change locks, if necessary; avoid single-employee shifts; install cameras and alarm systems.
- **Keep track of keys.** Use locks whose keys have restricted duplication.
- **Use approved panic exit devices.** Some come with alarms to deter theft. Don't compromise fire safety, mark inaccessible exits clearly.
- **Keep all areas well lit**, especially entrances and parking areas.
- **Use highly visible signs** to indicate that safes operate on a time-delay or employees can't open them if that is the case.
- **Screen new employees** for criminal history, always investigate references. Pay attention to employment gaps.





## **ACTIVE SHOOTER PREPAREDNESS**

**An active shooter** is an individual who is engaged in killing, or attempting to kill, people in a confined and populated area. In most cases, active shooters use firearms and there is no pattern or method to their selection of victims.

**Active shooter situations are unpredictable** and evolve quickly. Because these situations are often over before law enforcement arrives on the scene, individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation. However, prevention is possible by **understanding the threat, training workers to be prepared and clearly communicating the danger** when an active threat exists.

### **Strategies for preventing an active shooter situation in the workplace include:**

**Plan and prepare in advance, improve security** to prevent intrusion; and **understand the options** should a shooter gain access. Since the threat can be internal, workers trained to recognize common red flags can keep everyone on alert.

**Preparation is critical** to counter the fear that comes with an active shooter situation. There are no absolutes to guarantee a safe outcome, but common-sense measures can help: **stay alert, remain calm, rely on training**. Active shooter threats must be addressed and formally incorporated into emergency plans. Update existing plans to include this risk.

**Employee Training is necessary**, so everyone knows what they are expected to do. This includes communicating, listening for announcements, alerting authorities and taking appropriate action. **Holding active shooter simulation drills and evacuation drills**, like fire drills, allows workers to practice what to do if someone with a gun enters the facility.

**Improve premises security** to prevent intrusion. Conduct a security review of the physical plant, especially entry doors and their hardware. **Account for access codes or extra keys**, especially in the case of former employees. Regularly schedule door inspections and maintenance, add door alarms, balance life safety codes with security needs, install surveillance equipment and utilize uniformed security guards.

**Communication is vital.** Have a warning mechanism to alert workers in danger through a public-address message, phone apps or email. **Workers should know whom to call** and how to describe the situation.

**Explain the response options** as part of active shooter training. In an actual shooter situation, the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS) recommends three potential responses:

- 1. Evacuate** — Escape if it safe to do so. The best exit may not be the usual fire evacuation route. Workers should know all possible escape routes and determine the best route based on where the shooter is located or headed.
- 2. Hide** — If evacuation is not possible, find a place to hide that is out of the active shooter’s view. Get to a location that can be locked or barricaded, if possible. Use heavy tables or desks to block doors. Wedge-shaped door stops that hold doors open can be reversed to prevent doors from being forced inward. Stay away from windows. Remain quiet and silence cell phones.
- 3. Fight** — As a last resort if there is no means of escape and your life is in imminent danger, attempt to disrupt and/or incapacitate the shooter. Act aggressively; use improvised weapons within reach, such as chairs, fire extinguishers, etc., to stop or delay a shooter. A bright flashlight can temporarily blind attackers, making it possible to escape, hide or disarm them.



## RESOURCES

DHS— Active Shooter: How to Respond

[https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active\\_shooter\\_booklet.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/xlibrary/assets/active_shooter_booklet.pdf)

DHS— Active Shooter Preparedness:

<https://www.cisa.gov/topics/physical-security/active-shooter-preparedness>

CVE— Active Shooter Public Portal:

<https://www.dhs.gov/archive/cveas-portal>

FBI— Active Shooter Awareness:

<https://www.fbi.gov/how-we-can-help-you/active-shooter-safety-resources>

## EMERGENCY PLANNING & EVACUATION

An **emergency plan** enables your organization to evaluate its risks and prepare for unexpected occurrences that could harm workers, damage facilities or disrupt operations.

**OSHA requires most businesses with 10 or more employees to have a written emergency plan.**

Top management must support the plan, periodically review and update the plan, and involve all employees in its execution.

### Creating a Plan

In your emergency plan, **life safety is the primary consideration**, followed by **business continuity** and **organizational survival**.

- **Devise and implement** a workable solution that protects lives and property. Creating a comprehensive plan involves an emergency coordinator and a response team.
- **Gather key people** and the necessary data to create the plan. Employee involvement is critical, especially when there is a need to document and implement complex shut-down or contingency procedures.

