

Toolbox Talks 2

088: Unsafe Conditions: Eyes

Discussion leader duties for this session:

Review company safety policies related to eye protection.

What this Safety Talk covers:

This Safety Talk addresses conditions that affect eye safety.

Discussion notes:

Conditions that are unsafe for eyes

- Being on a construction site. Just being on a construction site is unsafe for unprotected eyes. All kinds of things can happen, no matter what you're doing. For example, you may be walking to your work area. This activity is perfectly safe. Nobody gets an eye injury from walking. It's the activities around you that are the problem. To protect yourself, wear your safety glasses at all times, except in designated break rooms and offices.
- Doing retro work on an operating site. In addition to construction dangers, you have the additional dangers posed by operational activities from both people and equipment. Wear your safety glasses at all times, except in designated break rooms and offices.
- Defective safety glasses. If the glasses obscure your vision, they obviously aren't safe. But a blemish in the lens also may degrade its impact resistance below safe limits. Replace damaged safety glasses.
- Test leads consist of probes only, with no clips. Try to use a clip whenever possible rather than two probes. This allows you to take measurements with one hand, rather than two. In addition to reducing the shock hazard across your heart, this practice reduces the possibility of creating a blinding arc flash.
- Energy sources not properly isolated. Your lockout/tagout procedure may not address all energy sources. For example, you're terminating feeders in a switchgear enclosure. The bus is hot, because some circuits are needed to feed lighting and receptacle panels. In this case, you could use rubber blankets to prevent accidental contact with the energized parts.
- Splash hazards are present. It doesn't matter if your work has nothing to do with the chemicals in that area. Wear goggles, face shield, or other protection as required.
- People are welding. Stay out of the area, if you can. If you must be there, ensure the welding screens are sufficient. Don't look at the arcs.
- People are grinding. Expect this whenever there's welding, though it may occur at other times. The same precautions apply. Take additional precautions against flying particles.
- Mists, aerosols, or other eye irritants are in the air. Stay out of the area if you can. If you must be there, identify the irritants. Review the MSDS for them and take the required protective measures.

Review and discussion

1. Why is just being on a construction site a situation that requires eye protection? What protection would that be? What are some eye dangers you can encounter simply walking from the gate to your work area?
2. When and where should you wear your safety glasses?
3. If you're installing additional power distribution on an existing site with

ongoing operations, what might be some additional eye hazards? Draw from your experience with past jobs to name some specific dangers.

4. Why do your safety glasses need to be in good condition? What should you do if they're not? How much does a pair of safety glasses cost? How much do you think a person blinded in an industrial accident would give a year later to have his or her vision back? *[Note to Presenter: The price of a pair of safety glasses varies, depending on the style. But you can buy a basic pair for less than what it costs to rent a movie. Your eyes are irreplaceable and priceless.]*

5. Voltage measurement is a common activity, especially late in a construction project. Why is it safer when one of your test leads has a clip instead of a probe?

6. If you open the breaker for the circuit you're working on, how can there be any danger of arc flash? How do you protect yourself from this danger?

7. What should you do if splash hazards are present? Does it matter whether you're actually working with any of the chemical hazards or not?

8. If someone's welding in your work area, how can you protect your eyes?

9. If someone's grinding in your work area, how can you protect your eyes?

10. How do you protect your eyes from mists, aerosols, and other airborne eye irritants?

Participant's Signature and Date

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