



Safety Reminder Series

Preventing Staff Injuries

Employed and volunteer staff is at the heart of many nonprofit organizations. Ensuring their safety and preventing injuries should be part of your organization's culture. Developing this culture does not happen by chance, it must be part of an ongoing safety effort. The information below will help focus your efforts toward safety with ideas for key components (follow [hyperlinks](#) for samples) of a safety program. These components of a strong safety program are part of creating your organization's culture of safety.

Leading the Way:

Organizations will find that forming a [Safety Committee](#) can help focus efforts at preventing common issues such as [Preventing Slips & Falls](#). The Committee should review position descriptions and lead the way for mandatory education about [Bloodborne Pathogens](#), [Hazard Communication](#), [Lock-out Tag-out](#), [Confined Space](#) and [Workplace Violence](#). Other topics such as use of [Proper Footwear](#) and safe [Vehicle Operation](#) should also be covered in a general [Safety Orientation](#) at the time of hire. Safety can then be reinforced through regular reminders at staff meetings and with good feedback from supervisors.

Prevention Back Injuries:

Slips and falls continue to lead the way for the most common accidents across industry classes. However, back injuries can be more severe for cost, lost work time, morale and ongoing workers' compensation issues. The prevention of back injuries should be part of your regular safety efforts. These efforts include providing regular [Safe Lifting Training](#) and reminders to staff about avoiding common behaviors that lead to injuries. Seasonal actions such as shoveling snow and spring maintenance can cause injury when staff are not properly trained and encouraged to follow good practice. Staff should also have position-specific training in order to avoid common causes of back injury such as lifting children and forgetting to use [Proper Footwear](#).

Ladder Safety:

Improper use of ladders can lead to injuries. According to the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) there are more than 164,000 emergency room-treated injuries relating to ladders each year. Teaching [Ladder Safety](#) can help prevent common mishaps that lead to injury. Key topics for training include using the right ladder for the job, inspecting ladders for use, maintaining them properly and controlling their use to staff that know how to use them properly. Equipment and supply storage also plays a key role in avoiding ladder injuries. Storing commonly used items for easy access can help to avoid the quick/casual use of ladders that often leads to problems.

Chemical Handling:

The proper labeling, storage and use of chemicals is an important staff safety topic. Chemicals can easily cause injuries and incidents when not respected through [Proper Handling and Care](#). Providing general and then position-specific training should be a top priority for protecting staff. All chemical practices should be outlined in your organization's [Hazard Communication Plan](#). Staff should be trained and encouraged to use [Personal Protective Equipment \(PPE\)](#) whenever they work with chemicals. Facilities should be equipped with appropriate safety devices such as [Eye Wash Stations](#). All the information about a chemical, its characteristics and safe handling practices are outlined in its [Material Safety Data Sheet \(MSDS\)](#). The information listed in the [MSDS](#) is crucial for protecting staff and preventing chemical handling incidents.

Find more safety information in the [Online Resource Library](#).

Resources include seasonal staff safety information such as [Snow-Thrower Safety](#), [Lawnmower Safety](#), [Chainsaw Safety](#), [Lyme Disease Facts](#), [Sun Protection Facts](#) and [Tree Trimming Safety](#).

Look for other important safety topics in our [Safety Reminder Series](#).