

RISK SERVICES

EMPLOYEE SAFETY UPDATE

Injury and illness recordkeeping: Employee information and antiretaliation

Nobody wants a worker to get injured but if an incident happens, it's important to know the procedures your company has in place to report a work-related injury or illness. "Work-related" means an incident in the workplace that results in an injury or illness or that worsens a preexisting injury or illness.

You have the right to report any work-related injury or illness without fear of retaliation from your company. In fact, it's against the law for your company to act against you for reporting an injury or illness. You're encouraged to report any work-related incident.

Even minor injuries are warnings that something happened that wasn't planned. Unless your company knows about incidents that don't result in injuries (known as "near misses"), it can't correct the problem that led to the incident. If left uncorrected, it can easily happen again, and it may be more serious the next time. So, report every incident or unsafe condition that causes, or could have caused, an injury.

Your company has specific steps for you to follow in the event of a work-related injury or illness. If you or a coworker is injured or becomes ill as a result of normal work duties, you should take the following steps:

1. If it's a life-threatening emergency or a death, call 911.
2. Inform your supervisor as soon as possible, regardless of the severity of the injury.
3. If you see an unsafe condition or behavior, you're encouraged to report it immediately to your supervisor to prevent an injury.
4. Cooperate in the investigation of the event so your company can get to the root cause and make the necessary corrections.

It's important to report work-related injuries and illnesses so you can receive the necessary treatment so steps can be taken to prevent recurrence.

National Clean Air Month 2023

Clean Air Month is observed each May across the United States in association with the [American Lung Association](#) (ALA). Initially a weeklong campaign in 1972, the event was lengthened to a month in 1994. The awareness campaign aims to:

- Educate people on the impact clean air has on our lives.
- Encourage people to take positive steps to improve the air quality — both locally and globally.
- Celebrate the improvements that have been made since the campaign was launched and that the Clean Air Act was included into legislation in 1970.

Clean Air Month allows us to learn more about how our daily activities, such as driving a car, affect the quality of the air around us. A typical passenger vehicle emits about 4.6 metric tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year. CO₂ is one of the common greenhouse gases (GHGs) that contribute to global warming. Clean Air Month coincides with National Bike Month, which features Bike to Work Week

(May 15–21) and Bike to Work Day (May 19). Approximately 40% of all trips in the United States are less than two miles, making bicycling a feasible and fun way to get around.

Clean air has a natural balance of gases, including oxygen, nitrogen, and CO₂. Clean air doesn't contain pollutants or allergens and doesn't cause or trigger health problems or harm the environment. Common air pollutants include ozone (smog), particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide (SO₂), carbon monoxide, toxic air and pollutants.

Poor air quality is linked to serious health conditions in humans, including cancer, chronic bronchitis, allergies and asthma. Those at risk include people with lung disease, children and teenagers, older adults, and those with heart disease or diabetes. Air pollution also harms the environment. The burning of fossil fuels releases high levels of SO₂ and nitrogen oxide into the atmosphere. These gases react with other gases and water to create acid rain, which raises the acid levels of water and disrupts the natural balance of life in lakes and rivers, as well as damages plants and trees.

Use the following tips to protect yourself from the dangers of air pollution:

- Check local daily air pollution forecasts. The color-coded forecasts let you know when the air is unhealthy in your community.
- Always avoid exercising near high-traffic areas. Even when air quality forecasts are green, the vehicles on busy highways can create high pollution levels up to one-third of a mile away.
- Avoid exercising outdoors when pollution levels are high. When the air is bad, walk indoors in a shopping mall or gym or use an exercise machine.
- Walk, bike, carpool and use public transportation or other alternatives to driving your car.
- Use less energy in your home. Generating electricity and other sources of energy creates air pollution.

- Don't burn wood or trash. Burning firewood and trash is among the major sources of particle pollution in many parts of the country.
- Use hand-powered or electric lawn care equipment rather than gasoline-powered.



Forklifts: Tips for safe operations at loading docks

Loading and unloading materials with a forklift at loading docks requires specific skills and a good deal of concentration. There are a lot of distractions at the dock that make for unpredictable or unsafe conditions. Dock plates that are badly placed or poorly secured, unprotected dock edges, and unstable truck trailers are common conditions that cause forklift injuries, and even death, from forklift tip overs.

Always conduct the following safety checks before you enter a truck trailer or railroad car with a forklift:

- The first thing to check is that the truck trailer's rear wheels are chocked, and the brakes are set to stop the trailer from rolling (make sure wheel stops are in place so the railroad car doesn't move).
- If the truck trailer isn't attached to the truck cab or tractor, make sure fixed jacks are in place to prevent the trailer from upending during loading or unloading.
- Make sure the dock plates are strong enough to carry the fully loaded forklift and that they are securely in place and completely cover any gaps or space between the trailer and loading dock.
- Inspect the floor of the trailer to be sure it will support the forklift and load. Make sure there are no broken boards or cracked surfaces, no spills or leaks, and no large areas of the floor that are not supported by cross-members or another structural support.
- Make sure the entry door of the loading dock and the truck trailer door are high enough to clear your forklift mast when it's raised high enough to carry a load.

