

news & notes

FOCUS ON THE 'BIG 6'

Along with talking about required eye protection for different kinds of jobs and your organization's safety rules for eye protection, you'll want to focus your training spotlight on the main causes of eye injuries in your workplace.

For most companies, the six leading culprits are:

1. **Flying objects are the leading cause of eye injuries in the workplace.** The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) says that well over half of eye accidents are caused by flying or falling objects, or sparks striking the eye.
2. **Contact with chemicals** causes some 20 percent of eye injuries.
3. **Improper equipment operation** is responsible for more than 30 percent of injuries.
4. **Poor choice of eyewear** results in a significant number of injuries. Although injured workers are often wearing eye protection, they're not wearing the right kind.
5. **Improper fit.** BLS says that 94 percent of the injuries to workers wearing eye protection result from objects or chemicals going around or under the protector.
6. **Lack of awareness.** Simple ignorance of the risks and the required protection is responsible for many workplace eye injuries. Many injured workers, when asked after an accident, report that they didn't realize eye protection was necessary in the situation.

The eyes have it

Protect your built-in camera

January is **National Eye Care Month**, so let's focus on the built-in camera that is your eyes. The cornea that shields the eye is capable of outperforming the best optics ever produced, but it is paper-thin and delicate, so it must be safeguarded diligently. You take good care of your snapshot and video cameras, right? It's even more imperative to take good care of your eyes, because there is no substitute if they are destroyed or severely damaged.

Start by having your vision tested, particularly if you experience:

- Blurred or foggy vision
- Double vision
- Loss of side vision
- Inability to adjust to reduced light

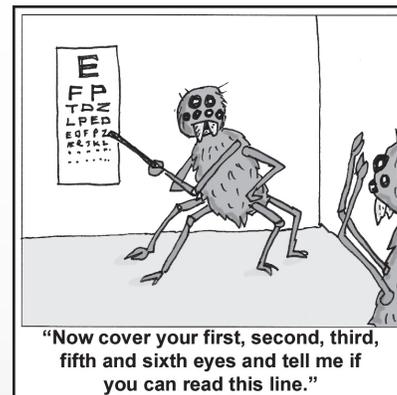
If you need a prescription:

- Choose lenses that are shatter resistant.
- Get properly fitted frames.
- Wear the glasses or contacts faithfully as prescribed.
- Get your vision rechecked periodically, because outdated prescriptions can distort your vision and strain your eyes.

Whether or not you need a prescription, always take these precautions to protect your precious sight:

- Wear eye protection whenever hazards require them — whether at work or at home.
- Avoid looking directly into any source of brilliant or potentially harmful light unless your eyes are shielded.
- Wipe your face and eyes with clean hands only to avoid transferring any particles to the eyes.
- If something does get into the eye, do not rub it; get the proper first-aid or medical treatment immediately.
- If your eyes are burned, flush immediately with cool water for several minutes. Keeping the eyes open to the soothing and diluting water may be somewhat uncomfortable, but it may help save your sight until you can seek medical attention.

NOTE: If you stare at a computer screen all day and your eyes feel slightly dry, don't wait until you're in greater discomfort — start using lubricating drops right away.



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EYE PROTECTION SELECTION

It's essential for employees to select the right type of eyewear to protect their eyes against the maximum level of potential hazard.

Use the following list to aid you in selecting the appropriate eyewear to protect against potential hazards.

Flying fragments, objects, chips or particles — Safety glasses with side shields or goggles with side shields, and for extra protection, a face shield over the safety glasses or goggles



Courtesy of osha.gov

Chemical splashes — Safety goggles and a face shield for extra protection



Courtesy of osha.gov

Dust, fumes, mists, gases and vapors — Offset ventilated safety goggles worn with a face shield



Courtesy of osha.gov

Hot sparks or splashes — Goggles or safety glasses with side shields and a face shield



Courtesy of osha.gov

Radiant energy — Goggles with special lenses to filter out the harmful light



Courtesy of osha.gov

For more information on proper eye PPE selection, visit <https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/eyeandface/ppe/selection.html>

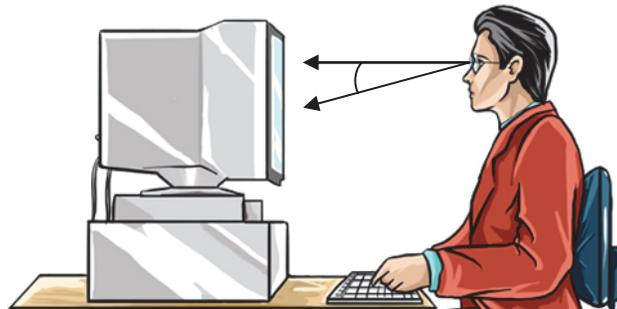
Safer computer use

Know how to prevent eyestrain

When working at a computer monitor, the typical eye blink rate drops about 50 percent, which can result in eye pain, dryness and sometimes, difficulty focusing. If you or your employees experience eye discomfort from the many hours spent in front of a monitor, you may want to learn more about computer vision syndrome. Dry, red, painful eyes are not a necessary result of computer work and if left untreated, this condition can lead to more serious vision problems.

Take these steps to prevent eyestrain and to help alleviate eye discomfort when working at a computer:

- **Position the computer screen about 18 to 24 inches from your face** to protect from undue stress and strain.
- **Set up your screen so that its top is just below eye level.** This will help avoid awkward postures.
- **Adjust screen brightness and contrast for your own viewing comfort.** A rule of thumb is for screen characters to be 10 times brighter than the screen background and for room illumination to be three times brighter than the screen background.
- **Avoid facing toward windows or sources of bright light.** Position your computer so that you are facing into an open space beyond the computer screen.
- **Eliminate glare** by moving or tilting the computer screen or using an antiglare screen.
- **Keep your screen clean** to reduce eyestrain.
- **Take frequent breaks;** try a 2- to 3-minute break every 15 to 20 minutes.



Make the most of eye protection

3 Keys to maximizing eyewear safety

To offer maximum safety protection, eyewear must fit well and be in good condition.

- **Proper fit.** Eye protection is only as good as it fits. Poor fit is not only uncomfortable, but it also defeats the purpose of wearing the protection to keep objects, vapors, splashes, etc., away from the eyes. Make sure eye protection fits snugly enough to keep out hazards, but comfortably enough to see and move around easily. To get a good fit with safety goggles, adjust the strap and place it low on the back of the head. Goggles should fit comfortably on the bridge of the nose, and the center of the lens should be in front of the eye.
- **Inspection.** Inspect eye protection before each use, checking for bent or damaged frames, scratched or pitted lenses and loose or damaged headbands. Replace any damaged equipment right away.
- **Care and maintenance.** After each wearing, wash eye protection gently in warm soapy water, rinse thoroughly and air-dry. After chemical exposure or before use by another employee, use a disinfectant to clean eye protection. Store eye protection in a clean dustproof case.