July is Eye Injury Prevention Month

July has been officially recognized as Eye Injury Prevention Month. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, eye injuries occur at a rate of more than 2,000 per day. More than 800,000 work-related eye injuries occur each year¹. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses found that almost 70 percent of the eye injuries studied occur from falling or flying objects, or sparks striking the eye. The best way to prevent injury to the eyes is to always wear the appropriate eye protection. The BLS found that almost three out of five workers who were injured were either not wearing eye protection or were wearing the wrong kind for the job.

For more information about eye protection, log in to the Risk Control Customer Portal at the top of this page and search "personal protective equipment" in the Keyword Search function.

¹ http://www.cdc.gov/features/dsworkPlaceEye/

FMCSA study: telematics can impact safety and fuel efficiency

A report released in April by the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) shows the impact telematics can have on truck safety and fuel efficiency.

The study involved monitoring driver performance and fuel efficiency for a fleet of 46 Class 8 tractors (24 day cabs and 22 sleeper cabs) for one year. Each vehicle was instrumented with a telematics device that tracked fuel efficiency, engine performance, speeding and harsh driving. Drivers were provided in-cab feedback on their driving, as well as feedback from their managers and safety incentives during various phases of the study. The purpose of the study was to determine the impact of telematics device use on safety and fuel efficiency.

Study highlights:

- Unsafe events (sudden acceleration, hard braking, and sudden lane changes) decreased by almost 50 percent.
- Distances driven at speeds more than 65 mph decreased by 33 percent for day cabs and 42 percent for sleeper cab groups.
- Fuel economy improved by 9 percent for the day cab group and 5 percent for the sleeper cab group.
The overall conclusion from the study is that monitoring key driver performance parameters and providing driver intervention through coaching and low-cost incentive programs can translate into significant fuel-savings and safety improvements. However, driver awareness alone does not result in a change in driver behavior. Only a long-term sustained coaching program, accompanied by a targeted behavior-change initiative, can achieve a safe and fuel-efficient driving culture.

View the full report: Study of the Impact of a Telematics System on Safe and Fuel-Efficient Driving in Trucks

For more information about telematics, log in to the Risk Control Customer Portal at the top of this page and search “telematics” in the search function.

**OSHA announces new interactive web tool to help identify workplace hazards**

OSHA has released a new interactive training tool to help small businesses effectively identify hazards in the workplace. Employers and workers can virtually explore how to identify common workplace hazards in the manufacturing and construction industries. Users of the new training tool will learn not only hazard identification skills, but also learn about hazard abatement and control.

Through the hazard identification tool, users can play from the perspective of either a business owner or an employee as they learn to identify realistic, common hazards and address them with practical and effective solutions. The tool explains the key components of the hazard identification process, which include information collection, observation of the workplace, investigation of incidents, employee participation and prioritizing hazards.

OSHA developed the tool in conjunction with its Training Institute to assist small business owners in effectively identifying hazards in their workplace. The hazard identification training tool can be found on OSHA’s website at osha.gov/hazfinder. To view the game trailer, visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yj_IqaWSbKo&feature=youtu.be.

For more information about identifying and preventing workplace hazards, log in to the Risk Control Customer Portal at the top of this page and search “workplace hazards” in the search function.

**New OSHA resources aim to help reduce injuries among workers in the nursing home and residential care industries**

OSHA has developed Safe Patient Handling: Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders in Nursing Homes, a new brochure that addresses the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders among nursing home and residential care workers.

Healthcare workers experience some of the highest rates of non-fatal workplace injuries and illnesses of any industry sector. In 2012, injuries and illnesses reported for nursing and residential care workers were nearly twice the number of those reported for construction workers, according to the BLS. Injuries include muscle strains, low back and rotator cuff injuries and tendinitis. This brochure explains how implementing a safe patient handling program can reduce or prevent the number and severity of these musculoskeletal hazards.

A successful safe patient handling program includes input from healthcare workers who work directly with patients, commitment to the program by all levels of management, hazard assessment, technology and equipment to control hazards and training.

Copies of the brochure are available online and through OSHA's Publications Office at 202-693-1888.

