

# 8 WORKPLACE SAFETY TIPS

## EVERY EMPLOYEE SHOULD KNOW

~eSafety

No matter how many safety guidelines and practices you've set in place, they won't do any good if your employees aren't aware and invested in following those guidelines. The safest work environments occur when employees, at all levels of the organization, work together to communicate and adhere to the safety standards set in place. A successful safety program is one that encourages employees to report unsafe situations and behaviors, and encourages safe practices throughout each and every work day.

Here are 8 workplace safety tips every employee should know to ensure all employees are engaged in developing a safety program that encourages the shared responsibility of everyone in the workplace:

### **#1 BE AWARE OF YOUR SURROUNDINGS**

Every job site has inherent dangers, whether that's large, heavy machinery, conveyor belts, or even tripping over items in the office. The best way to keep yourself safe is to be aware of your surroundings. The more familiar you are with your tasks and workplace, the more aware you'll be of the potential hazards. Knowing your surroundings and being aware of potential hazards will help you and your co-workers avoid unnecessary or dangerous situations.

### **#2 KEEP CORRECT POSTURE**

We've all heard that age old saying, "lift with your legs—not your back," but keeping correct posture refers to more than just employees who lift things regularly. If you work at a desk, you also need to make sure you have good posture to avoid back problems, neck pain, and even carpal tunnel. Of course, if you do have to lift things at work, be sure to keep your back straight and lift with your legs. And if you ever need to lift something you think might be too heavy, take a few extra seconds to find the mechanical aid that can help you, or lift with a partner. Whether it's a forklift or a wheelbarrow, your back is worth those extra few seconds.

### **#3 TAKE REGULAR BREAKS**

It's important that employees always take their regular breaks. OSHA has put them in place for a reason: tired workers are the most prone to an incident. The more tired you are, the less aware you are of your surroundings, and the more at risk you are for an injury. Take the breaks you're given on a regular schedule to keep yourself fresh, and try to schedule your more difficult tasks for the beginning of your shift when you're most alert.

### **#4 NEVER TAKE SHORTCUTS ON PROCEDURES**

Workplace procedures exist to keep employees safe, especially those that go along with heavy machinery. It's important to always use every tool and machine you're working with according to instruction. Shortcuts lead to injury and aren't worth the small amount of time they might save you. Be sure you're always using the right tool for the job, and using it correctly.

## **#5 BE AWARE OF NEW SAFETY PROCEDURES**

When your company purchases a new machine, or even updates training, it's important to make sure you're aware of the new safety procedures that go along with those changes. While your employer is responsible for providing the proper training, and your supervisor will make sure you're assigned to a training time, it's your responsibility to ensure you understand the new safety procedures and implement them properly before you use any new machines. Be sure to ask questions if you don't understand a safety procedure.

## **#6 KEEP EMERGENCY EXITS CLEAR**

Never place anything in front of an emergency exit door, even if it's only for a few minutes. While this might sound like a no-brainer, it's surprising how many ladders, trolley carts, and even forklifts get set in front of emergency exits. What's more, ensure pathways to equipment emergency shutoffs are clear in case something needs to be powered down immediately.

## **#7 REPORT UNSAFE CONDITIONS**

The only way to stop unsafe conditions from happening is to report them to supervisors as soon as you notice them and help be part of the solution. Your supervisor is legally obligated to provide all employees with a safe working environment, and will take care of any unsafe conditions, but they have to be aware of those conditions to do so. It's important to always report any hazardous situation or unsafe condition as soon as possible, to keep yourself and other employees safe. Work together to find a solution to prevent the unsafe condition from occurring again in the future.

## **#8 ALWAYS WEAR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

Finally, make sure you're always wearing the personal protective equipment (PPE) provided to you by your employer. Whether it's something as small as earplugs, or something as large as a chemical suit, this PPE exists for a reason. Wearing the correct PPE for the job you're performing is just another way to keep you safe from injury.

While all employees should do their best to understand and implement workplace safety best practices, it's up to managers and business owners to ensure their employees have the training they need to reduce risk.