



Weekly Safety Tip



"Your Connection for Workplace Safety"
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We're about service, commitment, results, and accountability!

Our Weekly Safety Tip provides valuable and current safety information relevant for Work, Home & Play.

And, you will be kept current on the latest Safety Compliance issues.



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Safety Slogan

**Playing with Pills...
Kills**

James Lehrke-SCI

of the week

SCI Safety Tip: Prescription Painkillers Kill more People than Motor Vehicle Crashes. Have you addressed this Workplace Hazard?

By Emily Clark

Source: www.blr.com

Date: June 6, 2014

In Week 1 of [National Safety Month](#), the National Safety Council is reminding employers and workers about the dangers of prescription drug use in the workplace. Have you addressed this workplace hazard at your facility? Keep reading for essential information.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 22,000 people die annually from overdoses of prescription painkillers, which now contribute to more deaths than all illegal drugs such as heroin and cocaine. The CDC also says women are at particularly high risk: although more men than women still die from prescription painkiller overdoses, the gap is closing, and from 1999 to 2010, the percentage increase in deaths was more than 400% among women, compared to 265% among men. Women are more likely to have chronic pain, be prescribed prescription painkillers, be given higher doses, and use them for longer time periods than men, and women may become physically dependent on these medications more quickly—all risk factors for addictions and overdoses.

For employers, the consequences are multifold. Workers who are abusing opioid painkillers—particularly those in safety-sensitive positions such as operating machinery—may be at increased risk for incidents, injuries, and errors due to the drugs' effects on alertness and mental clarity. An impaired worker can be a danger both to him- or herself and others (coworkers and/or members of the public), potentially leading to costly accidents, workers' compensation claims, and lawsuits. Finally, there's the loss of productivity that can occur both from a worker dealing with a drug addiction and from any resulting accidents or injuries. The following is a list of on-the-job behaviors the National Safety Council highlights as possible indications of a prescription painkiller problem:

- Lack of attention or focus
- Poor decision-making
- Decreasing work quality
- Poor judgment
- Unusual carelessness
- Frequently missing work

In many cases, prescription painkiller abuse stems from a legitimate injury or medical condition. An initial prescription for an opioid painkiller can lead to physical dependence, and sometimes addiction, if the drug is not taken as prescribed or is taken for a long period of time. For employers, this means that injury prevention—particularly prevention of the [musculoskeletal disorders](#) that can cause chronic pain—is key to preventing prescription drug abuse. A [job hazard analysis](#) can help to identify places where employees could be at risk of injury. Look for hazards from lifting and overexertion, awkward postures, contact with objects or equipment, slip and fall hazards, repetitive motion, and other issues. A wellness program that encourages employees to maintain a healthy weight and be physically active can also help to prevent injuries.

In addition, working with your workers' compensation provider to develop a system for managing and treating injuries that focuses on limited, responsible use of prescription painkillers can help to manage the problem if an employee does become injured. Physical therapy, anti-inflammatory medications, and exercises are a few of the many methods can help treat injuries and manage pain without the need for opioid painkillers.

Finally, make sure you have a clear [drug-free workplace policy](#) that addresses abuse of opioid painkillers in addition to alcohol and illegal substances such as heroin and cocaine.

Share these tips from the National Safety Council with employees to help prevent unintentional overdoses:

- . Only use medications as directed by your physician.
- . Always follow the recommended dosage prescribed by your physician.
- . Keep medications in their original container.
- . Don't share prescribed medications.
- . Properly dispose of any unused or expired medications.

Talk with your physician or pharmacist for information about possible drug interactions with other medications you may be taking.

SCI OSHA News: OSHA Offers Guidance for Classifying Combustible Dust under HazCom

Source: www.blr.com

By: Paul Lawton

Date: June 6, 2014

OSHA has issued guidance for its inspectors to determine if makers and importers of chemicals have correctly classified products as combustible dust hazards under the revised Hazard Communication (HazCom) Standard (or HCS).

The recent guidance, issued as an interpretation and sent to OSHA regional administrators, affects manufacturers and importers of chemicals ("classifiers"), not users.

In March 2012, OSHA amended its HazCom standard to align with the Globally Harmonized System for the Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). The final rule did not include a definition of the term "combustible dust." Instead, OSHA referred to previous guidance provided in its national emphasis program and through voluntary consensus standards.

The hazard communication standard requires classification of chemicals, but it does not require that chemicals be tested to determine how they should be classified. HazCom asks that classifiers consider the hazards of the chemical as it is transported, as well as hazards that would result from normal use and foreseeable emergencies.

Methods for Manufacturers and Importers to Classify Chemicals

One way for classifiers to gain knowledge about a product is through experience. OSHA explains that if the product has been involved in a deflagration or dust explosion, it should be classified as a combustible dust unless the classifier can show that the conditions of the incident were not normal.

Absent such knowledge, OSHA offers the following methods for determining if a product presents a combustible dust hazard:

- Laboratory testing. Many voluntary standards recognize ASTM E1226 and ASTM E1515 as reliable means to establish a combustible dust hazard. OSHA's national emphasis program also describes acceptable testing methods.
- Published test results. The National Fire Protection Association (<http://www.NFPA.org>) publishes lists of test results for various materials. As well, OSHA has published a list of combustible materials based on information provided by the NFPA. OSHA refers classifiers to other sources for dust explosion characteristics. In the absence of specific product data, OSHA says classifiers may rely on published test data for the classification of dusts if these test data apply to a material similar to the product in question.
- Dust particle size. The NFPA has traditionally defined "combustible dust" as 420 microns or smaller in diameter, and OSHA has used that definition in previous guidance. In the recent memo, OSHA instructs that in the absence of test data, or if the testing is inconclusive, classification may be based on particle size. "If the material will burn and contains a sufficient concentration of particles 420 microns or smaller to create a fire or deflagration hazard, it should be classified as a combustible dust," the agency explains.

OSHA has instructed enforcement personnel to find out what information classifiers have used to determine a combustible dust hazard. But OSHA adds, "Classifiers may have other reliable methods to establish whether their product does or does not present a combustible hazard in normal conditions of use and foreseeable emergencies."

HEALTHY BITES
Quick Tips for Health

PREVEA
Health & Wellness

Neck Injuries and Disorders

Any part of your neck - muscles, bones, joints, tendons, ligaments, or nerves - can cause neck problems. Neck pain is very common. Pain may also come from your shoulder, jaw, head, or upper arms.

Muscle strain or tension often causes neck pain. The problem is usually overuse, such as from sitting at a computer for too long. Sometimes you can strain your neck muscles from sleeping in an awkward position or overdoing it during exercise. Falls or accidents, including car accidents, are another common cause of neck pain. Whiplash, a soft tissue injury to the neck, is also called neck sprain or strain.

Treatment depends on the cause, but may include applying ice, taking pain relievers, getting physical therapy or wearing a cervical collar. You rarely need surgery.



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*In Loving
Memory of Jessica Lehrke*