



Occupational Health
Clinics for Ontario
Workers Inc.

Centres de santé
des travailleurs (ses)
de l'Ontario Inc.

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PROTECT YOUR EYES! PRACTICE EYE SAFETY AT HOME AND AT WORK

According to the Bureau of Labour eye injuries are very common with more than 2,000 eye injuries occur each day.

The main causes of eye injuries include:

1. Physical contact with objects or particles (e.g. metal chips, splinters, fragments, sparks, dust, other debris).
2. Exposure to chemicals (acids or alkalis), pesticides.
3. Exposure to ultraviolet (UV) or infrared (IR) radiation from lasers or other high energy sources.
4. Sparks and slag from welding and cutting
5. Pipes and wires sticking out of walls; objects hanging from ceilings.
6. Unsafe handling of tools.

Prevention: Most eye injuries can be prevented by taking simple safety precautions and wearing proper safety eyewear. Identify areas with hazards where flying parts or debris are a common occurrence (welding, drilling, grinding, wood cutting, lawn mowing etc). Engineering controls such as shields and vacuum devices will help lessen the chance of objects in the air, where appropriate, should be used to limit the objects movements. Administration controls (elimination and preventative maintenance of tools). Be sure to read instructions before using tools and chemicals, and follow the recommended safety measures. Be aware of power tools and other sources of fragments (such as concrete chips when you are driving nails). Use personal protective equipment as it could save your sight!

Choose protective eyewear that is designed for the specific duty or hazard, and ensure it fits and is worn consistently. Protective eyewear used in Canada must meet Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards. Types of protective eyewear include non-prescription and prescription safety glasses, goggles, face shields, welding helmets and full-face respirators.

Care of Protective Eyewear

Eye and face protection should be inspected, cleaned, and maintained at regular intervals so that equipment provides the requisite protection. It is also important to ensure that contaminated equipment which cannot be decontaminated is disposed of in a manner that protects employees from exposure to hazards. Cleaning is particularly important where dirty or fogged lenses could impair vision.

Vision Protection

Have your vision tested regularly by a qualified professional to ensure you have the proper corrective lenses in your safety glasses.

Here are a few very important things you should pay attention for:

- Your near vision should be tested at the actual distance at which you do your job.
- Your safety lenses can then be adjusted to match your prescription.
- When you open containers of acids, caustics or other hazardous liquids, turn your head to the side.
- When you are doing polishing or grinding work, keep your face at a safe distance from the machine.
- Protect your eyes when operating hand or power tools, trimming trees and hedges, using cleaners or spreading fertilizers, herbicides or insecticides.
- When in bright sunlight ultraviolet absorbing eyewear provides the greatest degree of UV protection, particularly if it has a wraparound design to limit the entry of peripheral rays of sunlight.
- Keep sharp and pointed objects away from your face and eyes.
- Never wipe your face or eyes with dirty hands or handkerchiefs because chips or particles clinging to them can accidentally enter your eyes.
- Pay attention to safety signs. Wear the protective eyewear indicated for that area.
- Know the location of eyewash and lens cleaning stations, the nearest clean water supply and where you can obtain medical assistance.

Remember, prevention is the best way to protect your sight. Prevent blindness, plan ahead and practice smart eye safety at work and at home.