

Safety Topic

Safety News

State Compensation Insurance Fund

Issue One, 2009



Personal Protective Equipment

Wearing or using the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) for the job can protect your health and your safety on the job. Some PPE is necessary for specific jobs, while other items are necessary for any work. It's important that you understand what equipment is necessary and why it's necessary. You should also be trained to know how to use and care for the equipment, so it will provide you maximum protection. If you're not sure what, if any, PPE is required or recommended to do a job safely, ask your supervisor.



What you wear to work can protect you or put you in harms way. Rings, bracelets, neck chains, and wrist watches, can get caught and pull you into moving machine parts. So, leave your jewelry at home or in your vehicle. Cover up or tie back loose hair and clothing. Wear close fitting or tucked in clothing with cuff-less pants. As the temperature changes, layer your clothing for heat or cold. To protect against the sun's ultraviolet rays, wear clothing that protects exposed skin and apply sunscreen.

Hard hats should be worn in areas where there's a danger of flying, falling, and moving objects overhead. Safety boots

with metal toes and appropriate sole or tread must be worn around machinery and in work areas where slip hazards are present. Rubber boots with hard toes and puncture-proof inner soles may also be required.

Safety glasses, goggles or face shields should be worn if your eyes can be damaged from splashes, dust, chips or other flying particles. If you'll be working around loud or excessive noise earplugs, earmuffs, or other protective hearing device may be required.

Gloves can sometimes help you get a better grip, guard against cuts,

keep fingers warm, give added padding or protect against a substance exposure. But, to function properly, they must fit correctly.

For some jobs, respirators or masks may be necessary to prevent nose and throat irritation or to prevent ingesting dangerous chemicals, dusts, or vapors. Because the specific type of respirator to use depends on the nature of the work, ask your supervisor which one is correct for the exposure. Then be sure you've been fit-tested to assure proper protection.

TOPIC REVIEW

Instructor _____

Date _____

Location _____

Attended By _____

Safety Recommendations



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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

Nip Hazards In The Bud

Pruning may seem like a common task but if not done with adequate safety precautions, it can result in an injury. Before beginning pruning activities, workers should be trained in pruning hazards, safe pruning techniques, safe tool handling, ladder safety, and in the use and care of recommended personal protective equipment.

Personal protective equipment like protective eyewear, gloves, headwear, shoes, long-sleeved shirts, and pants can shield workers from many hazardous exposures. Workers should dress appropriate for the weather conditions with light-colored, thin clothing on hot days and warmer layers on cold or wet days. Sunscreen and a wide-brimmed hat are recommended for protection against the sun's ultraviolet rays.

Wearing safety glasses or face shields is essential to protect a pruning worker's eyes from being poked or cut by a ricocheting branch, flying debris, or sharp twig. To prevent cuts and scrapes from foliage, workers should wear long-sleeved shirts, neck scarves, and long pants. A dust mask may be necessary to prevent inhaling airborne particles during the cutting, grinding or sawing of limbs and foliage.

Pruning tools often include sharp knives, saws, scissor shears, manual and electric hedge shears,

branch loppers, pole pruners, and power saws. Workers can avoid possible cutting injuries by practicing safe tool handling techniques, maintaining and storing tools properly, and wearing protective gloves. Well-fitting gloves can also provide a better tool grip and prevent blisters, cuts, or puncture wounds.



Because tree and orchard pruners often work at heights, they should be trained in ladder safety, including proper climbing techniques, ladder placement, and ladder maintenance. Pruners should also note the location and height of electrical lines and avoid touching them with foliage,

and pruning or lifting equipment. Shoes with good tread can provide traction for climbing and wearing hard hats and sturdy or steel-toed shoes can protect against falling limbs and debris.

Other general safety tips for pruners include using proper lifting techniques; avoiding awkward postures; using ear plugs while working around power tools; drinking plenty of liquids to prevent heat exhaustion and dehydration; taking short, frequent breaks from repetitive tasks; and stretching before, during and after work. Sometimes bees, wasps, snakes, and ticks may be encountered while pruning, so workers should carefully observe areas for signs of insect or reptile and avoid or take extra care in those locations. □



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The Expert's Corner

Tuberculosis – A Continuing Threat

Tuberculosis (TB) is a global epidemic. It's estimated that 2 billion people (or one third of the world's population) are infected with TB and every year, 2 million people die from it.

In the United States, TB control programs have kept the spread of the disease in check. However, the emergence of multidrug-resistant TB (MDR TB) and extensively drug-resistant TB (XDR TB) make the goal of eliminating TB in the U.S. especially important.

Tuberculosis is an infectious disease caused by the organism *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*. It typically affects the lungs, but may also affect other parts of the body. TB is spread from person to person through the air. When a person with infectious TB disease coughs, sneezes, speaks, or sings, microscopic droplets containing *M. tuberculosis* may be expelled into the air. These droplets can remain suspended in the air for several hours. Another person inhaling these droplets may become infected with TB. The longer the exposure and the more contagious the diseased person, the more likely the exposed person will become infected.

Most people infected with TB will never develop TB disease – the body's immune system keeps the bacteria under control and inactive. A person infected with TB but who has not developed the disease has a condition called *latent TB infection* (LTBI).



Approximately 10% of people with LTBI will develop TB disease at some point in their lives. For people with weakened immune systems, however, the risk of developing TB disease can greatly increase.

