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## *Weekly Safety Tip*

*Life Is All About Choices!®*

May 5, 2015

### SCI Safety Tip: New research confirms extraordinary job risks for nurses

Source: <http://www.blr.com>

Date: May 1, 2015

Nurses and nursing assistants experience the most workplace injuries of all [healthcare](#) workers, according to a new study from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). If you're a medical employer, you probably need to be doing more to protect them. Click here for important information.

In 2013, one in five reported nonfatal occupational injuries occurred among workers in the healthcare and social assistance industries, giving these sectors the highest number of such injuries for any private industry. Healthcare sites reported 10,680 OSHA recordable injuries attributable to patient handling and movement; slips, trips, and falls; and workplace violence.

In 2013, the rate of injuries and illnesses related to workplace violence increased for the second year in a row. OSHA has published new violence prevention guidelines for healthcare and social service personnel at <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/osh3148.pdf>.

NIOSH found that nursing assistants had more than twice the injury rate of nurses for patient handling and violence. Other studies found ergonomic injuries are increasing among nursing staff.

The incidents are related to risk factors like caring for overweight



***SCI Safety Slogan***

***Culture of Success in  
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***James Lehrke-SCI***

and acutely ill patients, high patient-to-nurse ratios, and long shifts. Another factor is the current preference for getting patients up and moving almost immediately after procedures are performed.

Interventions like the use of lifting equipment are recommended to reduce patient-handling injuries. Another strategy is to establish a safety culture that emphasizes continuous improvement and provides training, resources, and access to lifting teams and equipment. NIOSH concludes, “Emphasizing worker safety promotes and strengthens patient safety, which contributes to improved patient care and reduced costs.”

### **10 tips for keeping nurses safe and healthy**

The nursing magazine and website Scrubs.com recommends the following.

Share these tips with your workers:

- Prevent needlesticks by using technology that covers sharps. Don’t circumvent the safety features in the name of time or convenience.
- When lifting patients, push—don’t pull—to protect your back.
- If you’re lifting something from the ground, always lift with the knees, starting in a squat position with the weight close to your body.
- If you are concerned that a situation might turn violent, always team up with a coworker. Make sure you have a safe exit route, and don’t let the patient come between you and the door.
- Avoid latex allergy reactions by using gloves made from synthetic materials and without powder.
- Make sure all staff are made aware of patients who may be fall risks.
- Avoid becoming distracted. Studies show that nurses who are distracted make more errors, which can be detrimental to themselves and their patients.
- Even though you’re on your feet all day at work, you still need to exercise. Get your heart rate up for at least 30 minutes a day, five days a week.
- Find a way to forget about nursing when you’re off work; build fun and relaxation into your schedule.
- Get enough sleep, which is something many nurses fail to do, especially those who work the night shift. Sleep and fatigue can put you at risk, affect patient care, and can make even simple tasks difficult.



## **SCI OSHA Compliance: The pitfalls of noncompliance**

Source: [www.blr.com](http://www.blr.com) (Part 1)

Date: April 28, 2015

Following safety regulations isn’t just the right thing to do—it keeps employers on the right side of OSHA enforcement and saves money by avoiding fines, legal fees, and more. Keep reading to learn about six companies that ran afoul of OSHA regulations and paid the price.

### **Trench collapse kills two workers**

*Landscape, excavation, and snow removal company*

New Jersey OSHA Region 2

**Willful and serious violations:** After a trench cave-in killed two workers installing a drain system at a historic farm in October 2014, OSHA initiated an inspection of the worksite and cited the employer with one willful and nine serious safety violations. The investigation found that on the day of the incident, employees were working in a trench between 9 and 13 feet (ft) deep without cave-in protection. The willful violation was due to the trench not being adequately sloped or protected by shields or shoring. The serious violations included not providing ladders in the trench every 25 ft to allow safe exit, not having a competent person inspect the trench, failure to have utilities marked, failure to provide head protection, and failure to train workers on chemical hazards.