When you are loading or unloading:

- Make sure the load is within the forklift's rated capacity, is stable while sitting on the forks, and can be centered directly over the forks. If a load is loose or uneven, stack or tie the loose items together so they don't shift or fall.

- Drive straight across the dock plates when entering or exiting the truck trailer or railroad car, not at an angle.
- Use dock lights and headlights when working in a dark trailer.
- Sound the horn when going into or coming out of the trailer.

There are hazards when operating a forklift near loading docks when there is no parked truck trailer or railroad car.

When operating near the exposed edge:

- Keep a safe distance from the edge of the loading dock. A good rule of thumb is to make sure no part of the swinging radius of the forklift can reach the edge of the dock.
- Watch out for "tail swing." Remember the rear of the forklift has a very wide-swinging radius when you turn. It's easy to lose sight of your position and swing right off the edge of a loading dock that has no visible barriers.
- Keep floors around the dock clear and clean so there are no obstacles or surprises in your area of operation.
- Keep an eye on the painted edges of the loading dock as a point of reference to gauge your distance when maneuvering near the edge.



Lockout/tagout: Jammed machines

The first thing to do when a machine jams is to shut off the power supply. If you can't do that yourself, notify a supervisor or someone in charge who can shut it down. Never put yourself in danger by exposing your body to moving machinery parts, including the point of operation. Never reach around a guard or try to remove a guard to fix a machine.

Once the machine is turned off, make sure other workers who may be affected by the shutoff are aware. If you aren't authorized and trained to lock out or tag out machines, ask your supervisor or another person in charge of your operation what needs to be done once the power supply is shut off.

The next step, which should be done only by an employee who's authorized to do so, is to lock, block, or tag out the shutoff/restart device so it's completely isolated from its source of energy so someone can't inadvertently restart the machine. Keep in mind that control devices integrated into the machine, such as push buttons, selector switches, and other control circuit-type devices, aren't isolating devices for the energy source.

For those who are authorized and trained by the company to lock out and tag out machines, follow all the safety procedures for shutdown, lockout/tagout, clearing the jam, and restart after the jam is cleared.

The authorized person in charge of lockout and tagout will notify you and other affected workers that the machine is going to be locked out for service or repair. Stay clear of a machine when it's locked out, and never tamper with a lock or attempt to start a machine that's locked out.

Wait for authorized employees to tell you it's okay before using equipment.

Verify the machine is safe to operate after servicing or repairs have been completed and locks and tags have been removed.





Chemical spotlight

Divinyl benzene

Divinyl benzene is a colorless to pale, straw-colored liquid. It's used in making synthetic rubber, drying oils, polyesters, resins, and ion exchange beads.

Divinyl benzene isn't compatible with oxidizing agents, strong acids, and metallic salts. Store the chemical in tightly-closed containers in a cool, dark, well-ventilated area away from heat. Sources of ignition are prohibited where divinyl benzene is used, handled, or stored.

If divinyl benzene is spilled or leaked, avoid breathing vapors, mist or gas, and ensure adequate ventilation. Remove all sources of ignition and evacuate personnel to safe areas. Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including goggles or safety glasses, gloves, flame-retardant protective clothing, and respiratory protection.

Prevent further leakage or spillage if safe to do so, and don't let the product enter drains, sewers, underground or confined spaces, groundwater, waterways or discharge into the environment. Absorb liquids in vermiculite, dry sand, or earth of a similar material, and deposit in sealed containers. Ventilate and wash the area after cleanup is complete. It may be necessary to contain and dispose of divinyl benzene as a hazardous waste. Contact the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and local environmental regulatory agency for specific recommendations.

Flammable liquids: Housekeeping practices

Storage areas and spills

Keep areas where flammable liquids are stored or used free of combustible materials. Clean up spills of flammable liquids immediately if you are trained to do so and inspect areas where flammable liquids are stored for any sign of leakage from designated safety cans and storage cabinets.

Safe movement

Don't store flammable liquids where they could block or restrict the use of stairways, exits or other areas normally used to safely exit the building. Keep those pathways clear.

Be sure to maintain at least one clear aisle that's at least three feet wide in storage rooms designated for storage of flammable liquids. Don't stack containers in storage rooms if the containers are over a 30-gallon capacity.

Fire extinguishers

Unless you're using the fire extinguisher, don't remove it from its designated location. Be sure that cartons or other objects don't block access to fire extinguishers.

Fire sprinklers

Don't stack materials too close to fire sprinklers, as there must be a minimum of 18 inches of clearance below sprinklers.

Disposing of waste materials

Put flammable liquid waste in approved waste containers designated for that purpose. This includes flammable liquid waste collected in drip cans and pans.

Be sure you know which receptacles are to be used for the disposal of specific wastes and use the right one. Don't mix all dry waste in a common container. Some wastes need to be segregated due to their combustible nature.

