



How to protect yourself from falling objects

Each year, there are more than 50,000 “struck by falling object” recordable injuries—that’s 1 injury caused by a dropped object every 10 minutes. Injuries can range from bruises and broken bones to death. These injuries can be caused even by a small, lightweight object dropped from a large height. With safe work practices, however, these injuries are preventable. Everyone at the jobsite has a responsibility for the safety of himself and herself and others, especially if working from a height.

If you are working from a height:

- Have the area below cleared, and post necessary warning signs. Rope off or barricade the area.
- If possible, verbally warn those below that you’re about to begin an overhead job, and make sure they hear you.
- Use toeboards, guardrails, screens, and/or paneling to make sure objects don’t fall off of scaffolding or platforms. You can also use nets or canopies to catch any falling objects.
- Keep materials far enough from an edge, hole, or opening to prevent them from falling to a lower level.
- Stack materials securely to prevent them from sliding, falling, or collapsing.
- Don’t carry tools or materials up a ladder. Use a tool belt, a hand winch line, containers, or buckets lifted by a line.
- If you use a tool belt, make sure pockets, pouches, and slots are the correct size and shape to keep tools from falling out. The belt should be made of a sturdy material and reinforced for the points of tools. If possible, tether the tools to the belt with lanyards. Tools with sharp edges or points should be guarded to prevent injury to you and workers below. Never use a tool belt as a safety belt.
- Make sure any load being lifted is secure and balanced and that no one is under it.
- Practice good housekeeping, and properly store tools and materials that are not in use.
- Don’t carry tools in your pockets because when you bend over or reach, they may fall out.
- Never throw materials or tools.
- Never sweep material off the edge of the working surface.
- Don’t work, or allow others to work, under obviously unsafe conditions.

If you are working on the ground or below:

- Always wear your hard hat and protective footwear.
- Observe restricted areas where overhead work is being performed. Don’t cross the barriers, even to take a shortcut.
- Pay attention to what is going on around you, particularly when cranes and other equipment are being used to hoist materials in the air or you are working near overhead bricklaying, painting, or conveyor belts. Don’t walk near roofs after a snowstorm or ice storm.

Following these rules and using safety equipment may not only prevent accidents but also make any accidents that do occur, despite all precautions, less severe.

Eye on Technology

May is Health Vision Month

10 tips to help employees avoid the eyestrain that comes with computer work.

1. **Look away from the monitor for 30 seconds**, every 15 or 20 minutes. Look at or scan things at least 20 feet away to allow the eyes to focus in a rest position.
2. **Reposition monitor distance 20” to 26” from your eyes** (roughly the distance from your eyes to the end of your index finger with arm outstretched). Otherwise, you’ll be forced to sit or lean too close to the screen or sit too far away. If your eyeglass prescription does not allow clear vision at the 20” to 26” range, get it adjusted.
3. **Reset monitor height** so that the top edge is even with your view when looking straight ahead. Then tilt the screen upward so you are not looking at the image at an angle. The optimal screen position is 10 to 20 degrees below eye level.
4. **Reset the monitor screen resolution**, the Internet browser text size, and the zoom and font default in the operating system and in software applications so that text is easy to read. Start with a screen resolution of 600x800 for older CRT monitors and 1024x768 or higher for LCD (flat screen) monitors.
5. **Set the monitor refresh rate at or above 75 hertz (hz)** on older CRT models. Refresh rate is irrelevant for LCD monitors and is factory set, usually at 60 hz.
6. **Blink often** (put a sticky note on your monitor!). The average blink rate is 22 times per minute. The rate goes down to 7 per minute when looking at a monitor—this causes the eye lens to dry out. Use an eye moistener (saline solution) if you can’t get into the habit of blinking more often.
7. **Relax eye muscles**. Put the palm of your hands over your eyes for a minute or so, once every half hour. This warms the muscles around the eyes, relaxing them.
8. **Minimize glare**. Make sure the background light level around the monitor is about the same as the screen light level. Minimize direct sunlight or bright lights in front of the monitor or directly behind it.
9. **Adjust the contrast and brightness** to levels you use when reading a book comfortably. A bright screen causes eyestrain.
10. **Use a paper holder** to hold documents. Put the document at the same level as the monitor, or attach it to the monitor. This prevents repetitive neck and eye movement from paper to screen.

