

# Safety News



News About Occupational Safety and Health in **MANUFACTURING**

## Sewing Up Your Health And Safety

**W**orkers in clothing and upholstery manufacturing environments use cutting, sewing, and fastening machines and tools that can cause cuts, punctures, amputations, or repetitive motion injuries. If you work in this manufacturing industry, you should be aware of the hazards associated with your job and follow all safety practices to protect you from harm.

Making furniture and clothing often requires close-up work to cut, fasten, and inspect materials. Bring your work close to you on work surfaces that are adjustable in height and incline. Change your postures and your tasks throughout your shift. Stand or sit on adjustable, padded work chairs or stools that support your feet. Check for proper lighting in the shop and task lighting for close-up work.



Get training on all equipment you use and periodically inspect it to assure proper operation. Follow lockout/blockout procedures when performing maintenance, changing needles, or clearing jams. And, always wear close-fitting clothing, remove jewelry, and secure long hair around moving machinery. If you cannot replace or soundproof noisy equipment, use hearing protection.

Use tool grips made of pliable, slip-resistant materials that fit your hand. Cutting tools and staplers should be kept sharp and in good working condi-

tion. These machines and specialty equipment (fabric drills, pattern cutters, thread trimmers) require guards. Sewing machines have nip points along their handwheels and lower and upper pulleys requiring guards to prevent caught/crush injuries. Use safety interlock devices to stop machine operations unless guards are in place.

Knives, blades, needles, scissors, pins, staples, and tacks are sharp objects requiring extra safety precautions. Use the needle and fastener sizes appropriate to your equipment and materials to prevent accidental breaks. Dispose of sharp objects in labeled, rigid plastic containers, not the trash. Consider eye protection if there is a hazard of flying objects.

Lifting bolts of cloth, frame-work for furniture, and heavy items can cause ergonomic injury. Use mechanical lifting devices where possible. When you manually lift objects, keep your back straight and use your legs to power the lift.

Inspect your work area frequently. Proper housekeeping prevents fire, slip/trip hazards and provides safe emergency exits. Good ventilation in hot/humid work areas controls heat buildup from steam machines and irons. Cutting areas require good ventilation and even tool vacuum systems to remove dust and fibers from the work area. Consider dust masks or respirators for nuisance dust problems. □

## Work Safely With Glass And Ceramics

Glass and ceramic work are two industries with common hazards. Many of the glazes, color additives, fluxes, and material mixes contain hazardous substances such as lead, mercury, arsenic, solvents, and heavy metals. Some raw materials may contain silica, asbestos, or other harmful substances. These materials can be a hazard to your lungs if you inhale them as dusts or as fumes from curing/baking. Get training in your specific job tasks and the machinery, chemicals, and materials you use. Read the product information and use the proper PPE, including respiratory protection, to protect yourself. Practice good hygiene by washing your hands frequently at work and before you eat, drink or smoke. Keep your work clothes and shoes separate from your family's clothing to avoid cross-contamination.

Hot kilns and drying ovens can cause severe burns. Follow work procedures carefully to protect yourself. Allow the oven/kiln AND the products to cool down before you access them. Check the thermostat; even if the air in the kiln/oven feels cool. Remember that the conveyors, shelves, posts, and products can hold heat longer than the air. Wear heat-resistant gloves when you handle products that

*Continued on next page*

### ISSUE ONE, 2010

#### Feature Articles

- Sewing Up Your Health And Safety
- Work Safely With Glass And Ceramics

#### The Expert's Corner – Voluntary Use Of Respirators

- Safety Topic – Lockout/Blockout
- We're Here For You

#### In Each Issue

- Employer Education Series
- Reporting Injuries

## FROM OUR EXPERT

### Voluntary Use Of Respirators

**E**mployers may allow employees to voluntarily use respirators when respirator use is not required by the employer and substance specific OSHA standards are not being exceeded.

Employers should be provided a copy of Appendix D of the respiratory protection standard which instructs the user to heed manufacturer instructions on cleaning and maintenance, and ensure the respirator is NIOSH approved for the contaminant of concern. This should prevent misuse of the respirator from contributing to employee exposure.

Breathing resistance with filtering face piece respirators is considered negligible, not requiring a medical evaluation with voluntary use. Other respirators will require an employer provided medical evaluation.

#### OSHA States:

“When employers allow employees to use respirators when such use is not required by the employer or the OSHA standards, employers must determine that the employees that they allow to use respirators are medically able to do so, and that there are no other

conditions that could cause the respirator use to create a hazard. If the employer allows voluntary respirator use, the employer is required to provide employee with the information contained in appendix D of the respiratory protection standard. Where voluntary respirator use involves only filtering face pieces (dust masks), the employer is not required to implement a written program.

