

LABORSAFE

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A guide for health & safety at home & on the job

EYE SAFETY

WEARING PROPER PROTECTIVE EYEWEAR IS CRITICAL ON ALL WORK SITES

Construction and remediation work is risky business for the human eye. Each day, roughly 2,000 eye injuries occur in the U.S. workplace, costing more than \$300 million per year in lost production time, medical expenses and workers compensation. Of course, no dollar amount can measure the personal loss to the workers these accidents impact.

Fortunately, eye injuries are among the most preventable of injuries. Studies suggest that roughly 90 percent of eye injuries could have been avoided with the use of proper protective eyewear. That's why it is important that Laborers remember to use eye protection on the job – regardless of the type of work.

Here are some helpful tips to keep your eyes safe on the job:

Maintain a safe work environment

- ◆ Minimize falling or unstable debris
- ◆ Make sure that safety features on machines and tools (guards and screens) are in place
- ◆ Ensure that workers know how to use tools properly
- ◆ Keep bystanders out of the hazard area

Wear proper eye and face protection


- ◆ Select the appropriate eye protection for the hazard – safety glasses, goggles, face shields or full-face respirators
- ◆ Choose eye protection that fits properly and stays in place
- ◆ Make sure eye protection is in good condition



Beware of common hazards

- ◆ Dust, concrete and metal particles
- ◆ Falling or shifting debris, metal or glass building materials
- ◆ Smoke, noxious or poisonous gases
- ◆ Chemicals (acids, fuels, solvents, lime, wet or dry cement powder)

Emergency eye treatments

- ◆ If a foreign object is caught in the eye, use an eye washing station immediately.
- ◆ If an eye washing station is not available, flush eyes with lukewarm water repeatedly for 15 minutes to avoid permanent damage.
- ◆ Wash your hands thoroughly before touching the eyelids to examine or flush the eye and do not touch, press or rub the eye itself.
- ◆ If solid or liquid chemicals or fumes get into the eye, flush immediately and seek emergency medical attention to avoid burns.
- ◆ Do not try to remove a foreign object except by flushing, because of the risk of scratching the surface of the eye (cornea).
- ◆ If a foreign object scratches the cornea, it may be difficult to tell whether the object has been removed. Seek medical attention immediately if this occurs.
- ◆ If you notice vision changes or signs of an infection after an eye injury, seek medical attention immediately. 

ADULT OBESITY

Gaining weight is a growing problem with deadly side effects

Adult obesity has become a serious problem in the U.S. With the prominence of super-sized meals at fast food restaurants, sedentary lifestyles and rising stress levels, more than 60 million Americans – 30 percent of the population – are now obese.

Obesity can lead to the development of a host of health problems, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, gallbladder disease, cancer, osteoarthritis and premature death. It can also worsen asthma and can cause sleep apnea.

Unfortunately, many believe that being overweight can't be helped and is simply a result of poor genes. While genetics do play a part, eating and exercise habits largely determine one's weight.

The National Academies' Institute of Medicine calls for adults to do at least one hour a day of some type of physical activity – walking, biking or even gardening – to control

weight. The best diet for minimizing the risk of obesity is one that is heavy on fruits, vegetables, whole grains and nuts, and light on fatty meats, fried foods and whole-fat dairy products. Here are some easy tips to help keeping your weight under control:

Pass on that extra helping

During the holiday season, the big meals never seem to end. It takes some willpower, but try to eat smaller portions that feature vegetables and grains.

Exercise in the off-season

Make sure to exercise regularly in the off-season. Working out or keeping up a reasonable amount of physical activity can burn up your stored calories - even taking a 15-minute walk once a day will help.

Reduce your job stress

People who are constantly under stress about their work are more likely to become overweight. Find an activity that reduces stress, like playing a sport. 🍌



HEART DISEASE

A common but preventable killer

As heart disease rapidly gains notoriety as one of the most deadly health problems in the nation, it is important to be aware of the dangerous connection between heart attacks and obesity.

According to the American Heart Association, more than 70 million Americans are afflicted with some form of heart disease. Coronary artery disease is the most common form of heart disease and top cause of death in the U.S. Even more sobering, the majority of these cases could have been prevented with proper diet and exercise, as heart disease is the second most preventable death in the nation.

Obesity plays a considerable role in the development of heart problems. More than 300,000 people die each year from heart disease caused primarily from being overweight.

How is it prevented?

It's never too late to make lifestyle changes. From 1989 to 1999, the death rate from coronary artery disease declined 24 percent because of the efforts people have begun taking to avoid the disease. Here are some preventive steps to follow:

- ✓ **Quit smoking.** If you smoke, quit now. The risk of coronary artery disease decreases by 50 percent in the first year after quitting.
- ✓ **Improve exercise habits.** Research has shown that getting 30 – 60 minutes of physical activity every day can help lower blood pressure and cholesterol and keep your weight down.
- ✓ **Change diet.** Good nutrition also plays a key role in maintaining a healthy weight. Obesity places you at risk for high cholesterol, high blood pressure and diabetes.
- ✓ **Manage diabetes.** People with diabetes are two to four times more likely to develop cardiovascular disease.
- ✓ **Reduce cholesterol.** Fat lodged in your arteries can trigger a heart attack or stroke. Keep an eye on and reduce the amount of fat you eat.
- ✓ **Lower high blood pressure.** It's the single largest risk factor for stroke. Pass on the salt and take any medications your doctor recommends.
- ✓ **Reduce stress.** Some research has shown a relationship between coronary heart disease risk and stress. Find ways to relieve everyday stress in your life.
- ✓ **Limit alcohol.** Drinking too much alcohol can raise blood pressure, cause heart failure and lead to stroke. 🍷





MOLD REMEDIATION

Containment is key

Public concern about mold exposure has increased in recent years as more is learned about the variety of health effects and symptoms mold can cause.

Approximately 25 million Americans suffer from allergic reactions to molds. Whether it is aging office buildings, housing complexes or other public places, mold can be found almost anywhere and can grow on virtually any organic substance where moisture and oxygen are present.

Due to the rise in demand for mold remediation, Laborers have gained significant knowledge and expertise in this type of work. It is important to remember that working around mold can be dangerous.

Be on the lookout for mold in workplaces that are damp or moist. Active mold takes the form of green, gray or black spots, sometimes with a fuzzy or slimy quality, and often accompanied by a musty smell. Inactive mold is dry and powdery and is usually white. The remediation process can cause mold spores to become airborne, increasing the risk of serious side effects.

Tips before beginning mold remediation work:

- ❖ Laborers who are allergic to molds and fungi should visit their doctor before beginning remediation work to make sure their health will not be endangered.
- ❖ Keep dust levels as low as possible while working. Wet materials with a solution of bleach and water (1 cup of bleach per gallon of water). Never use a power washer.
- ❖ Wipe down any residue with the bleach and water solution and let air-dry.
- ❖ To help limit the release of mold spores during clean-up, affix fire-retardant polyethylene sheeting with duct tape to floors, ceilings, air vents and doors around contaminated area. 