

## **PRESENTER'S GUIDE**

# **“SAFETY HOUSEKEEPING AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS... FOR OFFICE AND FACILITIES PERSONNEL”**

*Part of MARCOM's Safety, Regulatory  
and Human Resources Library*

# **OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS**

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The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **There are several keys to preventing accidents. They include...**
  - Maintaining a good “safety attitude”.
  - Developing good “safety habits”.
  - Learning how to use sound judgement.
  - Knowing your body’s limitations just like you know its abilities.
  
- **It takes real thought and practice to learn how to avoid mental and physical stress when you’re on the job. You have to be able to...**
  - Pace yourself.
  - Recognize when you need to take a break.
  - Never bite off more than you can chew.
  
- **When things become routine, we sometimes forget hazards that are lurking around the next corner. To stay sharp and avoid accidents...**
  - Never let your body run on “auto-pilot” with your mind somewhere else.
  - Don’t let pressure on the job make you reckless.
  
- **If you are using sound judgment in your work area, you should...**
  - Never disable or remove power tool or machine guards to try to be “more productive” (they are in place to protect your hands and fingers).
  - Pay attention to smoke detectors and emergency lights.
  - Never overload electrical outlets or surge protectors.
  - Remember to “lock on” personal fall protection when you’re working up high.

- **Clutter and large and small hazards are major causes of accidents at work. To avoid potential “tripping” problems...**
  - Dispose of excess material and rubbish as quickly as possible.
  - Keep walkways, halls, aisles and stairways free of debris and equipment. (don't store furniture or supplies there either).
  
- **Keep doorways clear, especially emergency exits.**
  - Mark slippery areas with hazard signs so people will know to tread carefully.
  
- **You should also...**
  - Correct small hazards such as a screw jutting out from a door sill, a pencil lying on the floor or a loose piece of carpet.
  - Make sure electrical cords are taped down.
  - Keep drawers closed to prevent painful “trips” to the floor.
  - Report bad lighting immediately.
  
- **Using tools and equipment properly and safely is an important part of accident prevention. Always make sure that...**
  - Tools are clean and in good working order (dirty or damaged equipment can cause accidents).
  - Knives and other cutting edges are kept sharp (when a blade is dull, the extra force needed to make a cut could cause you to lose control).
  - You are using the correct tool for the job (for example, a wrench should not be a substitute for a hammer).
  - You use a ladder to get you “up high”, not a box or a stack of materials.

- **When you're making repairs or performing maintenance on machinery, you should...**
  - Only use tools that have been specifically designed for the job.
  - Make repairs, if possible, with the power source disconnected and all moving parts stopped.
  
- **To avoid back injuries when carrying equipment and supplies, get a good grip and take your time.**
  
- **If an object is too heavy or bulky to lift alone...**
  - Use a hand truck or forklift.
  - ...or ask for help.
  
- **Tool storage is important too. Make sure you...**
  - Return tools to the cases, racks or drawers they came from.
  - Remember to put all the guards back on before you put your tools away.
  
- **A major part of safety housekeeping and accident prevention involves substances that you work around every day.**
  - You might be surprised how many at your workplace are hazardous.
  
- **Before you start to work...**
  - Read labels on soaps, cleaners and disinfectants.
  - Read Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) as well.
  - Wear personal protective equipment such as goggles, gloves or respirators. (check the SDS or talk to your supervisor to find out what PPE you should be using).
  
- **When storing chemicals...**
  - Read the SDS and the labels to determine the environment they need.
  - Pay attention to temperature and ventilation requirements.
  - Make sure there is enough light to read the labels.

- **You should also...**
  - Make sure shelving is strong and corrosion-resistant.
  - Never overstock shelves (too many containers make it difficult to find what you want and can increase the chance of a spill).
  - Make sure the aisles are wide enough to provide safe access to the chemicals and allow for easy movement as well.
- **When working with flammable and hazardous substances...**
  - Store in UL approved cans with “spring-loaded” caps in a “flammable materials cabinet”.
  - Never store food or drinks in refrigerators that also contain potentially hazardous substances.
  - Store compressed gas cylinders so that they are firmly secured in cool, dry, well-ventilated areas.
- **If a chemical spill occurs...**
  - Evacuate the area and notify appropriate personnel.
  - Use the SDS to get information on proper clean up and disposal.
  - Remember that recommended procedures can be different for each chemical.
  - If the substance could be flammable or combustible, remove any open flames or sources of heat from the area and increase the ventilation.
- **During a spill cleanup, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and safety goggles, and in some cases a respirator and “chemsuit”.**
  - If the spill is liquid, use an absorbent solid to soak up the chemical and pack it up for disposal.

- **How you dispose of a chemical is also important. You need to...**
  - Know which substances you can safely put in the trash, and which require special handling.
  - Be extremely careful of chemicals that could become fire hazards, such as cleaning fluids, oily or solvent-soaked rags and photocopier inks and toners.
  - See your supervisor to determine how to dispose of any hazardous substances that you are working with.
  
- **Be aware of obvious biological hazards. For example, follow your hospital's regulations when disposing of items such as used needles.**
  
- **Some jobs don't require personal protective equipment (PPE) while others need it all the time.**
  - PPE can save you from a serious illness or injury.
  
- **Gloves should be used for a number of tasks.**
  - Leather gloves protect against rough materials and other hazards.
  - Cut-resistant gloves are good with sharp objects.
  - Rubber, vinyl or neoprene gloves work well with chemicals.
  - Aluminized gloves are needed to work with hot materials.
  
- **There are a number of situations that require eye protection, such as...**
  - Safety glasses for working around flying particles or debris.
  - Goggles for dust and splashing liquids.
  - Face shields for severely splashing liquids.

- **When working with chemicals that might splash, in extremely dusty or slippery environments, or at workplaces with overhead hazards, you may also need protective clothing, including...**
  - Various types of aprons.
  - Hard hats.
  - Safety shoes with steel toes or removable toe guards, and soles with traction for slippery surfaces.

**\* \* \* SUMMARY \* \* \***

- **Your workplace can contain both obvious and hidden hazards, which can decrease productivity and result in painful injuries, even death.**
- **To prevent accidents, you need to maintain a good safety attitude, develop good safety habits and know your body's limitations and abilities.**
- **Keeping your workplace neat and clean every day and cleaning up slippery areas, and marking them with hazard signs, can reduce tripping and slipping accidents.**
- **An important part of accident prevention is using tools and equipment properly and safely and wearing the right PPE for the job.**
- **If a chemical spills, evacuate the area, notify appropriate personnel and follow recommended cleanup procedures for the substance.**
- **You can help to create a safer workplace if you know the hazards and follow the rules for creating a risk-free environment every day!**