**Penalty:** \$77,000 fine

### **Two companies cited for multiple hazards**

*Screen printing company; Apparel distributor*

New Jersey OSHA Region 2

**Serious violations:** In response to a complaint, OSHA inspected a company that imprints graphic design images onto apparel such as T-shirts and sweatshirts. The inspection was expanded to include an apparel distribution company that shares facilities, management,





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## Are You Sitting to Much?

By now you have probably heard of the term “sitting disease” and the health dangers involved with sitting to much. Many health experts say today’s sedentary lifestyle is the equivalent of smoking cigarettes. US studies show that adults on average spend eight hours of their day sitting. **Health problems from sitting too much:** For most us, the majority of our time spent sitting is work related, either at our desk or commuting to and from work. The eight hours we spend sitting puts us at an increased risk for a variety of health hazards:

- **Heart disease:** Sitting for long periods causes your muscles to burn less of the fatty acids that can clog your heart. Blood pressure and bad cholesterol levels increase too. Sedentary people have twice the risk of heart disease that active people do.
- **Diabetes:** When you’re not moving, your body’s cells don’t respond to insulin as quickly, which can trigger your pancreas to produce more. This can lead to diabetes and other diseases.
- **Muscle degeneration:** Sitting lets your abdominal muscles relax, instead of working to hold you upright like they do when you stand. Your glutes suffer too. When they go unused, they can hurt your stability. The hip muscles can shorten and get tight from not being flexed, which can limit your flexibility and stride length.
- **Back and spine trouble:** If you don’t move around enough, your spine can become inflexible and injure easily. Moving around forces the discs between your vertebrae to expand and contract, taking in blood and nutrients. Sitting too much can cause damage to the discs. Tendons and ligaments can stiffen too.
- **Soft bones and poor circulation:** Bones need to be put under stress to stay strong, and sitting doesn’t do that. It does, however, let blood pool in the legs, and that can cause anything from blood clots to varicose veins and swollen ankles.
- **Fuzzy brain:** Muscles that are on the move keep fresh blood going to the brain and body. When you’re not moving, blood flow slows down, as does your ability to think.

**The misconception about standing all day:** There’s no question sitting too much is bad. But as more and more studies got published showing just how bad, standing desks soared in popularity. If sitting all day is bad, then standing all day must be good, right? That’s the message many people took away. The reality is standing in one place for long periods of time without moving can cause problems too. While standing burns a few more calories, it demands more energy from your body, puts pressure on your heart to circulate blood throughout your body, and strain on your veins, back, and joints. The important thing to remember is you need to move your body around. What you chose to do really can be simple. But it’s up to you to challenge yourself every day to sit less and move more.

maintenance employees, and a safety department with the screen printing company. The inspectors found a variety of hazards and cited the screen printing company with 15 serious violations for lack of a hearing conservation program, blocked exits, trip and fall hazards, lack of training on chemical hazards, lack of lockout/tagout training, and lack of eyewash facilities. The apparel distributor was cited with seven serious violations for blocked aisles and exit routes, energy control deficiencies, failure to train workers on chemical hazards, unsecured storage racks, and damaged electrical connections on forklift battery chargers.

**Penalty:** \$43,200 fine (screen printing company) and \$21,000 fine (apparel distributor)

## Roofing workers exposed to fall hazards

*Roofing contractor*

Florida

OSHA Region 4

**Willful and repeat violations:** A Florida contractor was cited with six safety violations after employees were seen working on roofs at two jobsites without fall protection. Two of the citations were willful violations, which were issued for allowing employees to work on roofs at heights of 8 and 12 ft without fall protection. Repeated violations were issued for not ensuring that workers wore eye protection, for having unsafe wiring, and for not training workers on how to use fall protection systems.

**Penalty:** \$184,000 fine

*Continued next week*

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*In Loving Memory of Jessica Lehrke*

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