Mark of a Craftsman

Use your tools properly and safely

Everybody uses tools at some time or other, even if it's just to a hammer a nail, turn a screw, or chop some wood. Although tools have different functions and some may be hand tools while others are power tools, the same basic safety rules apply to all of them whether you use them on the job or at home. For example:

- **Select the right tool for the job.** Never use a screwdriver as a chisel, knife, or lever, for instance. Don't risk a serious injury by using an ax or a heavy pipe wrench as a hammer. Use tools for only the specific purpose for which they are intended.
- **Inspect tools before use.** Make sure they're in good condition and safe to use. Get replacements for broken or defective tools rather than trying to use them, which could be dangerous.
- **Use tools correctly.** Hold them properly, apply the right amount of force, and keep your other hand clear. Follow safety directions in the instruction manual for power tools.
- **Take good care of your tools.** Keep them clean and sharp, and store them properly. Don't store pointed or sharp tools in a way you or someone else could be injured when reaching for them in a toolbox or tool crib.
- **Wear appropriate PPE.** That almost always means safety glasses to protect your eyes from chips and particles. It might also mean safety shoes and gloves. For some power tools, hearing protection might also be a good idea.
- **Transport tools safely.** Carry them in a toolbox, tool belt, bucket, or cart. Doing so eliminates the risk that a heavy tool could drop on your foot—or someone else's head if you're working on a ladder or scaffold.
- **Handle tools safely.** Never throw or toss a tool to a co-worker. Instead, hand it over with the handle toward the receiver.
- **Pay attention while using tools.** Focus on what you're doing. A moment's inattention could end up in an accident and severe injury.

Prevent injuries when using tools by always putting safety first.



Electrifying News!

The main hazards of electricity in the workplace are shocks, burns, and fires. Here's how you can help eliminate electrical hazards.

Take steps to avoid electrical shocks and burns:

- Inspect electrical equipment before use to ensure insulation is in good shape.
- Make sure that plugs have a good, tight connection.
- Report any wires with worn or damaged insulation right away.
- Remove from service, tag, and report any equipment, appliance, or electrical power tool that gives you even a slight shock.
- Don't use anything electrical with wet hands or while standing on a wet surface.
- Don't place electrical cords or equipment in or near water.

Prevent electrical fires:

- Don't overload electrical circuits or outlets.
- Don't tangle electrical cords or fasten them with staples.
- Use extension cords only when necessary and only to meet temporary needs.
- Keep paper, cardboard, flammable liquids, etc., away from electrical equipment and appliances.
- Use cords around flammable materials that are designed for that purpose.

Don't use any electrical equipment or appliance that smokes, smells, sparks, shocks, or trips circuits. Remove it from service and report it immediately.

Spring Planting

Working safely with pesticides

Exposure to pesticides can occur through eye or skin contact, respiratory contact (inhaling), or ingestion (swallowing). Symptoms may show up after one exposure (acute) or they may develop after repeated exposures (chronic).

You need to know the serious health problems pesticide poisoning can cause:

- Mild cases may cause headaches, nausea, skin irritation, and dizziness.
- Severe cases may cause fever, convulsions, loss of consciousness, and death.

Follow these precautions:

- Wear appropriate PPE.
- Obey entry restrictions and warning signs.
- Read labels on pesticide containers and MSDSs for pesticides you use.
- Handle pesticides in well-ventilated areas.
- Never store pesticides in food or drink containers.
- Never mix pesticides or drain a sprayer near a well, pond, or stream.
- Apply pesticides on a calm day to minimize the drift of pesticides.

If you are exposed to pesticides, you need to go immediately to the decontamination site and follow these emergency procedures.

- Wash with soap and water and use emergency eyewash for at least 15 minutes.
- Seek emergency treatment and have chemical label instructions available for use by medical team.