MERMA
Monterey Educational Risk Management Authority

The MERMA Monthly June 2024

June is Maintenance Safety Month

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HELPFUL LINKS

www.merma.org
www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/
Schedule an Ergo Evaluation

Forklifts–Operating safely around pedestrians.

There are simple, safe practices for forklift operators to follow that will prevent incidents with pedestrians. Operators must always:

- Look in the direction of travel, and make sure the view is unobstructed.
- Stop the forklift when talking or listening to someone on the floor or when using any communication device.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians.
- Sound the horn or give another appropriate warning and move slowly or stop when workers may not know that a forklift is moving in their direction.
- Drive slowly when going around corners and when your vision is limited by obstructions in areas with regular foot traffic or where people are working.
- Cooperate and plan out communications with pedestrians when sharing the same work area.
- Stay within marked forklift travel lanes and aisles, and slow down and use the horn to alert pedestrians when you travel across any marked pedestrian traffic lanes.
- Be alert to foot traffic during shift changes and at break times.
- Look around whenever raising and lowering the forks.

Other safe practices for operators include:

- When backing up, look in the direction the forklift is moving, constantly scan the area for pedestrians and objects to avoid, and proceed very slowly.
- When a forklift is left unattended, make sure to set the forks close to the ground, turn off the power, set the brake, and remove the key.
- Never let anyone hitch a ride on a forklift or stand on the forks.

Flammable liquids–handling them safely.

Liquids are rated as flammable because the vapors they give off can catch fire. The term "flammable liquids" means any liquid having a flash point at or below 199.4 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) (93 degrees Celsius (°C)).

Any large amounts of these liquids must be in a special storage room or cabinet specifically designed for flammable liquids labeled with the words "Flammable—Keep Fire Away." Keep only a 1-day or one-shift supply of a flammable liquid near any industrial operation. Flammable liquid containers need to:

- Be clearly identifiable, i.e., labeled with a proper hazard communication label, as required by Title 8, California Code of Regulations 5194(f), featuring the flame pictogram, which is a diamond with a picture of flames on a white background with a red border.
- Be stored in a self-closing safety can with a spark arrestor in the pouring spout. Do not leave flammable liquids in open containers because the liquid can vaporize and cause an ignitable mixture to build up.

When rags or other materials are used with flammables, the liquid-soaked rags must be stored in a metal container with a close-fitting lid. This keeps excess oxygen away from the rags and reduces the possibility of a fire. When exposed to the air, some rags can produce enough heat to cause them to ignite spontaneously.

All ignition sources must be controlled around flammable liquids. No smoking is allowed, and non-sparking tools may be required. Special explosion-proof electrical equipment may also be required, and never use standard electric power tools around flammable liquids.

All bulk containers must be grounded and bonded during dispensing operations. This means there must be a conductive connection between the receiving container, the dispensing container, and a specially installed ground, like a water pipe.

Some materials can be ignited by the minimal energy of a static spark; therefore, when liquids are drawn from a bulk tank into a portable use container, the containers should be bonded to the tank. This means there should be a solid connection between the tank or barrel and the container. Self-closing valves must be used with the dispensing containers to limit spills.

Any spilled material must be cleaned up and properly disposed of.

Paper and cloth must be kept away from open flames, matches and cigarettes must be kept away from flammable liquids, such as gasoline, kerosene, or other solvents. It's important to watch for excessive heat, such as that generated by friction on machines.

A basic formula to keep in mind is that fire prevention requires:

- Keeping fuel sources to a minimum,

- Limiting the oxygen available to the fuel, *and*
- Controlling heat or ignition sources.

Being aware of and following these suggestions are essential for saving homes, jobs, and even lives.

Head protection–Inspecting and maintaining your hard hat.

A hard hat has two basic parts: the shell, which is the outer portion of the hard hat, and the suspension system, which is the inside part that keeps the hat securely on your head.

Before you use your hard hat, you should inspect it for damage. Check the shell for cracks, dents, scratches, and other signs of wear. If you find even a small crack, the hard hat should be replaced.

Also inspect the suspension system to make sure it's in good condition. Check the webbing and buckles for cuts, frays, and other damage, and make sure the suspension is properly adjusted to fit your head. You may have to adjust it after you get a haircut or if your hair has grown much longer than usual.

