

# Hear Today Gone Tomorrow



Approximately 30 million Americans are exposed to high noise levels on and off the job. Long-term exposure to high noise levels can cause permanent hearing loss.

There is no medical cure for loss of hearing. Once hearing is lost, it is gone. Hearing aids can provide some relief, but the damage usually can't be surgically repaired. There is no pill to treat hearing loss. That is why prevention is so important.

Too much noise can affect your safety and health. Excessive noise can damage fragile structures in the ear. Noise can also make you stressed and tired, and prevent you from hearing important safety instructions.

High-pitched sounds are more likely to damage hearing than low-pitched sounds. Noise that is both loud and high-pitched is known to have the worst effect on hearing.

Examples of loud noises that can affect your hearing:

- gun shots
- chain saws
- lawn mowers
- weed whackers
- machines – punch press, grinders
- loud music
- tractors
- air compressors
- hand tools
- impact tools

The rule of thumb—if you can't communicate with someone next to you in a normal tone, hearing protection is needed.

Research your topic to answer simple questions that help you focus on **SAFETY HAZARDS/ACTIONS** and **steps** for getting your safety meeting off on the right foot!

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List what **actions** are needed to avoid such hazards, using improved steps to keep your workplace safe. **Discuss:**

- ✓ How can hazards be avoided or eliminated?
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## Safety Meeting Resources

<http://www.statefundca.com/safety/SafetyMeeting/SafetyMeetingArticle.aspx?ArticleID=81>

# Let's Back Up a Little



The goal for backing up safely is to Get Out And Look (G.O.A.L.). Backing incidents are one of the leading causes of accidents in the department.

Before backing a vehicle, do a walk around to check for any obstacles that may be in back, on the sides and above your vehicle. The safest method of backing is Don't Back Up. Park your vehicle in a way that you can drive forward. If driving forward is impossible,

minimize the distance you have to back up. Always drive forward as soon as you can.

When driving a truck use a guide when possible. Remember:

- The driver is always in control; never the guide.
- The driver is always responsible for any collision; never the guide.

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## Safety Meeting Resource

<http://upstream.chevron.com/contractorsjvbu/documents/VehiclePositioningBackingPolicy.pdf>

- Be on the same page communicating with the guide.
- The guide is always positioned on the driver's rear corner; if the guide can see you in the rear mirror, you can see the guide.
- If you can't see the guide in the mirror, stop the vehicle, get out and locate the guide.

**Backing is a risk — avoid the risk.**

# Lift With Power



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<http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/SafetyMeetingArticle.aspx?ArticleID=387>

<http://www.nesafetycouncil.org>

In today's work place manual lifting has been replaced with powered industrial trucks and forklifts. Using forklifts instead of lifting or moving heavy objects manually can be minimized in order to reduce the possibility of injuring the back, knees or arms.

Today, forklifts come in many forms—wheel loaders, skid steers and lift trucks. Get training before operating any power industrial trucks.

Injuries that can occur when operating a forklift unsafely:

- Forklift strikes a pedestrian.
- A load is dropped on a pedestrian or driver.
- Forklift falls off the edge of the dock.
- Forklift rolls over.
- Forklift runs into another moving vehicle.

Operating a forklift safely requires:

- Knowing the capacity of the forklift and the load being handled.
- Pre-operational inspections.
- Using dock plates between the dock and truck being loaded.

- Chock and block the truck being loaded.
- Being aware of the floor condition.
- Realizing a forklift is not a car and steers differently.
- Remembering where the center of gravity is when carrying a load.

When forks are put on a piece of construction equipment, it's now considered a forklift.



# The Need to Sleep

Whether it's due to workloads, working side jobs for more income, or after work activities—the results are the same—many workers are arriving on the job overly-tired or sleep deprived. Worker fatigue or lack of sleep can affect a worker's manual dexterity, reaction time, alertness and judgment.

Studies show that workers are not only getting less sleep than they should, they are getting less than they used to. The real danger arises when workers don't realize they are tired and go to work as if they are fine.

