

SAFETY AWARENESS FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

COURSE OUTLINE

- **Starting a new job always gives you plenty to think about. You have:**
 - New responsibilities.
 - New procedures to follow.
 - New coworkers to meet.
 - A new facility to learn your way around.

- **But there's something else you need to keep in mind as well, something very important, workplace safety.**
 - Workplace safety means thinking "safety first" your first day on the job, and every day thereafter.

- **Let's look at some of the hazards that you might encounter, and what you can do to help yourself and your coworkers avoid them.**

- **A lot of the accidents that occur each day begin with slips, trips and falls.**
 - You don't have to work up high, or fall a long way, to injure yourself.
 - Simply falling to the floor because you've slipped or tripped can be plenty serious.

- **Slips are caused by a lack of friction between the soles of your shoes and the surface that you're walking on.**
 - So they often occur on surfaces that are smooth, slick or wet.

- **The most slippery locations in many workplaces tend to be the floors near entrances and restrooms, as well as around machinery.**
 - Rainwater, grease and oil often make them even slipperier
 - So you need to be especially careful in these areas.

- **Just about anything that gets between the soles of your shoes and a walking surface can cause you to slip.**
 - Floors cluttered with trash, or that have dirt, sawdust, metal shavings, gravel or other loose material scattered on them can be very dangerous.

- **The shoes that you wear can make a difference, too.**
 - Casual dress shoes that are practical in an office may not have enough traction to walk safely on a shop floor or loading dock.
 - In these situations' footwear with nonslip soles is always a good choice.

- **Trips often occur when your foot catches on an object that unexpectedly "appears" in your path.**
 - It's easy to see how a cluttered workplace can be a hazardous one.
 - That is why good housekeeping is so important.

- **Many slips, trips and falls can be prevented just by cleaning up and disposing of trash and removing obstacles.**
 - Use absorbent substances like vermiculite or kitty litter to soak up liquid spills, grease and oil, then sweep it up and throw it out.

- **Keep aisles, stairs and doorways clear.**
 - Look for floor markings that indicate walkways, and keep these areas clear of obstructions as well.

- **Good housekeeping also includes not creating any hazardous conditions yourself.**
 - Stringing power or extension cords across a walkway can create serious trip hazards for people passing by.
 - Always tape these cords down securely.

- **Loose floorboards, torn carpets, protruding nails and small "potholes" in the floor create their own hazards.**
 - Cordon these areas off until they can be repaired.

- **Even a burnt-out lightbulb or a malfunctioning light fixture needs your attention.**
 - You can't avoid hazards if you can't see them!

- **Replacing a bulb in an overhead fixture can be hazardous as well.**
 - You'll naturally want to use a portable ladder to reach it.
 - But you need to remember that using any ladder incorrectly can lead to a serious fall.

- **Begin by inspecting the ladder for damage, or parts that don't work.**
 - If you find problems, don't use it.
 - Take it out of service and get another one.

- **When setting up a ladder, place the legs securely on a level surface.**
- **To get the most stable angle for leaning a ladder against a wall, make sure the base of the ladder is about 1 foot away from the wall for every 4 feet of working ladder height.**
- **To climb most securely,**
 - Face the ladder.
 - Keep two hands and a foot or one hand and two feet in contact with the ladder at all times.
 - Never rush.
- **Keeping your belt buckle centered between the ladder's rails can help prevent you from losing your balance and falling sideways.**
- **When you're finished, don't try to slide down or jump off the ladder.**
 - That's just asking for trouble.
 - Climb down carefully using the "three point" rule instead.
- **Every workday you perform a number of different tasks.**
 - You might even do each of them at different locations, or using different materials or tools.
 - Which means that each task can place a different combination of stresses and strains on your body.
- **"Ergonomics" is the study of reducing these stresses by adjusting your workplace and work habits to fit your own unique physical make-up.**
 - Bad ergonomics does more than just make you uncomfortable.
 - Over time these stresses and strains can cause serious injury.
- **There are three types of activities that are most likely to cause trouble.**
 - Performing the same motion over and over without rest or a break.
 - Working in irregular and extreme positions,
 - Lifting loads that are too heavy for you to lift alone... or lifting a load improperly.
- **To avoid hazardous repetitions, you can work more variety into your movements by alternating tasks that use different motions.**

