

Safety Topic

Safety News

State Compensation Insurance Fund



Issue Two, 2008

Ladder Safety

Ladder safety begins with selecting the right ladder for the job and includes inspection, setup, following safe procedures while on the ladder, proper use, care, and storage. This combination of safe equipment and its safe use can eliminate most ladder accidents.

Always check a ladder before using it. Inspect wood ladders for cracks or splits. Inspect metal and fiberglass ladders for bends and breaks. Never use a damaged ladder. Tag it “Defective”, take it out of service and report it to your supervisor.

When setting up an extension ladder, make sure it’s straight and sitting firmly on the ground or floor. If one foot sits lower, build up the surface with firm material, don’t set it on boxes, bricks or other unstable bases. Lean the ladder against something solid, but not against a glass surface. Make sure the ladder is placed at a safe angle, with the base away from the wall or edge of the upper level about one foot for every four feet of vertical height. Keep ladders away from doorways or walkways, unless barriers can protect them.



Keep the steps and rungs of the ladder free of grease, paint, mud or other slippery material. And remember to clean debris off your shoes before climbing. Always face the ladder when climbing up or down, using both hands to keep a good grip on the rails or rungs. Don’t carrying heavy or bulky loads up a ladder. First climb up the ladder, and then pull up the load with a rope or bucket.

Many ladder accidents occur because of slipping or skidding. You can prevent these accidents by equipping the ladder with non-slip safety feet, blocking its base or tying it to a sound, permanent structure.

Overreaching is probably the most common cause of falls from ladders. A good rule is to always keep your belt buckle inside the rails of a ladder. Don’t try to move a ladder while you’re on it by rocking, jogging or pushing it away from the supporting wall.

When you’ve finished the job, properly store the ladder so it won’t be exposed to excessive heat or dampness and will be in good condition for the next time. □

TOPIC REVIEW

Instructor _____

Date _____

Location _____

Attended By _____

Safety Recommendations





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Loss Control Services

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Please forward to the person responsible for your safety program

News about Occupational Safety and Health in Agriculture

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Employer Education Series

State Fund continues to promote community educational outreach by increasing the quantity and frequency of employer seminars. These seminars are produced and sponsored by State Fund and are open to State Fund policyholders. The seminar topics cover all aspects of worker's compensation and are offered statewide.

As part of State Fund's Employer Education Series, the local State Fund Loss Control departments offer safety seminars dedicated to loss prevention. They feature safety training targeted to specific industries and safety topics of interest to California employers. Various programs in the series are developed in conjunction with State Fund insured Group Programs and external affiliates and partners. Some of these partners are occupational safety and health providers such as Cal/ OSHA Consultation Service, the Department of Health Services, and the University of California.

The goal of State Fund's Employer Education Series is to present valuable information from recognized safety and health experts to enable employers to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace injuries, facilitate regulatory compliance, and increase business profits.

The program venues provide the opportunity for attendees to have their workplace safety questions immediately and personally answered by industry experts. The typically half-day seminars are usually held at regional State Fund offices. To learn what programs are scheduled in your area, visit www.scif.com and click on Seminars. □

Reporting Work-Related Injuries

State Fund's Claims Reporting Center (1-888-222-3211) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for policyholders to report injuries as soon as they occur. Agents will do the necessary paperwork to get the claim started and refer the injured to the designated physician or provider.

Within 8 hours of any serious illness or injury (requiring hospitalization over 24 hours, other than for medical observation or where there is permanent employee disfigurement) or death occurring in the workplace or in connection with employment, employers must report the incident to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health. □

This Agricultural Safety News is produced by the Safety and Health Services Department of State Fund to assist clients in their loss control efforts. Information or recommendations contained in this publication were obtained from sources believed to be reliable at the date of publication. Information is only advisory and does not presume to be exhaustive or inclusive of all workplace hazards or situations. Permission to reprint articles subject to approval by State Compensation Insurance Fund.

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Safety News

STATE COMPENSATION INSURANCE FUND

Heat Illness Resources

Heat illness is a silent hazard. Victims may not realize they're in trouble until the illness is advanced or life threatening. In California, employers with any outdoor place of employment must comply with the *Heat Illness Prevention Standard* to reduce the risk of work-related heat illnesses among their employees. To assist employers in crafting their heat illness prevention procedures, Cal/OSHA has created a guide, the *Employer Sample Procedures for Heat Illness Prevention*.

