

news & notes

NATIONAL SAFETY MONTH

Every June, the National Safety Council (NSC) celebrates **National Safety Month** "to educate and influence behaviors around leading causes of preventable injuries and deaths."

This year's theme is "Safety Starts with Me," which is the principle that everyone in the workplace is responsible for safety, not just management or safety professionals.

Weekly themes are as follows:

Week 1 (June 2 to 8):

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

Week 2 (June 9 to 15):

Employee Wellness

Week 3 (June 16 to 22):

Emergency Preparedness

Week 4 (June 23 to 29): **Ergonomics**

And two bonus topics:

1. Summer Safety
2. Driving Safety

For more information on National Safety Month, visit [NSC's website](#).



"You okay man? Looks like the heat's starting to get to you."



June 2013

Summer safety

National Safety Month bonus topic

The month of June is a perfect time to give an annual refresher course on working in hot conditions. That's probably why the National Safety Council chose Summer Safety as a featured bonus topic during their annual [National Safety Month](#). Here's why this topic matters:

- Various health conditions are a direct result of rising temperatures, and they all interfere with worker performance.
- These conditions range from mild heat cramps to dangerous heatstroke which, if not treated immediately, can lead to death.
- These conditions can also increase the risk for other accidents as overheated workers lose focus, get irritable, and make rash decisions.

Body heat

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, in order to maintain a fairly constant internal temperature, the body finds ways to get rid of excess heat. This is done primarily by varying the rate and amount of blood circulation through the skin and by the release of fluid onto the skin by the sweat glands. The process of lowering body temperature requires the heart to pump more blood, and blood circulates closer to the surface of the skin so the extra heat is lost to the environment.

If heat loss from increased blood circulation is not adequate, the sweat glands kick in and shed sweat onto the surface of the skin. Evaporation of the sweat cools the skin. But when humidity is high, evaporation decreases. More blood goes to the external surface of the body, with less going to muscles, brain, and other organs. This can cause a drop in strength, an increase in fatigue, and possibly, a change in mental condition.

Hot environments give rise to an increased risk of accidents because of slippery, sweaty palms; dizziness; foggy safety glasses; and a heat-related decline in alertness. When people are overheated, they also become more irritable and angry and may be more likely to take shortcuts.

Beat the heat

Take these precautions:

- Drink at least four 8-ounce glasses of water or about a quart per hour throughout your shift.
- Wear light, loose-fitting, breathable clothing.
- Take frequent short breaks in cool shade.
- Eat smaller meals before work activity.
- Avoid caffeine, alcohol, and large amounts of sugar.
- Check with an occupational health professional about risks associated with medications.

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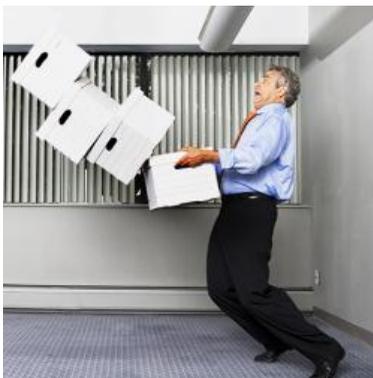
NEW FORKLIFT SIMULATOR

A virtual reality training program for forklift operators is expected to reduce work-related injuries and deaths. The first-of-its-kind device was created by Tactus Technologies and was funded by a National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health grant.

According to the company, the 3D Forklift Trainer uses virtual reality technology to give users the “active cognitive experience of operating a forklift.” The trainer allows users to practice with a video game-like system that features a steering wheel, joystick, and pedals. It offers simulated environments, including a warehouse, elevator, and railroad track.

Current training typically involves a combination of classroom lectures, videos, and observation before operators get into the seat to practice. Tactus CEO Jim Mayrose says the problem is that such training is passive, not interactive. He says the new simulator incorporates safety lessons aligned with OSHA standards. It takes about 3 to 4 hours to complete.

Learn more at <http://www.Tactustech.com>. The company is a University at Buffalo spin-off.



Weekend warrior wellness training

Stay safe while staying in shape

Carly Day is a sports medicine physician at the Cleveland Clinic. “We see a variety of active patients from 6 years old to 106—from a high school or college athlete to a 40-year-old who plays softball on the weekends or an 80-year-old who likes to go for walks.”

Day indicates there are two chief types of injury associated with physical activity.

1. The first is **trauma**. For example, a volleyball player jumping for a ball lands on her ankle, or a baseball player is hit by a ball and fractures a bone.
2. “The other thing we see, which is more typical of working-age people, is **overuse** injury, which often comes in the form of tendonitis or muscle soreness,” says Day. An example is someone who is relatively inactive and decides to go on a 6-mile run on a Saturday afternoon. “These are preventable to some extent especially if we catch them early and get them under control.”

Day’s formula for prevention is “start low and go slow.” For example, if you want to start running, go out for a half mile, then increase by half miles. The same applies to team sports—don’t go from couch potato to four games of weekend basketball. “Ease your way into any activity so your body can accommodate and get used to the motions you’re going through,” she advises.

Stop slipping!

Take precautions to avoid slips, trips, and falls

Practice good housekeeping, such as:

- Clean all spills immediately.
- Plainly mark spills and wet areas.
- Sweep or mop debris from floors.
- Remove obstacles from walkways and keep them free of clutter.
- Secure mats, rugs, and carpets that do not lie flat.
- Close all file cabinets and storage drawers consistently.
- Cover cables that are placed over walkways.
- Keep working and walking areas well lighted.
- Report burned-out bulbs and faulty switches.

Choose the right footwear—and regularly inspect, maintain, clean, alternate, and replace. Don’t wear shoes with hard plastic or leather soles and heels. Also avoid smooth soles. Choose appropriate tread patterns; some tread patterns trap liquid and add to the risk of slips.

Take these safety steps:

- Take your time and pay attention to what you are doing.
- Adjust your stride and pace to the walking surface and task.
- Walk with your feet pointed slightly outward (“like a duck”) on wet or slippery surfaces.
- Use a flashlight when entering a dark, unlighted space.
- Make sure you can see over loads you are carrying or pushing.