- **You can also reduce the stress on your joints and muscles by making a few changes in your work area:**
 - Adjust your chair to provide firm support for your lower back.
 - Raise or lower work surfaces to take stress off your upper body.
 - Arrange the tools and materials you use so you don't stretch or strain to get them.

- **You can avoid one of the most common symptoms of bad ergonomics, an aching back, by using safe lifting and carrying techniques.**
 - First, examine the object you want to lift.
 - If it is too heavy or hard to handle, get a coworker to help you, or use a dolly, handcart or other equipment.

- **If you can handle the lift by yourself:**
 - Get close to the object and bend slowly at the knees (don't bend at the waist).
 - Get a good grip and lift slowly with your legs.
 - Keep your back straight and the load close to your body.

- **To carry something safely, remember not to twist your back when you're turning.**
 - Turn gradually with your feet, instead.
 - When it's time to set the object down, simply reverse the lifting process.

- **Hand and power tools and machinery make it possible for us to work better and easier, but they also cause thousands of serious injuries and hundreds of deaths every year.**
 - Fortunately, you can avoid their hazards by following safe work practices.

- **Inspect your tools every time you use them. Look for:**
 - Cracked or bent pieces.
 - Loose or missing parts,
 - Rust or corrosion.

- **Be sure to always use the correct tools for the job.**
 - Don't try and "cut corners" by using a screwdriver as a chisel, a wrench as a hammer or a knife as a screwdriver.
 - These are good ways to damage the tool, the material you are working on and your hands.

- **Be sure you know how to operate your power tools properly.**
 - Follow the manufacturer’s instructions, or ask your supervisor if you're not sure.
- **Check that a tool's housing is not cracked before you plug it in.**
 - Verify that switches are not loose or damaged.
 - Carefully inspect power cords and pressure hoses to make sure that they aren't cracked, cut or frayed.
- **Some tools may not be safe to use in certain work environments.**
 - Water conducts electricity.
 - Using electrically-powered tools in wet conditions like rain, or while standing in water, can create a serious shock hazard.
- **Both metallic hand tools and electrical power tools can produce sparks.**
 - They could ignite a fire if they're used around flammable or combustible materials.
- **Whatever types of tools you're using, be sure you wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).**
- **Industrial machinery is equipped with guards as well as other safety devices that reduce your exposure to their hazards. These mechanisms can include:**
 - Fixed, adjustable and self-adjusting guards.
 - "Light curtains".
 - Pressure-sensitive trips and mats.
- **But none of them will protect you if they have been damaged, altered or removed from the equipment.**
 - Use a machine only when its safeguards are in place and in good operating condition.
 - Be sure to wear PPE to shield yourself from any sparks or flying material that might get past the guards.
- **Keeping your work area clean, and free of tools, materials and debris is essential for safety as well.**
 - Any of these could fall into your machine, hit moving parts, and become dangerous projectiles.
- **Loose clothing, long hair and jewelry can slip past a safety guard and get wrapped up in moving parts.**