Procedures suggested in this guide provide the minimal steps applicable to most outdoor work settings that are essential to reducing the incidence of heat-related illnesses. In working environments with a higher risk for heat illness (e.g., during a heat wave or other severe working or environmental conditions) it's the employer's duty to exercise greater caution and include additional protective measures, beyond what's listed in the guide, to protect their employees.

The four main sections of the guide include but are not limited to those contained in Title 8 of the California Code of Regulation 3395. They are: provisions of water, access to shade, written procedures, and training. Each section begins with a reference to the *Heat Illness Prevention Standard* and offers sample bulleted procedures. The section is then followed by lined pages where

employers can insert the specific steps their company will take to assure compliance with that particular element of the standard.

The guide's recommended procedures are not intended to supersede or replace the application of any other Title 8 regulation, particularly Title 8 CCR 3203, the *Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)*. However, the measures listed may be integrated into a company's existing IIPP.

Employers should also be aware of other standards that apply to heat illness prevention such as the requirement to provide for drinking water, first aid, and emergency response.

To effectively establish your company's procedures, carefully review the key elements listed in Cal/OSHA's guide,

as well as the examples provided, then select and fill out the procedures applicable to your workplace. Use additional paper when necessary. Next, implement and train your employees and supervisors on the procedures you have established for your company and encourage workers to immediately report symptoms or signs of heat illness in themselves or in coworkers.

To access a copy of the *Employer Sample Procedures for Heat Illness Prevention* or for additional information on heat illness prevention, go to <http://www.dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo.html>. □



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The Expert's Corner

Grip Force And Gloves

People wear gloves for many different reasons and occasions. Whether people are making fashion statements, participating in their favorite pastime, or simply working, properly fitting gloves can be an important accessory for completing tasks comfortably, efficiently, and safely. Gloves improve grip when handling tools and slippery objects, and they protect the hands from extreme temperatures, sharp or abrasive materials, and guard against the effects of toxic and corrosive substances.

While gloves provide excellent protection against many hazards, they can be hazardous if they do not fit properly. When gloves are too loose, extra force needs to be applied in order to get a good firm grip. Because of this, there is a loss of grip strength, in comparison to not wearing any gloves at all. This, in effect, causes double work: performing the job at hand and overcoming any movement or slippage from the glove. On the other hand, when gloves are too tight, they interfere with grasping, dexterity, and finger movement. Additional force is needed in order to flex the tight

gloves, especially if they are thick.

Wearing ill-fitting gloves requires the wearer to apply additional grip force that would not be required if the gloves fit correctly. Over time, greater grip forces applied can lead to fatigue, discomfort, and eventual injury to the hands and arms.



The following points should be considered when selecting the right glove for the job:

- Gloves with rubber dots on the surface increase grip stability on surfaces that are slippery (e.g., wet items or items without handles).

- For slippery surfaces, workers use greater grip force when wearing cotton gloves than with rubber gloves. Cotton gloves perform better with non-slippery surfaces.
- Rubber gloves allow employees to maintain relatively low grip force levels for both slippery and non-slippery surfaces.
- Studies by the University of Osaka suggest that rubber gloves help reduce force and provide more efficient control than cotton gloves in tasks requiring precision handling of small objects.
- Performance time for cotton gloves tends to be longer than that for rubber gloves.
- In addition to carefully selecting the type of glove provided to workers, gloves of different sizes should also be provided.

Information above refers to a research study conducted at the School of Health and Sport Sciences at the University of Osaka, Japan. □

Lou Vicario is one of State Fund's Certified Associate Ergonomists based in Southern California.

Check Out State Fund's Online IIPP Builder

Since 1991, the California Code of Regulations has required employers to establish, implement, and maintain an effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) to ensure that all California employers meet their legal obligation to provide and maintain a safe and healthy workplace for their employees.

An IIPP is a written plan that details the required steps employers must take to protect their employees from workplace hazards.

If a Cal/OSHA inspector visits a workplace, one of the first things he/she will ask is to see the company's IIPP. The benefits of having an effective IIPP include: reducing work-related injuries and illnesses, decreasing financial losses resulting from work-related injuries, and avoiding costly Cal/OSHA fines.

