

SAFETY ORIENTATION IN HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS... FOR OFFICE AND FACILITIES PERSONNEL

COURSE OUTLINE

- **Before you begin a task, you have to be mentally prepared to work safely, no matter how simple or routine the job may seem.**
 - Concentration is the key.
 - If you give the task your full attention you are much less likely to make a mistake and cause an accident.
- **There are a number of things that can obstruct our focus.**
 - Anger and frustration are two of the culprits.
 - They can cloud your mind and impair your judgment.
 - A decision made "in the heat of the moment" could have disastrous consequences.
- **If you ever feel frustrated or angry, take a break.**
 - Step back and take a deep breath, or switch to another task for a while.
 - You can resume your original work when you are calm and in the right frame of mind.
- **Drugs and alcohol have no place in the workplace.**
 - They "alter" your state of mind and ability to focus on what you're doing.
- **You have to be careful about what you do on your own time as well.**
 - The residual effects of a substance can cause someone to have an accident hours or even days after they last used it.
 - If you drink, do it in moderation, and don't drive.
 - Make sure the effects of any alcohol you have had are long gone before you start to work.
- **Know your company's drug and alcohol policy, and follow it.**
 - Inform your supervisor immediately if you suspect a coworker is "under the influence".
- **Never operate equipment if you are taking medication that could affect your performance.**

- **You'll be mentally prepared to work safely if you...**
 - Keep your mind clear at all times.
 - Concentrate.
 - Be aware of everything that goes on around you.
- **Preventing accidents is another important part of making safety a top priority.**
 - Most hazards can be spotted and eliminated before they become a problem.
- **Inspect your work area.**
 - Look for "hazards" that could endanger you or your coworkers.
 - Then take steps to remove or reduce the risk of a potential accident.
- **Walkways, hallways and exits should be kept clear of obstacles at all times.**
 - A simple pile of boxes could cause someone to trip and fall, or block an emergency escape route.
- **Loose railings and overstocked shelves can be accidents waiting to happen.**
- **Look for fire hazards as well.**
 - Sparks from machinery, damaged electrical cords, and overloaded outlets can all be a source of ignition.
 - Correct situations like these as soon as possible.
- **As you reach the end of your shift you still have some "safety work" to do.**
 - Tidy up your work area.
 - Properly dispose of scrap.
 - Return left over materials to their assigned storage places.
- **Put all tools, equipment and manuals back where they belong as well.**
 - This eliminates clutter and makes things easier for everyone to find.
- **Don't overload shelves or jam-pack storage areas.**
 - Find a "comfortable" place for everything ... and put everything in its place.
- **Not all housekeeping situations have simple solutions.**
 - If you encounter a problem that you can't solve yourself, talk to your supervisor or safety manager.

- **Wearing gloves, safety shoes and other personal protective equipment (PPE) can help guard against injury.**
- **Foot protection such as safety shoes should be worn in many work environments.**
 - Most safety shoes have soles that are designed for safe traction on specific surfaces, such as oily or wet flooring.
 - Many shoes have steel toes as well.
 - You need to choose the best shoes for the job you do, and wear them.
- **Gloves can improve your grip and protect your hands from potential hazards such as splinters, sharp edges and chemicals as well.**
 - Gloves can be made from many types of material, including cloth, leather, metal- mesh, rubber and plastic.
 - Each material helps to protect you from different hazards.
 - Make sure you know which is the right type for the job that you're doing.
- **Safety glasses and goggles protect against a variety of hazards.**
 - In certain situations, you may also need to add a face shield or use a welder's helmet.
 - Ask your supervisor about the type of protection you'll need for your job.
- **Hearing protection can often eliminate the harmful effects of hazardous noise.**
 - Earplugs, canal caps and ear muffs all provide different degrees of protection.
 - In extremely noisy situations, you can wear both plugs and muffs
- **When harmful dust, fumes, and vapors make the air dangerous to breathe, there are a number of types of respiratory protection that you can wear, such as...**
 - Filter masks.
 - Chemical cartridge respirators.
 - Supplied-air respirators.
- **To help you determine what kind of respiratory protection you need for your work environment, OSHA has established "Assigned Protection Factors".**
 - These can help you find the appropriate respirator for your job.

