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Weekly Safety Tip

Life Is All About Choices![®]

February 9, 2015

SCI Safety Tip: Practical solutions to keep workers safe, comfortable, and productive

Source: <http://www.blr.com> (Part 2)

Date: January 30, 2015



Standing: Problems and solutions

Although the hazards of excessive sitting have received the most attention recently, prolonged standing carries its own set of challenges. For employees who work on their feet all day (such as chefs, hairdressers, surgeons, and warehouse employees), problems can include sore feet, swelling of the legs, varicose veins, muscle fatigue, low back pain, and neck and shoulder stiffness, among others.

When standing, workers have fewer positions to choose from. They're limited by the layout of the workstation and the placement of keys, controls, and displays. The result is more rigid postures and fewer choices for moving around and resting working muscles.

According to the Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety, "Keeping the body in an upright position requires considerable muscular effort that is particularly unhealthy even while standing motionless." It reduces blood supply to muscles, which can cause fatigue and pain in the muscles of the back and neck.

SCI Safety Slogan

Give Support and Back Safety!

James Lehrke-SCI

Prolonged, frequent standing without the relief of walking can cause blood to pool in the legs and feet and inflammation of the veins. Excessive standing also results in immobility (“locking”) of the joints in the spine, hips, knees, and feet, which can lead to degenerative damage to the tendons and ligaments that bind muscle to bone. Changing job design and providing seating to give workers some relief from standing can mitigate the risks. Other ideas:

- Change positions frequently.
- Make sure the workstation fits variously sized and shaped employees and provides adequate support.
- Provide a foot rail or portable footrest to shift body weight from leg to leg.
- Avoid extreme bending, stretching, and twisting.
- Allow rest and exercise periods for workers.
- Provide instruction in proper work practices.

Allow an adjustment period for workers when they return after being away for vacation, etc.

SCI OSHA Compliance: When PPE is the only choice, make it the right choice

Source: <http://www.blr.com> (Part 3)

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The CSX safety team has built a number of checkpoints into the workday to confirm that employees are wearing their PPE. For example, protective gear is covered during job safety briefings that occur before every shift. It’s a quick check to ensure that employees know what’s expected in terms of tools and protection. PPE also figures into operational tests mandated by the Federal Railroad Administration. The agency requires that supervisors conduct daily observations of employees on the job. Internal CSX requirements go even further.

CSX employees who work alone (solo workers) are trained to conduct personal job safety briefings before starting to work. There are also pretask briefings throughout the day as tasks change. And PPE is addressed in-depth during quarterly safety training.

Other best practices

The conventional wisdom is that when employees are involved in PPE selection, they are more likely to reliably use it. With that in mind, CSX maintains an active PPE committee that includes representatives from departments such as safety, purchasing, human performance, and industrial hygiene.

“We use a single vendor (distributor), which is very important so we can ensure our quality and supply.” Morton says the distributor representative attends PPE committee meetings, reviews new products, and discusses any issues.

Once the PPE committee and safety department have approved new equipment, employees participate in trials of the gear. “People like being consulted; they want to have a voice,” says Morton.

CSX looks for other ways to encourage use of PPE. Upon their completion of annual safety training, the company provides employees with a new pair of steel-toed safety boots. Workers choose online from more than 25 styles, and the boots are shipped to their homes. Morton says the railroad has seen a definite correlation between the boot program and reductions in foot and ankle injuries. “We really feel it’s a nice thing to do for our employees, but it has a great safety benefit as well.”

The railroad continues to encourage workers to make the right and safe choices. Adds Morton, “We’re not completely there yet on intrinsic motivation. But our folks know that there will be no corners cut, whether because it’s the right thing to do or because of our culture.”

I’LL TAKE A RESPIRATOR AND SOME CHIPS

Much as they select their favorite snacks and beverages from vending machines, some employees can also choose PPE like goggles, gloves, and other gear. Among the advantages of PPE vending systems is that they help employers monitor and track use of the items.

Gary Gokey of Safety Management Group, an Indianapolis-based safety consulting firm, likes the idea. He says the machines make it easy for employees to make PPE choices, typically using a card, which they enter into the machine. With the machines, workers don’t feel that they have to trouble a supervisor to ask for needed PPE.

Adds Gokey, “The employer can see if someone is getting multiple pairs of glasses a day and can regulate use.” Some companies use the vending machines to accommodate employees who have forgotten or lost their PPE. Being able to quickly



Quick Tips for Healthy Living

PREVEA

Health & Wellness

The Flu Fight!

The flu can be a very serious disease. In fact, the flu can hospitalize up to several hundred thousand people in the United States per year. But by following a few simple suggestions, you can help fight the spread of this disease.

Flu Prevention
Get vaccinated.

Yearly flu vaccines are the most important step in protecting yourself against this disease.

- The flu vaccine fights a different group of flu viruses every year. Make sure to be vaccinated each year.
- Flu vaccines are especially important for young children, pregnant women, people age 65 and older, and people with chronic health conditions like asthma, diabetes or heart and lung disease.
- Yearly flu vaccination should begin soon after the flu vaccine is available, and ideally by October. However, getting vaccinated even later can be protective, as long as flu viruses are circulating.

Stop the spread of germs.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands with hot water and soap often, especially before you eat. If you can't get to a sink, use alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Clean and disinfect surfaces that may harbor flu germs.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle.
- Eat a balanced diet to keep your immune system stay healthy. Consume lean proteins (chicken or fish), fruits and vegetables to get the vitamins and nutrients you need.
- Get enough exercise.

Continued next week

supply the needed gear prevents lost work time. The vending machines are offered by a number of companies.

Industry voice—ISEA

The International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA) is the PPE trade organization. Its membership is made up of manufacturers as well as some distributors. The group develops standards and is responsible for administration of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) standard for products such as hard hats, eyewash and shower equipment, high-visibility vests, and eye and face protection.

The ISEA is the official representative to a number of other standards committees and serves as the lobbying arm for the PPE industry. "We're political but not partisan," explains President Dan Shipp.

Asked about trends in PPE, Shipp offers, "There are only so many ways you can protect a head, basically by putting a hard shell on it."

But while the basics of PPE don't change much, there are important refinements. "For example," says Shipp, "in hand protection, within the last few years there's been an enormously diverse collection of gloves that take advantage of new materials. These deliver better cut protection but still provide dexterity, vibration resistance, and impact protection."

Shipp points to advancements in product development to ensure better-fitting, better-looking gear. "There was a time when safety glasses all looked like Buddy Holly glasses and came in two sizes," he says. "Now companies are developing eyewear that fits various sizes and shapes of faces. They look cool, they come in colors, and sometimes they have popular brand names on them. All that is to get the worker to wear them."

That's important, he adds, because in PPE, compliance equals protection. When a worker gets injured, the problem is usually that the item was not being worn, was being worn improperly, didn't fit, or was the wrong type or classification for the hazard. "It is very seldom the case that the PPE failed and didn't provide the protection," says Shipp.

Continued next week



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