- **It takes proper training to operate powered equipment safely, so if you haven't been trained and authorized to use a machine, don't.**
- **Don't use a machine if you are sick, tired, or having trouble concentrating, either.**
 - Your full attention is required to avoid accidents.
- **Maintain a healthy respect for the equipment you work with. Many serious accidents happen to experienced workers because they:**
 - Become complacent.
 - Forget their good work habits.
 - Try to get away with dangerous short-cuts.
- **Forklifts play a big part in many work environments.**
 - You have to be trained and certified to operate one.
 - Even experienced drivers can benefit from a periodic "refresher" on the basic safe work practices that they should follow.
- **Always enter the vehicle using a "three-point mount".**
 - Keep at least two hands and one foot, or two feet and one hand, in contact with the truck at all times.
- **Before you drive off, be sure to buckle up and adjust your seatbelt.**
 - Once you're moving, keep your hands inside the vehicle.
 - Maintain a safe speed.
 - Watch where you're going.
 - Look out for pedestrians.
- **You should drive to the right of oncoming traffic and pedestrians, just as you would in a car.**
 - Don't tailgate.
 - Stay at least three truck-lengths behind other vehicles.
- **When approaching corners or doorways on a forklift, stop and sound your horn.**
 - This lets pedestrians and other equipment operators know that you're coming.
 - Look both ways before you pull out.
- **Remember to keep your forks low, four to six inches above the floor.**
 - Moving with raised forks can damage equipment and injure coworkers.

- **Making a sudden stop when you're carrying a load could dump it right off the forks.**
- **If a load blocks your forward vision, drive in reverse.**
 - Ask a coworker to help you as a "spotter" if necessary.
- **Be careful crossing wet and icy surfaces.**
 - Stopping or turning suddenly could cause you to skid out of control.
- **Any type of load will change a forklift's center of gravity.**
 - The best way to keep a lift stable while it's carrying a load is to tilt the mast back and keep the forks low.
- **If for any reason your forklift begins to tip, do not jump out. To avoid being crushed by the machine:**
 - Brace your feet.
 - Grab onto the steering wheel and pull yourself tight up against it.
 - Lean in the opposite direction from the way the lift is tipping.
 - Hang on.
- **Never allow riders on a forklift unless it's specifically designed for transporting passengers.**
- **And don't fool around.**
 - The driver's seat of a forklift, or any other equipment, is no place for a joker or show-off.
- **It takes a lot of power to make a workplace "work".**
 - Regardless of what types of power the equipment and machinery in your facility run on, it's crucial for you to recognize that the energy itself can be dangerous.
- **"Energy safety" is everyone's responsibility, especially when that energy is electricity, because so many of us use it so often and it can be so dangerous.**
- **To work safely around electricity you need to stay alert for hazardous conditions.**
 - Inspect all power and extension cords before you plug them in.
 - Look for cracked insulation and exposed wires.
 - If you find problems, do not use the equipment.
 - Report it, repair it or replace it right away.

- **Electrical equipment is never safe unless it has been properly grounded.**
- **If you see an adapter being used to insert a three-prong plug into a two-prong outlet without the ground wire being connected, that's a shock hazard.**
 - Three-pronged plugs that have had their ground prongs removed so they'll fit into a two-pronged outlet are also hazardous.
- **Plugging too many power cords into one receptacle creates another type of hazard.**
 - This can overload the circuit, cause the wiring to overheat and possibly start a fire.
- **To avoid creating an overload, power cords should be distributed evenly among receptacles that are on different circuits.**
 - You can use extension cords to help with this.
 - Be sure to choose cords that can handle the amount of electricity that's required.
 - Tape them down so they don't trip people.
 - Then talk to your supervisor about finding a permanent way to make the power available where it's needed, because extension cords are only temporary solutions.
- **Moisture can be a problem as well.**
 - Never plug in wet cords or touch wet electrical equipment.
 - Don't touch electrical equipment with wet hands either.
 - These are all serious shock hazards, because water conducts electricity.
- **You should never use a metal ladder near electricity.**
 - It can act just like a lightning rod.
 - Use a fiberglass or wooden ladder instead.
- **Serious energy-related injuries occur when one person is working on a piece of equipment that has had its power turned off, and someone else turns the power back on.**
 - The result can be a severe injury, even death.
- **A safe work practice known as “lock-out/tag-out” can prevent these accidents.**
 - Its goal is to ensure that power can't be restored to equipment while it is being worked on.