- **When you select your respirator, make sure that it is undamaged.**
 - If you are unfamiliar with the equipment, it's a good idea to practice using it before going into your work area.
 - For most respirators you will also need to undergo a "fit-test" to make sure they are sealing tightly to your face.
- **Protective clothing is something else you may need to use to stay safe.**
 - Aprons and lab-type coats can defend against flying particles and contact with hazardous materials.
- **A good, strong hard hat is essential if you are around overhead hazards.**
- **Most tasks create multiple hazards.**
 - Combine the safety gear you wear to make sure you get complete protection.
 - Talk to your supervisor or safety manager if you have any questions about the PPE that's right for you.
- **Tools are helpful in many of the jobs we do, but use a tool incorrectly and somebody could get hurt.**
- **You should always follow good "tool rules".**
 - Always use the right tool for the job.
 - Check that all the tools you use are clean and undamaged.
 - Make sure you know how to properly use the tools that you work with.
- **Power tools and other electrical equipment require special considerations.**
 - Inspect all power cords... a damaged wire is both a shock hazard and a fire risk.
- **Too many plugs in one outlet can overload the circuit, blow out a fuse or even start a fire.**
 - So don't create an "octopus".
- **Remember to unplug or lock-out electrical equipment before attempting repairs.**
- **When you're working near machines with moving parts, make sure appropriate guards are in place.**
 - Remove loose clothing and jewelry that could get caught in the equipment as well.

- **If your job takes you into a warehouse, be careful how you handle the materials that you're working with.**
 - Use a cart or dolly, or get help if you have to move a heavy or unwieldy object.
- **Only use powered equipment such as a forklift if you are trained and certified on it.**
 - Consult the operating manual if you have any questions.
 - Plan your route, take your time and always be aware of what is going on around you.
- **We need to be careful how we "use" our bodies as well.**
 - Each job makes a different set of physical demands.
- **Knowing how your body "works" can help you avoid ergonomic injuries.**
 - Keep your body in "neutral" positions as much as possible.
 - Select tools that are "ergonomically friendly" and whose weight, size and shape make them easy to use.
 - Adjust your workstation to fit your size and shape, whether you are in an office or in a storage area.
 - Keep tools and materials within easy reach.
- **When you're lifting something, be sure to use proper procedures:**
 - Bend at the knees.
 - Keep your back straight.
 - Lift with your legs, smoothly, not suddenly.
- **If you are ever unsure about how to use a piece of equipment or perform a task, talk to your supervisor.**
- **No matter how careful we are... no matter what precautions we take... accidents can still happen.**
 - So we need to be prepared to act if an emergency occurs.
- **Be sure to read the Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for any hazardous materials in your work area before you use them.**
 - SDS's should be kept in a central location for quick reference.
- **Clean up chemical spills immediately... but make sure you know:**
 - What chemicals you are dealing with.
 - What tools and materials should be used in the cleanup process.

- **Water is almost always the first line of defense when someone is splashed by a hazardous chemical.**
 - This is where safety showers and eyewashes come into play.
 - Be sure you know where they are and how they work.
- **Fires are another major threat in the workplace.**
 - Now-a-days they often involve toxic fumes and vapors.
 - This makes them more dangerous than ever.
- **Be familiar with your facility's Emergency Action Plan.**
 - It will describe how to report fires and where to go if one occurs.
- **To be prepared for a fire emergency, you should also...**
 - Make sure that emergency telephone numbers are posted in plain sight at all the telephones in your facility.
 - Know at least two evacuation routes that you can use in case you have to leave your work area.
- **You can sometimes fight small fires yourself and prevent them from spreading, so make sure you know:**
 - Where the fire extinguishers are in your facility.
 - How to use them.
- **Remember, there are different types of extinguishers for different types of fires.**
 - Be sure that you have the correct one for the fire that you're fighting.
- **Basic first aid and CPR can be valuable skills in many emergency situations...**
 - But don't try to do anything unless you have the proper training.
 - You could do more harm than good.
- **Never underestimate the seriousness of an injury.**
 - Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- **Above all, the key to handling emergency situations is to stay calm.**

*** * * SUMMARY * * ***

- **Prepare yourself to work safely... concentrate, be aware of what's happening around you and stay alert.**
- **To prevent incidents and injuries, look for hazards, and control or remove them when you find them.**
- **Always wear the correct PPE for the job that you are doing.**
- **Follow safe work practices, use proper procedures and eliminate careless habits.**
- **Be prepared to act quickly and effectively in emergencies.**
- **If you and your coworkers stay alert and follow safe work practices, you can help ensure that everyone goes home injury-free at the end of every day.**