A person with TB disease may have any of these symptoms:

- Persistent cough (3 weeks or longer)
- Bloody sputum
- Weight loss or loss of appetite
- Fever
- Night sweats

Diagnosis and treatment of TB is not only important for the health of the individual. It is also important for preventing the spread of TB within the community.

TB infection control programs should be established for clinics, hospitals, and settings in which home-based health care and emergency medical services are provided. Nursing homes, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, drug treatment centers, and other places that serve clients who are at risk for being infected with TB should also develop TB infection control programs. Information on such programs is available at www.osha.gov. The Center for Disease Control is also an excellent source of information on TB. Visit www.cdc.gov. □

Beth Mohr, Ph.D., CIH, is a Certified Industrial Hygienist assigned to State Fund's San Francisco and San Jose Districts.

Agricultural Pesticide Use Regulations

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) governs pesticide use in agricultural operations and classifies pesticides as “general” or “restricted” use. Workers must be certified to buy, use, or supervise the use of restricted pesticides and usually require a permit from the local County Agricultural Commissioner to do so. Workers must read and follow all of the requirements on the pesticide product label in order to use it safely and correctly. Engineering controls required by pesticide

labels may include closed application and mixing systems that reduce worker exposure during use. Workers require training on this equipment and it should be properly maintained and inspected prior to each use. Product level gauges should be functional and pesticide container sizes and shapes should be compatible with the closed system hatches to maintain system integrity.

The personal protective equipment (PPE) required for pesticide applicators varies

depending on the material and the application method; product labels must be carefully reviewed. Workers must use all of the PPE required on the pesticide label every time. PPE for pesticide application may include coveralls, eye protection, protective gloves and footwear, chemical resistant aprons and hoods, and respiratory protection. Workers require extra, clean coveralls to change into if they become soiled or soaked with pesticide.

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(Driverless) Tractor Safety

It is a Cal/OSHA requirement that an operator must be at the controls whenever tractors and other mobile farming equipment are moving in the field. The rule is designed to prohibit “driverless tractors,” where a driver hops off the tractor while it’s in motion leaving the tractor unguided by someone at the controls.

The Cal/OSHA rule does have an exception. It allows a driver to control the tractor from an area other than the cab seat as long as the controls for starting, accelerating, decelerating and stopping are provided. If the tractor operates faster than 2 miles per hour OR requires guidance other than that from the ground or a furrow, steering controls must also be provided outside the cab. Operators can walk alongside furrow-guided, self-propelled equipment as long as they are within 10 feet and have a clear view ahead and of nearby workers.

Some tractors are equipped with global positioning systems (GPS) and other computer-controlled systems that enable tractors to precisely navigate along



field rows and turn efficiently in the headlands (open end of the crop field). Some systems can control tractor speeds, turning radius, and the lifting and lowering of implements and can operate for longer hours and at high speeds despite darkness, fog, and weather. But, while these systems improve work efficiency, tractor operators are still required to follow basic safety rules. Basic rules include: never sitting on a tractor without a proper seat and seatbelt; not allowing riders unless there is an extra seat and safety belt; and never reaching into moving parts to clear jams or do maintenance until the tractor is turned off and the machinery is locked out, blocked out, and unhooked from any power.

Drivers operating automated tractors and agricultural workers around them should get training on their features. And, warning signs should be posted where automated tractors are used in fields. Fencing areas to limit access is also a safety option. The entire Cal/OSHA regulation can be found at <http://www.dir.ca.gov/title8/3441.html>. □

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Workers under 18 years old cannot mix or load a pesticide that requires air supplied respiratory protection, a closed system, or full-body chemical-resistant clothing.

Decontamination facilities with adequate supplies of soap, water, and towels must be provided to workers using pesticides. Emergency eyewashes must be immediately available. Emergency medical care information should also be posted at the worksite. Workers should use proper hygiene by washing hands and face and changing clothes before leaving the worksite.

Warnings must be posted at the site of a pesticide field application. Workers should monitor weather and other factors that may affect the application

process and the safety and health of humans and animals near the application site. Records of pesticide use should be maintained. Pesticide containers must be handled properly by storing them in a secure place and disposing or recycling them according to product label requirements. Pesticides should never be stored in unlabeled containers, especially those that may appear to be food containers (cans or bottles).

For further information about pesticide regulations, contact the California Department of Pesticide Regulation <http://www.cdpr.ca.gov/> or your local County Agricultural Commissioner, which may have more stringent requirements than the DPR. □

Practice Good Hygiene

Workers who practice good personal hygiene can prevent the spread of germs and disease, reduce their exposures to chemicals and contaminants, and avoid developing skin allergies, skin conditions, and chemical sensitivities.

One way to assure good hygiene is to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) such as face protection, gloves, coveralls, and boots. Workers should inspect, clean, decontaminate or replace their protective equipment frequently to make sure it isn’t damaged and won’t collect or absorb irritants.

Periodic hand washing throughout the day is basic to good hygiene; scrubbing with soap and water helps remove germs, contaminants, and chemicals. It can also prevent exposure by ingestion and cross-contamination. Workers should wash their hands before they take breaks at work to eat, drink or smoke; after they use the restroom; and before, during, and after preparing food. To control the spread of germs that can cause the flu or common cold, workers should wash their hands whenever they cough, sneeze, or blow their noses, and whenever they are around someone that is sick.

Showering and face washing after work is also a good idea. Proper personal hygiene and hand protection can help keep workers productive and on the job. □