- **The "lock-out" step disconnects a machine from its source of energy.**
 - Actual locks and other devices are installed that physically prevent the energy from being turned back on.

- **In the "tag-out" step, tags are also attached, to call attention to the fact that the power is shut off.**
 - They explain why the equipment has been de-energized, and list the personnel who are involved in working on the machine.

- **For added safety, only certain employees in your facility will be authorized to install, or remove, lock-out/tag-out devices.**

- **If you encounter equipment that has been locked out and tagged out:**
 - Do not attempt to remove the locks or tags.
 - Do not try to turn the power back on.

- **You may have heard of the "Hazard Communication Standard" (sometimes called "HAZCOM").**
 - But you might not know that it gives you the "right-to-know" about any hazardous materials you may handle as part of your work.
 - It also requires your employer to provide you with the training and equipment that you need to work safely with these substances.

- **Information about potentially hazardous chemicals is provided for you in three ways:**
 - On Safety Data Sheets,
 - On container labels,
 - In your facility's written Hazard Communication Program.

- **A material's Safety Data Sheet ("SDS") explains how to safely handle and store that chemical, and what exposure controls and personal protective equipment you should use when you're working with it.**
 - The SDS also tells you how to clean up a spill involving the chemical, and what first aid procedures to follow in an emergency.
 - You can find all of this quickly and easily because the SDS presents information in the order you typically need it, and in easily understood language.

- **The labels on chemical containers are required to provide you with important information about the substances inside them, at a glance.**

- **Labels display the material's name and potential health, fire and reactivity hazards, along with...**
 - What precautions to take.
 - What situations to avoid.
 - What personal protective equipment to wear when you're working with it.

- **You can also find information about hazardous chemicals in your facility's Hazard Communication Program, which tells you:**
 - What hazardous materials are present in your workplace.
 - Where they are and how they're labeled.
 - Where their SDSs are kept.
 - Anything else you need to know to work with the chemicals safely.

- **As we have seen, the safe handling of hazardous materials always requires the use of proper personal protective equipment.**

- **PPE is anything that you wear to prevent or minimize injuries.**
 - It's not just for use around chemicals.
 - It can help you to protect yourself from many different types of hazards throughout your workplace.

- **For example, where there's danger from overhead hazards, such as low beams, pipes or raceways, you should wear a hard hat.**
 - It can protect you from falling objects, chemical splashes, molten metal and other hazards as well.

- **To protect your eyes from flying particles, you should wear safety glasses.**
 - Goggles can provide even better protection.
 - Optical filter lenses can prevent injuries from intense light sources.
 - You can use a face shield for more coverage if you need it.

- **In noisy environments, ear plugs, ear muffs and canal caps can reduce the risk of hearing damage.**

- **Gloves can protect your hands from hazards that can range from:**
 - Dirt.
 - Splinters.
 - Rough surfaces and sharp edge.
 - Heat.
 - Chemical.
 - Potentially infectious body substances
 - ... and more.

- **Safety shoes can have non-slip soles, steel toes, protective inserts and insulation.**
 - These features can help to prevent slips, resist crushing and punctures, and protect against extremes of both heat and cold.

- **Some hardhats, gloves and safety shoes can also protect against electric shock.**

- **For hazards in the atmosphere, you need to wear respiratory protection.**

- **Depending on the amount of protection you require, this can range from...**
 - Disposable dust masks.
 - To full-face cartridge respirators.
 - To supplied air systems that provide breathable air from tanks.

- **But no PPE can protect you if you leave it sitting on the shelf.**
 - So be sure to wear yours every day.

- **Industrial fires can spread quickly, cause serious damage, even kill.**
 - The best way to fight any fire is to prevent it from starting in the first place.
 - You can accomplish this by following safe work practices.

