

SAFETY HOUSEKEEPING
AND ACCIDENT PREVENTION IN
HEALTHCARE ENVIRONMENTS...
FOR OFFICE AND FACILITIES
PERSONNEL

COURSE OUTLINE

- **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!**