

news & notes

EMPLOYERS' ROLE IN SOLO SAFETY

Here are several steps employers can take to reduce solo safety hazards for employees in stores or gas stations or other similar jobs:

- Having surveillance cameras in plain view of customers
- Having a limited access safe or comparable device in the store
- Limiting the amount of cash to which employees have access
- Posting signs notifying customers of these security measures
- Lighting the store's approach area and parking lot at night
- Keeping the windows and outside of the building clear so employees can have an unobstructed view of outside customers or passersby
- Providing crime prevention training for their employees
- Having a hidden button that sends an alarm to the local police in case of an emergency

Employers also need to provide specific training for any employees who work alone in any capacity, such as:

- Reminding workers that procedures are designed to protect them from the specific hazards of their jobs
- Emphasizing that asking for assistance is not a sign of failure
- Reassuring workers that they will not be disciplined in case they ask for help for a minor incident



Working alone can be unsafe.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

May 2011

Provided by Hierl Insurance, Inc

Solo Safety

Take extra precautions when working alone

Working alone presents many hazards that busy workplaces may not experience. If you ever work by yourself in the workplace, you need to be aware of what precautions to take to keep yourself safe.

Solo workers in stores or gas stations, for example, are considered easy targets by many thieves. These types of employees can help to keep themselves safe by:

- Being alert for anyone who seems to be watching from outside and who may be waiting for a time when they are alone.
- Monitoring surveillance cameras carefully, especially if a customer seems to be wandering around the store for longer than normal.
- Not hesitating to use their alarm button if they sense trouble.

Other lone workers who may be at risk include taxi drivers and delivery persons as well as outside sales people or home healthcare workers. Here are the precautions for these employees to take:

- Assess each situation on a case-by-case basis.
- Establish a check-in procedure with a designated contact, using a daily work schedule or reporting whenever they change their location.
- Establish procedures to follow in case of a vehical breakdown.

Even solo employees in a remote section of a building may be at risk and need established check-in procedures. Use this checklist for your procedures:

- Is voice contact sufficient or should there be visual contact as well?
- What hazards will the worker face to perform his or her duties?
- What special protections should be established for security guards?

Finally, should any incident occur, thoroughly investigate and record it. Review procedures regularly to make necessary improvements for added safety and security.

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ELECTRONIC SLEEP

The National Sleep Foundation (NSF) reports the 2011 Sleep in America® poll:

- 43% of Americans between the ages of 13 and 64 rarely or never get a good night's sleep on weeknights.
- 60% experience a sleep problem every night or almost every night.
- 95% use some type of electronics like a television, computer, video game or cell phone at least a few nights a week before bed.
- 61% use their laptops or computers at least a few nights a week within the hour before bed.
- 74% of working Americans over 30 who don't get enough sleep admit that sleepiness affects their work.

Follow these tips from NSF:

- Set and stick to a sleep schedule.
- Get bright light in the morning and dim light at night.
- Exercise early in the day. Relax later in the day.
- Set up a bedtime routine.
- Make your bedroom comfortable and free of distractions.
- Keep a pad nearby to write your worries so they don't keep you up.
- Avoid caffeine, nicotine, and heavy eating and drinking late in the day.
- Avoid alcohol before bed, which can keep you from deep sleep and make you wake up early.
- Read medicine labels for side effects that include disrupting sleep.
- Don't take naps late in the day.



OSHA at 40

Celebrating four decades of safety

An interactive timeline commemorating 40 years of safety and health milestones is now available on the OSHA website at www.osha.gov. The Occupational Safety and Health Act was signed into law by President Nixon on December 29, 1970. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration, better known as OSHA, was created on April 28, 1971.

According to the agency, “The nation has made dramatic progress in reducing work-related deaths and injuries” in those four decades. For example, estimates are that around 14,000 workers were killed on the job in 1970. By 2009 worker deaths had fallen to around 4,340. In addition, OSHA reports that “the rate of reported serious workplace injuries and illnesses has declined from 11 per 100 workers in 1972 to 3.6 per 100 workers in 2009.” What makes these numbers even more remarkable is that in that same time frame, the number of U.S. workers has almost doubled to over 130 million workers at more than 7.2 million worksites.

In those 40 years, OSHA has issued many safety and health standards, including for:

- Trenching
- Asbestos
- Benzene
- Bloodborne pathogens
- Hazard Communication
- Lead
- Machine guarding

Visit the timeline by typing “40 year timeline” into the search box at www.osha.gov.

Walk this Way around Forklifts

Pedestrian safety in forklift areas

Follow these do's and don'ts to stay safe.

DO:

- Keep alert for forklift activity.
- Keep track of where forklifts are and what they're doing.
- Stay at a safe distance.
- Listen for horns, backup alarms, and other warnings.
- Look both ways before crossing aisles.
- Obey traffic signs, use walkways, and stay behind barriers.
- Assume forklift operators don't see you.
- Wear high-visibility clothing.
- Be extra careful in noisy work areas.

DON'T:

- Don't try to cross in front of an approaching forklift or squeeze past it.
- Don't hitch unauthorized rides.
- Don't ride on the forks.
- Don't distract forklift operators.
- Don't walk or stand under raised forks.
- Don't stand anywhere you could be crushed or run over by an oncoming forklift.
- Don't engage in horseplay around forklifts.
- Don't smoke in refueling or recharging areas.