

# Eye Injuries - Part 1

Every day an estimated 1,000 eye injuries occur in American workplaces. No matter where we work, flying particles, dusts, splashes or flying objects are apt to expose us to potential eye injury. Fortunately, we can protect against these hazards by using the appropriate protective eyewear for our jobs.

A survey by the Labor Department's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) of about 1,000 minor eye injuries reveals how and why many on-the-job accidents occur:

- **Not wearing eye protection.** BLS reports that nearly three out of every five workers injured were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.
- **Wearing the wrong kind of eye protection** for the job. About 40 of the injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection when the accident occurred. These workers were most likely to be wearing eyeglasses with no side shields, though injuries among employees wearing full-cup or flat-fold side shields occurred, as well.

### What Causes Eye Injuries?

- **Flying particles.** BLS found that almost 70% of the accidents studied resulted from flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye. Injured workers estimated that nearly three-fifths of the objects were smaller than a pin head. Most of the particles were said to be traveling faster than a hand-thrown object when the accident occurred.
- **Contact with chemicals** caused one-fifth of the injuries.
- **Other accidents** were caused by objects swinging from a fixed or attached position, like tree limbs, ropes, chains, or tools which were pulled into the eye while the worker was using them.

### Eye Injuries - Part 2

Every day an estimated 1,000 eye injuries occur in American workplaces. Yesterday we learned that most occur from fast moving flying particles.

The BLS reported that more than 50% of workers injured while wearing eye protection thought the eyewear had minimized their injuries. But nearly half the workers also felt that another type of protection could have better prevented or reduced the injuries they suffered.

It is estimated that 90% of eye injuries can be prevented through the use of **proper** protective eyewear. There are several types of eye protection and it's important you wear the right protection for the task.

#### **Safety Glasses**

We wear safety glasses anytime we're in the production area. Safety glasses with side shields are a good form of eye protection for general use to prevent flying debris and or objects from coming into contact with your eyes.

#### **Safety Goggles**

When we're using compressed air or handling harmful chemicals we need to wear safety goggles. Goggles offer superior protection from small flying debris and particles as well as chemical splashes.

#### **Face Shields**

When grinding, changing propane or changing batteries we need to wear a face shield along with our safety glasses or goggles. This gives additional protection to our face during these types of tasks.

#### **Welding Helmets**

When welding you have the risk of harmful rays impacting your eyes from a short distance. That is why we have special tinted welding helmets. It not only protects your face from flying objects, but your eyes from the rays.

### Eye Injuries - Part 3

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#### **Eye contact with chemicals:**

Immediately flush the eye with water or any other drinkable liquid.

There are eye wash stations throughout the facility. Keep the eye open and as wide as possible while flushing. Continue flushing for at least 15 minutes taking small breaks as needed.

DO NOT use an eyecup.

If a contact lens is in the eye, begin flushing over the lens immediately. This may wash away the lens but the sooner you start the flushing, the better you are.

The flushing may cause eye irritation itself and once flushed thoroughly you can use eye drops if needed. However, eye drops are not a substitute for flushing the eye.

#### **Specks in the Eye ...**

DO NOT rub the eye

Try to let your natural tears wash the speck out. This is the best method.

Try lifting the upper eyelid outward and down over the lower lid.

Use an eye wash station or a bottled solution if your natural tears are not working effectively. Flush the eye for at least 15 minutes taking breaks as needed.

# Eye Injuries - Part 4

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### Lawn Care

Whether you are mowing the lawn, using the **weed wacker** or using a **chainsaw** or **pruning sheers** to cut back branches on a tree you should wear your eye protection. Each year thousands of people go to the emergency room with eye injuries while taking care of their lawn.

### Sports

Every year thousands of people, many of which are children, damage or lose their vision from sports-related eye injuries. However, the good news is that 90 percent of these eye injuries are preventable if appropriate protective eyewear is worn. Encourage your children or grandchildren to wear eye protection while playing tennis, baseball, softball or basketball. Unlike what we have here at work, many stores such as Dicks Sporting Goods sell very stylish safety glasses. Buying a set of these for your children may encourage their use even more.

### Other Activities

**Paintball, hunting, target shooting, setting off fireworks, wood working** and many other leisure activities also have a history of causing eye injuries without the proper eye protection. Ensure you and your families are protected during these activities.

Vision is a terrible thing to lose and prevention is pretty easy with just wearing safety glasses.