

Attributes of a Safe Worker

You are alert to all possible hazards in your work environment. You take whatever steps necessary to correct or avoid them.

You are always aware of your surroundings and how to safely interact with your environment.

You take advantage of any and all safety training offered in your workplace so you can learn to protect yourself, your co-workers and the public.

You report all hazards, accidents, close calls and other incidents so unsafe situations can be corrected.

You seek first aid for all injuries, no matter how minor, before they develop into larger problems.

You wear the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) required for your job. You seek the advice of your supervisor in choosing and fitting this protective gear, and you maintain it correctly.

If you identify a hazard, the next question is what you should do about it.

"Am I authorized to fix it?"

Even if you know how, make sure you have permission to do this kind of work.

"To whom should I report it?"

Your supervisor would be the place to start, and he may refer you to the maintenance department or other source of help.

"Should I warn others away until it is taken care of?"

Keeping everyone away is the first consideration after your own safety when dealing with dangers.

Risk Services Notes

STRUCK-BY INJURIES

Did you know that the number one cause of injury for State of Florida employees is Struck-By? One of the reasons for this is the injuries that are reported under this cause code group vary widely from motor vehicle accidents, to insect stings, to falling objects, there are too many to list, but they vary widely. However, many of the injuries within this category are preventable by following a few simple rules of safety.

Everyone has a responsibility to protect themselves, their fellow workers and the public from injury. This means becoming an active participant in your company's safety program; not just a bystander. It means following safety standards and safe work procedures. It means prompt reporting of potential hazards, incidents, injuries and illnesses.

In most operations, unsafe environmental conditions or mechanical failures are easier to control than human behavior. Some workers ignore the dangers while others take heed. Some workers have difficulty keeping their minds on the job while others are always focused. Often, the difference is a matter of attitude and often a change in attitude comes about the hard way.

You should report all injuries and all "close call/near miss" incidents. You need first aid for even minor injuries and your company needs a record of all injuries. By reporting close calls, you can help prevent an injury from occurring later. Your observations count so never simply rely on your boss or the safety officer to determine if your job is safe. Use your own eyes, ears and mind. Promptly report any unusual noises, conditions or actions of equipment. Doing so could prevent a fatal accident.

It doesn't matter whether you work in a warehouse or an office - a struck-by injury can occur. It is usually things that you do everyday that can lead to one of these injuries. For example, you open a file cabinet top drawer in your cubicle and you're only going to be using the file for a few minutes, so you leave the drawer open. A few moments later your co-worker comes into your cubicle and runs face first into the open drawer - this is an example of a struck-by injury and one that happens more frequently than we care to realize. Was it avoidable? Absolutely! Take the few extra moments to close the file drawer regardless of the length of time it may remain open.

Another example of a avoidable incident; you're walking through an office or a warehouse when suddenly a small object falls from above and almost hits you and you walk away and don't report it to anyone. Later that day in the same area a ceiling tile falls and hits a fellow employee in the head, sending him to the hospital. If you had reported

your "close call" from earlier that day an inspection could have taken place and there's a good chance that the employee that was injured could have completed his workday safely.

Don't ever be afraid to report a "close call" or to report unsafe conditions just because you think it makes you look "silly". If you report a "close call" and later that day someone is injured, you will at least know that you attempted to have the issue resolved. And this leads to another question, should you follow up to insure that the person you reported to took corrective action? Yes, if it is a condition that can lead to injury or equipment damage, but each situation is different and you have to be the judge.

The main thing to remember about struck-by injuries is that if you remain alert chances are you can avoid the majority of them. We are all guilty of becoming complacent in the areas that we work in day in and day out. We report to work each day and walk directly to our assigned area and don't notice the environment around us. You walk into the supply room everyday, just as you've done for years and nothing ever fell on you, so why would you notice that someone put a box of copy paper on the top shelf and they didn't push it in far enough and now all that has to happen is for you or someone else to bump the shelf and down comes the box. This doesn't mean for you to become paranoid about everything around you, it just means take the time to notice your environment. This is information that you can use all day, every day, not just at work.

Before you bend down to pick up that piece of paper under your desk, make sure and notice how far you have to lean out to avoid hitting your head when you stand up, when you place an object on a shelf, make sure it is back far enough so as not to fall, and always pay attention while driving! Avoiding struck-by injuries is just a matter of using common sense and staying alert. It also involves good housekeeping within your work area and reporting that "close call".

There are many situations in life where you rightly can be told to mind your own business, but workplace safety is not one of them. Your own safety, and that of your co-workers, is most definitely your business.

In fact, the more you discover about any workplace hazards and unsafe practices, the safer everyone will be. So start your own safety investigation and make it a daily practice. Please see the attached safety poster and remember "Safety First".



Look up and down, and all around,
You never know what's coming down.