**NYSIF Risk Control Consultants** can help evaluate your risk, the hazards of your operations and physical location, and what emergencies are likely to arise. **Risk Control Consultants can help you:**

- **Evaluate floor plans**, exits, evacuation procedures, notification systems, medical facilities, staff training and overall emergency readiness.
- **Honestly consider** how effective your plans would be in dealing with risks your organization may face and modify them as necessary.

### A WELL DESIGNED EMERGENCY PLAN

- ▶ **Assesses** likely emergencies, their causes and means of prevention
- ▶ **Minimalizes** injuries and loss of life
- ▶ **Defines** a chain of command during emergencies
- ▶ **Maintains** proper communications throughout the crisis
- ▶ **Preserves** physical assets, property and cash flow
- ▶ **Establishes** contingency operation plans
- ▶ **Provides** rapid return to normal operations



## Evacuations

The key to successful evacuation — and survival — is **establishing safe, effective egress routes**, communicating them to all employees, and holding practice drills to get occupants out quickly and calmly.

- **Egress routes should provide the most direct way out.** They must bypass hazardous areas. They must be properly lit and be wide enough to accommodate the number of persons expected to use them.
- **Clearly mark all exits.** They must be unobstructed. Panic exit devices and alarm systems eliminate the need to double-lock critical fire exits.
- **Evaluate evacuation routes objectively** through a competent authority from outside your organization.
- **Ensure escape route diagrams** (with a “You are here” legend) are placed at strategic points and show hallways and exits. **Designate and train searchers and wardens** to guide all visitors outside and assist the disabled and non-English speakers.
- **Provide lighted exit signs and battery-backed emergency lighting.** These are required by many building codes to illuminate escape routes and guide occupants to exits in smoky conditions. Test these systems regularly.

## Practice Drills

- **Conduct practice drills regularly.** Management and employees should not view these as an inconvenience. Experience has shown that practice drills help employers get occupants out alive during actual disasters.
- **Assign specific safe gathering areas** for personnel to report to after an evacuation. Once outside, a coordinator should perform a head count of all employees and visitors. Those missing should be reported to the coordinator, but no one should go back inside to search without proper authorization.



**Emergency management guides for business are available from the Federal Emergency Management Agency at [www.ready.gov/business](http://www.ready.gov/business).**



## SAFETY INSPECTIONS

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**Supervisors should make regular, detailed inspections** of their areas to detect unsafe conditions, such as those arising from mishandling of materials, scrap accumulation or wear and tear on machinery. During inspections, observe employees to help identify unsafe work acts.

**Additional inspections can reveal hazards** that supervisors overlooked. These can be performed by a safety director or another supervisor. **Inspection committees** of two or three supervisors are very effective. Where a safety committee exists, two or three members can make inspections before the committee's meetings. It's good practice to rotate this role among committee members.

**Make sure inspectors cover your entire operation**, whether it takes one inspection or a series of inspections to obtain a complete survey. If your company is engaged in a continuous process, start at the beginning, with raw materials, and continue step-by-step through all production phases, to completion and delivery of the final product.

**Schedule inspections regularly** — monthly, quarterly or at any suitable interval. Stick to your schedule. You may be required by law to inspect equipment at specified intervals. This includes fire extinguishing apparatus, pressure vessels, boilers and elevators.

**Use checklists** to ensure you haven't missed anything. Take accurate notes and record all unsafe conditions and unsafe acts.

**Inspectors must wear safety equipment** and observe all required safety practices in areas they visit. They should not talk to workers without their supervisor's approval. Avoid criticisms; stick strictly to facts.

Inspectors should **complete written reports that recommend corrective action for hazards or unsafe practices**. Include target dates and names of those responsible for hazard corrections.

**Remember:** The intent is to find ways to **reduce accident exposure**.

**Stick to a regular inspection schedule. Keep records of all unsafe conditions and acts. Include target dates and the names of those responsible for hazard correction.**

**Inspections should cover all areas of safety** including, but not limited to:

### **Building Conditions**

- **Structural safety** — walls, floors, elevators, stairways, railings
- **Housekeeping** — clear aisles, walking and working surfaces
- **Egress** — unobstructed exits
- **Fire Protection** — extinguishers, sprinkler systems, water tanks, storage of flammables
- **Electrical** — switchboxes, outlets, extension cords

### **Machines/Tools/Equipment**

- Guarding, wiring, power transmissions, shafting
- Condition of hand and power tools
- Chains, cables and ropes

### **Health Hazards**

- Atmospheric contaminants
- Noise levels

### **Procedures & Practices**

- Safe practices in all operation
- Adequate lighting

### **Protective Clothing/Equipment**

- Use of required PPE
- Proper equipment suitable to the hazard
- Cleanliness/maintenance

### **Employee Behavior**

- Unsafe acts
- Not following rules
- Horseplay





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