- **Since many industrial fires are caused by stray sparks from welding and cutting operations, any flammable materials should be stored away from where this type of work is going on.**
 - Fireproof blankets should be placed over any flammables that can't be moved.
 - Arrange welding screens or curtains around the work area to prevent sparks and hot metal fragments from scattering.

- **Even with these precautions a stray spark or piece of hot metal might still escape.**
 - So it's often wise to post a coworker to keep a "fire watch" just in case.

- **Overloaded electrical circuits can cause fires too.**
 - So don't plug too many power cords into any one outlet.
 - Make sure extension cords are rated to take the voltage they will need to handle.

- **Fires can also start when wood shavings, grease or other flammable materials build up on parts of a machine that get hot.**
 - You can prevent this by keeping equipment clean, especially around electrical parts like motors or areas where friction creates a lot of heat.
 - If you ever see equipment overheating, or notice frayed or loose wiring, shut off the power and notify your supervisor.

- **But fire prevention doesn't stop at the edge of the shop floor.**
 - It continues into office areas and even breakrooms.

- **Watch out for overloaded outlets and extension cords there as well.**
 - Don't leave toaster ovens and other appliances unattended when you're heating up something to eat.

- **If you smoke, light up only in designated areas, and never around flammable materials.**
 - Be careful where and how you dispose of your cigarette butts too.
 - Be sure they are completely out before you toss them, and then only into appropriate containers such as specially designed receptacles or metal pails filled with sand.

- **If a fire emergency does occur in your facility, your safety and possibly even your life will depend on knowing just what to do.**
 - Your company will have developed an “Emergency Action Plan” that contains all of the information that you need, including evacuation routes and procedures.

- **This plan is the key to maintaining emergency readiness at your facility.**

- **It's not only about fires. It addresses many different types of potential incidents, including:**
 - Hazardous spills.
 - Natural disasters, such as floods, earthquakes and hurricanes.
 - Even civil unrest and terrorist attacks.

- **The Emergency Action Plan is made available to everyone in your facility, so you can use it to prepare yourself to act quickly and safely when an emergency does arise.**
- **For starters, you should identify at least two escape routes from your work areas.**
 - That way if one is blocked you have another way out.
 - Evacuation routes and emergency exits should never be cluttered or obstructed by equipment, materials or tools.
 - If you notice something blocking the way move it or report it immediately.
- **When an alarm sounds...**
 - Leave the area immediately.
 - Remain calm.
 - Walk, don't run.
- **Never use an elevator to leave a building during an emergency.**
 - Use the stairs instead.
- **Feel doors before you open them to make sure they are cool to the touch.**
 - Never open a door that's hot!
 - It could have flames and smoke behind it.
- **Close doors as you go through them.**
 - If there's a fire, this helps to keep smoke and flames from spreading.
- **As you evacuate, be sure to stay close to the floor.**
 - Since heat rises, this will help you breathe cleaner, cooler air.
- **Your facility's Emergency Action Plan will also list the location you should report to once you get outside.**
 - This way your company can keep track of who's safe, and who may still need help.
 - Emergency personnel can also be notified immediately if anyone is missing.

- **No safety program is perfect. Even when we do our best, accidents can still happen, and people can still get hurt.**
 - You need to be ready to deal with these situations when they occur.
 - Often, the best course in responding to a health emergency is to call for medical assistance.
 - So make sure you know what numbers to call, or where to find them quickly.

- **Every second counts in a health emergency, so call for assistance immediately if:**
 - The victim is unconscious.
 - There are injuries to the head, neck or back.
 - The victim cannot move or bear weight on an injured joint or limb.
 - There is significant swelling, pain or numbness.
 - There is an obvious break in a bone, or a severe muscle strain.

- **If a coworker suffers a heart attack, their very survival may depend on getting them treatment quickly.**
 - A heart attack victim may suddenly have trouble breathing, feel a tightening in the chest and experience nausea or indigestion.
 - Their skin may turn pale or “blue,” and go cold and sweaty.