---

### Industrial hygiene evaluations are available to you as part of your policy with State Fund.

---

The great majority of voluntary use situations involve the use of dust masks, i.e. filtering face pieces which are provided for the employees comfort. There are no medical limitations on the use of these respirators, so employers who allow their use need only ensure that the masks are not dirty or contaminated, that their use does not interfere with

employees ability to work safely, and that they provide the employee with the information contained in Appendix D of the Respiratory Protection Standard; the employer is not required to implement a written program.

In the rare case where an employee is voluntarily using other than a filtering face piece respirator, the employer must implement some of the elements of a respiratory protection program, e.g. the medical evaluation component of the program and, if the respirator is to be reworn, the cleaning, maintenance, and storage components.”

**Federal Register Vol. 63, No.5 Thursday January 8, 1998 29CFR parts 1910 and 1926; Respiratory Protection Final Rule.**

Respirator use considerations may include effectiveness of control measures, relevant exposure standards, conditions of use, an exposure assessment, suitability of the respirator for the contaminant, and its level of protection. □

*Vince Moretto, MS Industrial Hygienist with State Fund, is available at [vmmoretto@scif.com](mailto:vmmoretto@scif.com).*

#### Glass and Ceramics *continued from page 1*

have recently been fired, baked, or dried.

The sharp edges from fired glass, coatings, and ceramic glazes cause many cuts and punctures in both industries. Wear puncture-resistant gloves when you handle materials coming from the kiln or oven. If you need to clean off glazes and other materials from kiln and oven racks, wear safety glasses to prevent flying chips and shards of material from injuring your eyes.

Moving parts of mixers, pottery wheels, extruders, and presses can cause cuts and abrasions along with more severe caught/crush injuries. Wear close-fitting clothing, tie back long hair, and

remove jewelry when working near machinery. If possible, only add materials to a mixer while it is NOT in motion. Machine guarding around moving parts can protect you; make sure it is in place before you turn machines on. Practice lockout/blockout for maintenance or clearing jams.

Ergonomic injuries are common to both industries, so lift and handle materials properly. Raw materials can be very dense and heavy. Use lifting devices such as carts, hand trucks, pallet lifters, or forklifts to move materials around. If you must hand-carry materials and product, keep your back straight and use your legs to lift. Test the load be-

fore you lift and break up loads into smaller, more manageable sizes.

Adjust your work station so you can maintain a neutral posture and a straight back. Keep your work and often-used items close to you to avoid reaches. Use adjustable tables and seating to get your work at the optimal height. Rotate your tasks throughout the day to reduce fatigue. Practice good housekeeping in the workplace and to prevent slips, trips, and falls, clean up spills of liquids and dry materials immediately. □



# Safety News

ISSUE ONE  
2010

News About Occupational Safety and Health in **MANUFACTURING**



## Loss Control Services

P.O. BOX 420807  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94142-0807



Prsrt Std  
US Postage Paid  
Permit 803  
Zip Code 92887

Please forward to the person responsible for your safety program



Remember To Recycle  
This Newsletter

## We're Here For You

State Fund's Safety & Health Services Department maintains a staff of highly trained and experienced professionals including Loss Control Consultants, Industrial Hygienists, and Ergonomists who produce a wide range of safety and health products and provide services to insureds, Brokers, and stakeholders.

Products and services are reflective of current Cal/OSHA guidelines and standards and include:

- **Newsletters** – Clients receive quarterly industry-specific newsletters with safety, health, and compliance recommendations and bi-lingual safety meeting topics.
- **Seminars** – State Fund-sponsored seminars on regulatory, safety, or health issues are conducted statewide throughout the year.
- **Training Products** – There is ongoing product development of hard copy and downloadable brochures, training CDs, and ErgoMatters®.
- **Safety Meeting Topics and Loss Control Bulletins** – We have produced over 300 online bilingual safety topics that include sign-in sheets for recordkeeping.
- **Safety and Health Experts** – Our staff of Loss Control Consultants, Industrial Hygienists and Ergonomists conduct on-site surveys, partnering with clients' efforts to establish safe workplaces.

For more information, call your local State Fund Office or visit [www.scif.com](http://www.scif.com). □

## 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](http://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 Manufacturing 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.

Published by State Compensation Insurance Fund's Safety and Health Services Department. Editor: Judy Kerry  
© State Compensation Insurance Fund 2009

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER