

Eyes are one of the most vulnerable parts of our bodies. Eye injuries can cause serious vision loss, lost time at work and, in some cases, permanent blindness. Increasingly common workplace problems are blurred vision and headaches due to eyestrain and eye fatigue from computer, tablet and smartphone use.

### What's the hazard?

A hazard is something that may expose a person to a risk of injury. Below are examples of hazards that can contribute to eye injuries or eye strain. Which could happen in your workplace? Are there any others that may be relevant in your workplace?

Examples of hazards that could contribute to eye injuries include:

- flying objects, dust and debris
- chemical fumes, vapours and mists
- biological hazards
- excessive screen time
- splashing liquids
- molten metal
- various types of radiation
- incorrect screen position

### What can be done to prevent eye injuries in the workplace?

The most effective way to prevent eye injuries is to eliminate the risk of being exposed to a hazard. Personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the eyes must be worn once all other methods of controlling the hazards, including elimination, substitution, engineering controls and administration controls, have been attempted.

#### Required by law:

- employers must do hazard assessments and identify any hazards in their workplaces, including eye injury hazards
- employers must have safe work procedures for identified hazards that cannot be eliminated
- employers must offer training to employees on safe work procedures
- employers must have procedures for reporting, investigating, and documenting incidents and injuries, and offer training to employees on those procedures
- employers must provide workers with properly fitting and appropriate safety eyewear where required
- workers must wear safety eyewear provided by the employer
- workers must take precautions to ensure prescription glasses and contact lenses are safely worn
- employers must provide emergency eyewash fountains where eye contamination is possible
- employers must provide information about hazardous products and training on the safe handling of hazardous products (WHMIS Regulation, sections 4 and 5)

#### Additional controls:

##### Talk leader instructions:

- This is background information ONLY.
- Be sure to customize to your organization.
- Consider printing copies of this sheet for yourself and each participant.
- Lead a discussion with your workers about the materials on this sheet.
- Be sure to give real life examples whenever possible. Be open to questions.
- Conclude with a brief review of the main points or a summary based on the discussion.
- Fill in the name of your organization, location and the date on your sheet. Have each worker sign your sheet to confirm their attendance.
- File your sheet in your worker records to document the Safety Talk.

- consider mandatory use of safety eyewear in high-hazard workplaces like construction, mining or mechanical
- maintain safety eyewear by cleaning after use and storing where they will not be damaged
- provide safety eyewear in a range of eye, bridge and temple sizes to meet needs of individual workers
- sit directly in front of computer monitor, about 50 to 65 centimetres away and slightly above screen
- use computer reading glasses to reduce eye strain
- when using a computer, use the 20-20-20 rule to reduce eye fatigue: every 20 minutes, look away about 20 feet for 20 seconds

### Discussion questions:

1. Which safe work procedures for eye protection are required in your workplace?
2. Is there any PPE required for eye protection in your workplace?

### More information:

If you have questions about eye safety in your workplace, please contact:

- Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, 867-667-5450 or 1-800-661-0443 or [worksafe@gov.yk.ca](mailto:worksafe@gov.yk.ca)

### Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared to help workplaces understand and comply with workplace health and safety laws. It is not legal advice and is not intended to replace the *Workers' Safety and Compensation Act, S.Y. 2021, c.11* and *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations*.

Safety Talk record:

Print and complete this page or fill in electronically, then save as a record of your Safety Talk.

Comments/suggestions

Organization name

Safety Talk leader

Date

Safety Talk participants

print name

signature

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