As a service to our policyholders, State Fund has developed an online tool called the IIPP Builder. This interactive tool enables you to create an Injury and Illness Prevention

Program specific to your business operation and allows you to download various forms and checklists to use when implementing your IIPP. The IIPP Builder contains tutorials that will guide you through the steps necessary to compose your customized safety program. The IIPP Builder will not only enable you to create and update your IIPP, it's also designed to help you understand IIPP requirements and to determine if your

Continued on next page

“Bee” Alert

The rapid growth of Africanized honeybees (AHBs) or “killer bees” in California poses a potential threat to agricultural workers. AHBs and European Honey Bees (EHBs) look and sound alike and both are valued for pollination, honey, and beeswax. But, although both types sting only once, AHBs attack in larger numbers with less provocation and can pursue their victim for over a quarter mile and attack for several hours. The threat of an AHBs attack can be minimized if you know how to prevent and protect against a bee encounter.

Bee swarms commonly seek nesting sites in the spring and early summer. But, as AHBs produce more swarms per year, they may appear at other times. Remove or seal potential bee nesting sites like wall openings, sheds, deserted or neglected cars or equipment; trees stumps, dense vegetation, trash areas or woodpiles; and underground areas such as animal holes, irrigation pipes, meter boxes or drainage ditches.

Before beginning a job or entering a shed or outbuilding, examine the area and report signs of bee activity. Wear a hat and gloves, tuck long shirts into pants, duct tape cuffs or tuck pants into boots and avoid wearing dark clothes or scented products. If bees might be encountered during work, wear protective equipment such as a bee

veil, handkerchief or a full-length bee suit. AHBs defend their nests quickly and viciously within 5 to 100 feet or more of their nest when disturbed by vibration or noise from power equipment such as lawn mowers, weed eaters, chain



saws or other machinery that excites them. To protect yourself during an AHB encounter *RUN AWAY* to an enclosed vehicle or building protecting your head, eyes, nose and mouth with your hands, arms or clothing. Swatting bees upsets them more. Although some bees may get in the shelter, the majority will be shut out. If stung, quickly pull or scrape the stinger from the skin and go immediately to a professional medical facility for treatment because multiple bee stings can affect breathing or trigger a fatal allergic reaction. □

Continued from previous page

IIPP meets Cal/OSHA requirements.

The IIPP Builder - which requires either Internet Explorer 5.5 or higher or Adobe Acrobat 5.0 or higher - is available exclusively to our policyholders through State Fund Online (a free online resource tool that allows you to quickly and easily manage your policy round-the-clock). If you're not currently a State Fund Online user, register now at www.scif.com and begin building your IIPP today.

State Fund recognizes that an employer's loss control efforts help to decrease the frequency and severity of illnesses and injuries in the work envi-

ronment. We are committed to the belief that a safe workplace can increase productivity and lower workers' compensation costs and are proud of our role in helping you develop and enhance your safety programs.

For questions about the IIPP Builder, contact your State Fund Loss Control Consultant, call State Fund Online Support at 1-866-721-3498, or email us at iipp@scif.com. The IIPP Builder is just one of many products State Fund has developed to help you control costs as well as lower employee work-related injuries and illnesses. To find out about additional products and services available to State Fund policyholders, visit www.scif.com. □

Work At A Safe Pace

You've heard the expression, "Haste makes waste," but hurry and haste can lead to accidents and injuries, when speed becomes more important than safety. In fact, hurrying is a common factor in many accidents.

Any time you're about to climb a ladder or equipment, pick up a heavy object or use a potentially dangerous piece of machinery, give a thought to safety first. Make a mental note to do it at a safe and steady pace. This is especially true if you're about to start a new job or use equipment you are not familiar with.

Sometimes workers, especially new ones, work at a fast pace in order to impress their foreman or the boss. While that kind of attitude is appreciated, it won't be appreciated if it results in an accident or injury. For an employer, the cost of the accident could more than wipe out the profits from the job, but what's more important is the pain, worry, and the financial loss to the injured worker and their family.

There's also another expression, "Slow and steady wins the race." Work at a safe pace. You'll get the job done and both you and your employer will end up winners. □

