

Top Workplace Hazards



Each year, nearly 6,000 workers are killed on the job in the United States. Another 5.7 million are injured - nearly 230,000 of them are teens. And tens of thousands of people suffer work-related psychological disorders. Don't become one of these statistics. Be aware of the dangers at work. Here are some of the most common occupational hazards and what you can do to protect yourself.

Chemical Hazards - Health hazards can arise from exposure to a wide variety of chemical substances in the workplace. These dangers can come in the form of solids, liquids, vapors, gases, dust, fumes, and corrosives. They can be inhaled, ingested, or absorbed into the body. Whether you work in an office building, a classroom, or in the maintenance department, chemical hazards could pose a serious health risk.

Fire - Any workplace is susceptible to the risk of fire. Know where fire extinguishers are stored and participate in company fire drills. Most importantly, know your emergency escape route. It could save your life.

Over-exertion and Stress - You have the most personal control over preventing this occupational hazard. "Repetitive use injury" is the fastest growing type of injury in the workplace. It is caused by repeating the same actions or maintaining the same position for long periods of time. These injuries involve the hand, wrist, forearm, shoulder, and back. They result from a wide range of occupations, including use of a computer keyboard, food service, IT work, warehouse tasks, teaching, and caring for students. Stress, both physical and emotional, is a major factor.

Electrical Hazards - Electrical hazards can be prevented by avoiding the use of worn or frayed power cords. Keep a safe distance (at least 10 feet) from energized power lines. Ensure that power tools and electrical equipment are grounded and in good working order before use.

Accidental Falls and Flying Objects - Falls from high places are a common hazard in certain jobs, such as construction and work on cellular towers. Use a personal harness or install guardrails or a safety net to minimize injury. Protect yourself from flying, falling, or collapsing objects by wearing a hard hat or other safety gear.