

# **Eye Protection**

## **A SAFETY TALK FOR DISCUSSION LEADERS**

This safety talk is designed for discussion leaders to use in preparing safety meetings.

Set a specific time and date for your safety meeting. Publicize your meeting so everyone involved will be sure to attend.

Review this safety talk before the meeting and become familiar with its content. Make notes about the points made in this talk that pertain to your workplace. You should be able to present the material in your own words and lead the discussion without reading it.

Seating space is not absolutely necessary, but arrangements should be made so that those attending can easily see and hear the presentation.

Collect whatever materials and props you will need ahead of time.

Try to use equipment in your workplace to demonstrate your points.

## **DURING THE MEETING**

Give the safety talk in your own words. Use the printed talk merely as a guide.

The purpose of a safety meeting is to initiate discussion of safety problems and provide solutions to those problems. Encourage employees to discuss hazards or potential hazards the encounter on the job. Ask them to suggest ways to improve safety in their area.

Don't let the meeting turn into a gripe session about unrelated topics. As discussion leader, it's your job to make sure the topic is safety. Discussing other topics wastes time and can ruin the effectiveness of your safety meeting.

At the end of the meeting, ask employees to sign a sheet on the back of this talk as a record that they attended the safety meeting. Keep this talk on file for your records.

## **Eye Protection**

### **NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

Bring to the meeting the different types of eye protective devices that may be used in various departments of the hospital, such as the lab or maintenance department.

Have you ever thought about what life would be like without eyesight? How would you get dressed in the morning? How would you make a living? How would you enjoy the flowers in your garden or the expressions on your children's faces at Christmas?

Your eyes are important in almost all your activities, and because eyes come only one pair to a customer, they deserve all the care and protection you can give them. What actions can you take to protect the eyes that are so important to your happiness and well-being?

The most important thing you can do is to wear eye protection when there is a danger of flying particles, dust or harmful liquids getting into your eyes.

Maintenance department employees know the importance of eye protection because they are sometimes exposed to flying particles of wood when operating power saws, intense light when welding, and spray paint that may get into the eyes.

Perhaps you think that your ordinary eyeglasses offer enough protection against any eye hazards you may encounter. Think again!

On impact, regular lenses tend to shatter more easily. Safety lenses may shatter, but they require a much greater impact. Various types of eye protective devices have been designed, including safety glasses, goggles and full-face shields. Their uses differ according to the type of work.

Industrial-thickness glass, plastic and polycarbonate lenses meet or exceed the requirements of the eye protection standard. In general, each type of lens does offer certain advantages and disadvantages.

Glass lenses provide good scratch resistance and can withstand chemical exposure. They can also accommodate a broad range of prescriptions. But glass is heavy and can be uncomfortable. Plastic and polycarbonate lenses are lighter weight, protect against welding splatter, and are not likely to fog. Unless specially coated, these lenses are not as scratch resistant as glass. They also cannot accommodate as wide a range of prescriptions as glass lenses. Polycarbonate lenses are superior to glass and many other plastics in strength and impact resistance.

**NOTE TO DISCUSSION LEADER:**

At this time you can show employee the types of eye protection they should use.

You should always wear the type of eye protection recommended for the work you are doing; you never know when an accident will occur.

Remember, sight was never saved while safety glasses were worn on the forehead or carried in the pocket.

Contact lenses should not be worn anyplace there is a chance of foreign matter, especially around harmful liquids, entering the eyes. Liquids can get trapped under a contact lens. Frequently, before the lens is removed and the eye is flushed with water, delicate eye tissue has been damaged. You may think you don't look good wearing goggles or safety glasses, or that you look your best only with contact lenses. You shouldn't allow these thoughts to interfere with eye safety, because you are exposing yourself to the possibility of an accident that could blind you.

By wearing appropriate eye protection, you should be able to avoid injuries to your eyes. However, there is still a possibility that you or those around you might need eye first aid. Here are a few points you should remember in case of an eye injury.

**In the case of a foreign particle entering an eye:**

- Do not rub the eye, because this may force the particle deeper into the tissue.
- Wash your hands before examining the eye; this help prevent infection.
- Do not attempt to remove a particle that is embedded in the tissue; this will result in further damage. Place clean, preferably sterile, patches over both eyes and get to a physician as quickly a possible.

In case of a burn to the eye or eyelid, from acid for example, the eye should be irrigated for 10 minutes with clear water. This can be done with an eye dropper or syringe, or by using one of the special eyewashes provided in laboratories.

Accident prevention through detection and correction of vision problems and adequate illumination of the work area can also save your eyes.

You need good eyesight to perform your job effectively, efficiently and safely.

Periodic eye examinations are a must, because they are often the only way people learn that their vision is defective. In fact, people may have vision that is considerably less than optimal and remain unaware of it because the defects have developed so gradually that changes went unnoticed. Have your eyes examined and your vision tested annually.

If you are more than 40 years old, this examination should include a test for glaucoma, a condition of increased pressure in the eyeball, which is responsible for a large percentage of blindness in adults. If defects are found, steps can be taken to correct them. With clear vision, you will be able to spot and correct or avoid hazards in your environment.

Adequate illumination is also necessary if you are to perform your job safely. You should report to your supervisor if you think lighting is inadequate or if lightbulbs or fluorescent tubes need to be replaced.

Don't risk losing one of your most precious possessions, your eyesight.

Wear eye protection when needed and encourage others to do the same. If an accident should happen, you'll be very glad you did.