To maintain your hard hat and keep it in good condition, follow these do's and don'ts:

- DO clean the shell and suspension with mild soap and warm water. Rinse it and wipe it dry.
- DON'T store your hard hat in direct sunlight, as this can damage the shell.
- DON'T use paints, solvents, chemicals, adhesives, gasoline, or any similar substances on your hard hat.

Hard hats are generally marked in the underside of their brims with date codes that indicate when they were made. Familiarize yourself with these date codes so you know when it is time to replace your hard hat.

Shells should generally be replaced every 2 to 5 years, depending on working conditions. If your hard hat is frequently exposed to direct sunlight, chemicals, or extreme temperatures, replacement at 2 years is usually necessary. Suspension systems should generally be replaced at least every 12 months, depending on the environment you work in.

If your hard hat undergoes a strong impact, replace it even if it looks like there is no damage.

Hand protection–Cut-resistant gloves: Quiz

Hand protection–cut-resistant gloves.

Gloves come in many materials, each of which has unique protective qualities. A

1. Which of the following materials are cut- and puncture-resistant gloves made from?

A. Metal mesh

B. Steel core

C. Rubber-coated fabrics

D. All of the above

2. It's important to select a glove that will protect your hands from the specific hazards you encounter. TRUE or FALSE

3. You should wear gloves at all times, no matter what machinery you are working with. TRUE or FALSE

4. When should you get a new pair of gloves?

A. Weekly

B. When the gloves have tears

C. When the gloves have holes

D. Both B. and C.

ANSWERS

1. **D.** 2. **TRUE.** 3. **FALSE.** 4. **D.**

few common materials include:

- **Metal mesh,** which is made of stainless-steel rings;
- **Steel core,** which is a fabric with steel woven into the material;
- **Kevlar®,** which is the material used in bulletproof vests; *and*
- **Rubber**-coated fabrics.

In addition to glove material, cut and puncture resistance depends on other characteristics, including thickness and coatings applied to the outside surface. It's important to select a glove that will protect your hands from the specific hazards you encounter. Make sure your gloves fit you properly and that they are the right length for the job.

Cut-resistant gloves provide protection from sharp objects like knives and blades, while puncture-resistant gloves protect against pointed items like needles. Abrasion-resistant gloves protect against rough surfaces. Manufacturer ratings will indicate how protective a particular glove is against these hazards.

The material of a glove and the coatings applied to it affect how well you will be able to grip items while wearing it. Grip can be important for protecting against cuts and punctures, especially if you are working with slippery objects.

It's also important to know when not to wear gloves. When you're working with certain types of machinery, gloves can create a greater hazard because they could be caught in the machinery and possibly pull your hands in with them.

Inspect your gloves for damage each time you use them. If they have tears, holes, or other defects, discard them and get a new pair. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning, storing, and caring for your gloves.

D F G S L A L E U N	forklift
K O L H D P A I A R	pedestrian
P R O T E C T I O N	flammable
D K V N K A R D S D	liquids
P L E L H T D D E T	head
I I S O S N I V R L	protection
N F I E A U N Q A O	hand
T T D H Q B H I L M	gloves
T E H I N A L I L F	
P F L A M M A B L E	

eBacksafe® by Future Industrial Technologies, Inc. (FIT)

Are you looking for strategies to improve culture, morale, staffing, and safety? The eBacksafe® program is perfect for you. **eBacksafe® is a great program that is free to our member districts, it is a virtual injury prevention program designed for teachers and paraeducators, however, the information and safety tips pertains to all types of classifications including maintenance, administration, and yard supervisors.** Note: Segments of the virtual safety training were customized and filmed locally to ensure that real-life wellness scenarios were addressed.

FIT has been in business for 30 years helping school districts and other organizations throughout the US protect the health and wellbeing of employees. Fatigue, discomfort, pain, and injuries are often caused by Cumulative Micro Trauma, and when employees learn how to prevent it, their quality of life at work and home improve dramatically.

Contact Maria Lorenzana via email at mlorenzana@merma.org or by phone at (831) 296-9196 for details on enrolling your staff in the virtual eBacksafe® training program or for training on any of the topics listed on this newsletter.

June Safety Calendar

June	June 2-8	June 11
National Safety Month	National Trailer Safety Week	National Ride to Work Day