OSHA’s Nursing Homes and Personal Care Facilities web page lists the industry's most common hazards and possible solutions, OSHA enforcement initiatives including the National Emphasis Program - Nursing and Residential Care Facilities and information on implementing workplace safety and health programs to help reduce the extent and severity of work-related injuries and illnesses.

For more information about preventing injuries in the healthcare industry, log in to the Risk Control Customer Portal at the top of this page. Once in the Portal, click on Technical Tools, TravSources® and then choose “Healthcare Industry.”

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Continuity plans: critical to small business survival

One year ago, the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety (IBHS), a Travelers alliance, created OFB-EZ™, a free business continuity planning toolkit to help small businesses translate professional continuity concepts into an easy-to-use guide for their business. Although the past year was one of the least extreme U.S. weather years in memory, a number of significant events occurred that caused substantial property damage and business disruption across all regions of the country. The first half of 2014 has seen severe winter weather that froze pipes as well as the U.S. economy; destructive tornadoes that killed dozens of people and damaged homes and businesses in the South Central and Southeast states; and more than twice the average number of wildfires in California and elsewhere.

The only certain thing about the weather is that it is always changing. OFB-EZ helps small businesses focus on planning for business interruptions regardless of the specific cause, so they can reduce their losses, get a jump start on recovery, and re-open as quickly as possible. By using OFB-EZ, a small business can utilize many disaster planning and recovery best practices without the need for a large company budget to accomplish the planning and protection basics. The toolkit provides a simple eight-step process, and users do not need to be an expert in business continuity planning.

Benefits of an OFB-EZ business continuity plan

Creating a business continuity plan, such as that provided in the OFB-EZ toolkit, can help small business owners:

- Consider and identify what risks and serious threats their business faces and how these threats could impact their critical activities and assets. Owners will be able to focus on the kind of disruptions that are most likely to happen, what the impacts would be, and what measures they can take to reduce those impacts.

- Ensure that critical business operations are not shut down. A plan will include how a business’ critical operations will continue by concentrating on which activities need to be recovered immediately versus which can wait, developing and documenting workaround methods, and identifying who does what.

- Plan for communications with employees, customers, suppliers and vendors during and after an emergency. By having up-to-date personal and emergency contact information and leveraging social media, a business owner can be sure their key stakeholders will not miss out on vitally important information if normal communication channels are down. In addition, they can help plan how to keep customers and suppliers informed about the status of the business, product or service, delivery schedules, and develop mutually agreeable alternative arrangements.

- Protect information and information technology as it is extremely vulnerable to many disruption scenarios, ranging from localized power outages to major natural catastrophes. A business continuity plan also reminds employees to inventory and document all information technology and reminds them of the importance of frequent back-ups, off-site storage, and restoration options.

- Reduce downtime; every hour a business is down can cost thousands of dollars.

- Avoid going out of business, which ensures job security for its employees and a faster recovery for the community.

Now is the time to get started

No matter what a business does, or where it is located, disasters can strike, sometimes without a moment’s notice. For the past year, OFB-EZ has been helping small businesses prepare for the unexpected and respond effectively. Now is the time for small business owners to download OFB-EZ, available at disastersafety.org/open-for-business, and create a plan that can help them survive, and even thrive, when disasters – small or large – strike.

For more information about small business safety, click on “Small Business Safety” in the left-hand navigation bar.

Article from the Insurance Institute for Business & Home Safety.

Preventing worker injuries and deaths at roadway construction work sites

Workers on roadway construction worksites are exposed to possible injury and death from moving construction vehicles and equipment [NIOSH 2001].

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) recommends that specific procedures and controls be in place at roadway construction worksites to help prevent injuries and deaths from backing construction vehicles and
equipment. According to a BLS review of the 962 fatal workplace injuries at road construction sites from 2003 to 2010, 443 were due to a worker being struck by a vehicle or mobile equipment [BLS 2013]. Workers were fatally struck 143 times by a vehicle or mobile equipment that was backing up. In 84 of these cases, the worker was fatally struck by a dump truck that was backing up.

Between 1992 and 2009, NIOSH and state partners investigated 36 deaths of workers killed by backing construction vehicles or equipment on roadway construction worksites through the Fatality Assessment and Control Evaluation Program.

Read more. For more information about construction site safety, log in to the Risk Control Customer Portal at the top of this page and search “construction site” in the Keyword Search function.