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By: James Dean

Eye Injuries

Editor: Emily Hanson

Intermountain Power Service Corporation

Supervising Safety Newsletter

Avoiding Eye Injuries

Statistics show that over 15,000 eye injuries occur each year, causing employees to miss days of work. Simply wearing the proper eye protection can significantly minimize the risk of an eye injury from occurring. The type of eye protection that should be used depends on the type of hazards the person will be exposed to. For example, someone working in an area with particles, flying objects, or dust should wear safety glasses with side shields for protection. If working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed specifically for that task should be worn.

Some of the steps that can be taken to help promote safer conditions are:

- Educate and train all employees about dangers specific to the workplace and their individual assignments.
- Lead by example and instill procedures that encourage safety throughout the workplace. This should include information on where protective equipment, first-aid kits, and emergency eye wash stations are located.
- Ensure employees working in hazardous environments have access to and are always wearing the appropriate safety equipment.
- Install barriers such as shields in areas prone to flying debris and dust.
- Keep your PPE and safety glasses clean and in good repair.

To avoid accidental exposures, workers should also remember to:

- Brush away or vacuum any dust and/or objects from hair, facial area, and hats before removing protective

eyewear. Avoid rubbing eyes or touching face until hands have been cleaned.

Industrial settings are not the only place where eye injuries can occur. Those working in offices on computers and other digital devices are at an increased risk of developing digital eye strain. The American Optometric Association estimates that workers spend more than seven hours a day using a computer or other digital device. Symptoms of digital eye strain include sore and dry irritated eyes, blurred vision, and headaches. This can be easily corrected by adjusting your workspace, using proper lighting, and consciously blinking more. Computer settings can also be adjusted to minimize brightness, increase text size, and adjusting color temperature to help prevent eye strain.

Give your eyes a break by following the 20/20/20 rule. This will help avoid and relieve digital eye strain. Every 20 minutes, look away from the computer, look towards something 20 feet away, and focus on it for at least 20 seconds.

By developing safe and healthy habits to protect our eyes, we can preserve our sight for years to come.