- **Another condition that requires fast action is "heat stroke".**
 - This is an extreme form of "heat stress" during which the body becomes severely overheated.
 - It can lead to brain damage and even death.

- **A heat stroke victim can have a temperature as high as 105° degrees Fahrenheit, but they are unable to sweat normally.**
 - Other symptoms can include headache, dizziness, nausea and cramps.
 - They may even lose consciousness.

- **If you think one of your coworkers is suffering from heat stroke, you should call emergency medical services immediately.**
 - Get the victim out of the heat.
 - Raise their feet so their blood can circulate more easily and cool them better.
 - Stay with them until help arrives.

- **To avoid any heat-related illnesses, when you're in a hot environment you should drink from five to seven ounces of an “electrolyte sports drink” every fifteen or twenty minutes.**
 - This will help replace the fluids and minerals that your body is sweating out.

- **Loose, lightweight clothing made of cotton or cotton blends can help to keep you cool.**
 - Avoid dark colors that absorb heat.
 - Instead, wear light colors that will reflect it.
 - If you're working outside, wear a light-colored hat to keep the sun off your head.
 - Sunglasses and sunscreen can help, too.

- **Cold conditions can be just as hazardous as hot ones, so dress right to stay warm.**
 - Layer your clothing to trap body heat and keep out the cold.
 - You can protect yourself from rain and snow with a waterproof outer shell.
 - Wear a hat and gloves or mittens, as well as waterproof, insulated boots to keep your extremities warm.

- **But keep in mind that working in heavy clothing can tire you out quickly.**
 - You can work up just as big a sweat working in the cold as you do when it's hot.
 - Stay safe by replacing lost fluids and minerals with electrolyte drinks as you work.

- **You can prepare yourself now for any minor cuts, scrapes and burns by learning where to find a first aid kit when you need it.**

- **If you cut or scrape yourself, or you need to treat a coworker...**
 - Stop the bleeding with direct pressure.
 - Clean the wound with soap and water.
 - Give it time to dry, then apply a sterile bandage.

- **In case of a burn...**
 - Soak the area in cool water or apply ice.
 - Don't try to clean the affected skin, and don't break any blisters.
 - Cover the burn with a sterile dressing.
 - Never apply ointments or salves unless a medical professional tells you to.

- **In any incident bleeding can be a serious concern.**
 - If you come into contact with someone else's blood, any disease-causing micro-organisms in that blood could infect you, too.

- **Some of these organisms are called "bloodborne pathogens".**
 - They can give rise to Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C, and the Human Immunodeficiency Virus ("HIV").
 - You must do whatever you can to prevent getting other peoples' blood on your skin or mucous membranes, or in your eyes, even during an emergency situation.

- **If possible, before assisting an injured coworker, equip yourself with:**
 - A pair of latex gloves from a first aid kit.
 - Or any clean work gloves you can find.

- **Afterward, thoroughly wash your hands and any other part of your body that may have come into contact with blood.**
 - Then report the exposure to your supervisor.

- **Remember, first aid is always, and only, the first step.**
 - You take the next one by getting help from a medical professional.

*** * * SUMMARY * * ***

- **The best way to deal with accidents is to prevent them.**
- **Even if you feel you know your job "backwards and forwards", don't become complacent. Think safety all the time, every day.**
- **Always follow safe work practices.**
- **Wear the right PPE for the job that you're doing.**
- **Stay alert for hazards. Report, repair or remove them.**
- **Know what to do in an emergency. Prepare yourself to act quickly when seconds count.**
- **Learn the signs of health problems, like a heat stroke or heart attack, and know what to do if a coworker is injured.**
- **Workplace safety is a team effort. We can all be "team players" by staying "safety minded" on the job.**
- **Working together we can keep accidents and injuries to a minimum, and ensure that everyone gets to go home safe at the end of the day!**