Workers who try to function without enough sleep have a reduced ability to recognize or avoid risks. These workers have:

- Reduced quality of work
- Poorer safety records
- Slower reaction times
- Reduced ability to make appropriate responses

Worker's sleep habits are out of the employer's control or even influence. Employers need to be aware of the effects of worker's fatigue and make adjustments so workers can do their jobs more safely and efficiently.

Workers should take the responsibility of getting enough rest. They should decide how much sleep they need to perform optimally. To insure a good night's sleep, individuals should exercise during the day, establish a regular sleep schedule and relax before bedtime. Before going to sleep:

- Avoid heavy meals.
- Avoid alcohol and nicotine.
- Drink fewer liquids.

Also, certain drugs or sleep aids can sometimes interfere with natural sleep.

## Safety Meeting Resources

<http://www.sleepfoundation.org/>

<http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/SafetyMeetingTopics.aspx>



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# Driven to Disaster



Ironically, many drivers rescued from floodwaters report that they were in a hurry to get home as a reason for attempting the danger of driving into water. Driving into floodwaters may be one of the most dangerous things one might try.

Most cars will float and be swept away in 18-24 inches of moving water. Trucks and SUVs are not much better, having only 6-12 more inches of clearance. Creeks and rivers can rise very rapidly and the road bottom can also wash away, making the water much deeper than it appears.

Once cars are swept downstream they will often roll to one side or flip over entirely. The driver has only a few seconds to escape the vehicle. In fact, many drivers panic as the vehicle submerges and are found later with their seat belt intact.

Dangers of driving or contacting flooded roads:

- Road surfaces become obscured. Drivers can unknowingly steer into a deep body of water, such as a canal or pond.
- Roadway may have washed away.

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## Safety Meeting Resources

[http://www.emergencypreparednesstips.org/the\\_dangers\\_of\\_flood\\_water.html](http://www.emergencypreparednesstips.org/the_dangers_of_flood_water.html)

[http://www.semo.state.ny.us/info/publicsafety/flood\\_prepare.cfm](http://www.semo.state.ny.us/info/publicsafety/flood_prepare.cfm)

- DO NOT attempt to drive over a flooded road. Turn around and don't drown.
- Electricity from street lights and power poles may be active through standing water causing a deadly shock to anyone coming in contact with it.
- Two feet of water running two miles per hour will float your vehicle and sweep it off the road.
- Floating objects can stall your vehicle.
- If water begins to rise rapidly while you are in your car, abandon the vehicle quickly.

# Biting insects



**Chiggers** – The chigger stage is the only parasitic stage of this mite. It attacks rodents, birds, poultry, rabbits, livestock, snakes, toads, as well as humans. The chigger crawls onto the feet or legs and moves about until it reaches a place where it is confined, particularly around ankles, under socks, behind knees, under the beltline and elastic bands of underwear.

**Fleas** - Fleas are more active in warmer months. They are almost always associated with pet or wild animals and can be “dropped off” by animals wandering through the yard.

**Mosquitoes** - Repellents should be used; however, some people, especially small children, may be sensitive to repellents. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends two “conventional” repellents (DEET; picaridin) and two “biopesticide” repellents (oil of lemon eucalyptus; IR3535).

**Ticks** - The American dog tick is found throughout the state. People who live in the southeastern-most counties of Nebraska may also encounter the Lone Star tick. Ticks hang onto vegetation with their hind legs and extend their front legs out to grab their host as they pass by. Then they climb up their host and spend time before settling down to feed.

**Stinging Insects** - Honeybees, paper wasps, yellow jackets, bumble bees, carpenter bees, cicada killers, digger wasps and mud wasps can sting you when agitated.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) recommends four active ingredients registered by the U.S.-EPA.

**DEET** (chemical names: N,N-diethyl-m-toluamide or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide). Products containing DEET include, but are not limited to, Off!, Cutter, Sawyer and Ultrathon.

