Safety Training Works!

Safety training is a valuable tool in preventing potential injuries. Depending on the situation, it could also save your life.

Last year, a commonwealth employee was operating a dump truck when the bed pulled down some overhead powerlines. Fortunately, the employee remembered his training, which stated that the safest practice in this situation is to stay inside the vehicle unless it is on fire. The employee stayed in the truck, even when another employee tried to convince him to get out; his training potentially saved his life.

The other employee was later educated on the safest procedures for this type of situation.

This incident is an example of how safety training can reduce injuries and ensure that employees return home safe at the end of the day. Are you using the lessons you’ve received in safety training to make your workplace more safe?

Black Ice: A Driving Hazard

We all know to be on the lookout for icy roads during the winter, so some types of ice are more difficult to spot than others.

Black ice is a thin coat of highly transparent ice. Because it is so thin, it blends in with color of the road pavement, making it nearly impossible to see.

Black ice can occur under a variety of conditions. It can form when the air temperature is warmer than the pavement, causing moisture to freeze on impact. It can also happen when melting snow on the road refreezes.

If you encounter black ice or if weather conditions increase the risk of black ice, the following actions are recommended:

- Keep your distance. The distance needed to stop on black ice is twice as long as for normal driving circumstances. Keep a minimum five second following distance behind the vehicle in front of you.
- Do not apply pressure to your brakes while on black ice; it will cause the vehicle to skid.
- Use caution when driving on bridges, overpasses, tunnels and in the early morning when the air temperature rises faster than the pavement.

Contact Us: For more information about your agency’s safety program, please contact your safety coordinator. A current list is available at the following link: Click here.
Winter Clothing Tips for Working Outdoors

Prevent frostbite, wind-chapped skin and hypothermia from the cold weather by observing the following tips:
- Dress warm enough to withstand the lowest forecasted temperature
- Dress in layers so that clothing can be added or removed as the temperature changes
- Cover all of your exposed skin including your face, hands and neck
- Wear moisture-wicking long underwear, socks and boots rated for cold weather
- Wear gloves that are windproof and waterproof
- Reduce the time that your gloves are off and never take them off in extreme sub-zero temperatures
- Take breaks in warm, dry areas
- Drink warm beverages
- Eat hot, high-calorie foods to encourage your body to burn the foods and keep you warm
- Work during the warmest part of the day in pairs or groups, if possible

Carbon Monoxide Exposure Prevention

From 1999–2010, over 5,000 people in the U.S. died from unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning. Carbon monoxide is an odorless and colorless gas that’s found in fumes produced by cars, small engines, stoves, lanterns, grills, fireplaces, gas ranges or furnaces. To reduce exposure:
- Have your heating system, water heater and any other gas, oil or coal burning appliances serviced by a qualified technician annually
- Install a carbon monoxide detector near sleeping areas on every floor in your home
- If the detector sounds, leave your home immediately and call 911

Snow Shoveling Safety

Avoid injury while shoveling snow this winter by following these tips:
- Take it slow; lightly stretch before you begin
- Push the snow rather than lifting it
- If lifting, use a small shovel or only partially fill the shovel
- Lift with your legs, not your back

Slips, Trips and Falls

Safe winter walking is all about taking the proper steps. When walking in snow- or ice-covered surfaces, be sure to wear shoes or boots that provide solid traction and support.

You can also walk like a penguin on ice. Take small steps and keep your balance forward to keep your body in the correct position. Smaller steps will allow you to keep your weight centered so you are less likely to feel off balance and slip and fall. Point your feet outward and relax your knees. Hold your arms away from your sides to maintain your balance, walk slowly and flat-footed.