**Picaridin** - KBR 3023 (chemical name: 2-(2-hydroxyethyl-1-piperidin-carboxylic acid 1-methylpropyl ester). Products containing picaridin include, but are not limited to, Cutter Advanced, Skin So Soft Bug Guard Plus and Autan (outside the United States).

**Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus or PMD** (chemical name: para-methane-3,8-diol) the synthesized version of oil of lemon eucalyptus.) Products containing OLE and PMD include, but are not limited to, Repel.

**IR3535** (chemical name: 3-[N-Butyl-N-acetyl]-aminopropionic acid, ethyl ester). This repellent is available exclusively through the Avon Corporation as Skin-So-Soft™ Bug Guard Plus Expedition.



## Safety Meeting Resources

<http://lancaster.unl.edu/nebline/2009/aug09/page07.pdf>

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# Aggressive Driving



Longer commutes, traffic congestion, other driver's behaviors, or your own mood can cause aggressive driving—which may lead to road rage. Aggressive drivers are more likely to speed, make unsafe lane changes, ignore the right-of-way and violate traffic signals.

Aggressive driving includes:

- Tailgating
- Unsafe passing
- Honking your horn
- Making rude gestures
- Swearing at other drivers

'Road rage' is aggressive or angry behavior by a driver with the intent to do harm.

Common signs of road rage:

- Cutting others off or deliberately preventing someone from merging.
- Sounding the vehicle's horn in intimidating or threatening ways.
- Flashing lights excessively.
- Yelling or exhibiting disruptive behavior at roadside establishments.
- Driving at high speeds in the median to terrify drivers in both lanes.

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**Safety Meeting Resources Keyword: Safety**

<http://statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/SafetyMeetingArticle.aspx?ArticleID=448>

<http://www.wsp.wa.gov/traveler/roadrage.htm>

- Rude gestures.
- Shouting verbal abuses or threats.
- Intentionally causing a collision between vehicles.
- Hitting other vehicles.
- Exiting the car to attempt to start confrontations, including striking other vehicles with an object.
- Threatening to use or using a firearm or other deadly weapon.
- Throwing projectiles from a moving vehicle with the intent of damaging other vehicles.

If you encounter an angry or aggressive driver on the road, don't engage them. Avoid eye contact and do not make rude gestures or comments. Put distance between you and the angry driver. Slow down or exit the roadway if necessary. Do not pull off to the side of the road or try to "reason" with an angry driver. Call for help on your cell phone or drive to a public area such as police station or shopping center.

# Harvest Time on Rural Roads

Harvest season brings increased farm vehicle traffic on the roadway. Prior to harvest, dangers also lurk on rural corners where a motorist's sightline may be obstructed by tall corn.

The most common time for collisions is between 4 p.m. and 8 p.m. That coincides with commuter traffic coming home from work and farm operators returning from their fields.

Left-turn, rear-end and passing collisions are the three most common types of farm crashes.

- A left-turn collision occurs most often when a farm vehicle is about to make a left-turn and a motorist decides to pass.
- A rear-end collision happens when a slow-moving vehicle is hit from behind.
- A passing collision takes place when a motorist passes a farm vehicle without taking into consideration the extra width or length of the vehicle.

Tips for motorists:

- Be alert and always watch for slow-moving vehicles, especially during planting and harvesting seasons.
- "Slow down as you approach the farm vehicle."
- Be patient and don't assume the farm vehicle operator can move aside to let you pass. The shoulders may not be able to support a heavy farm vehicle.

Tips for farm vehicle operators:

- Make intentions known in advance of a turn by using the turn signal or appropriate hand signal. "If using flashing lights, consider turning them off while your turn signal is on, to make the turn signal more obvious."
- Drive slow-moving vehicles in the right lane as close to the edge of the roadway as safely as possible. Traveling half on and half off the roadway may cause a motorist to risk passing in a dangerous situation.
- Avoid encouraging a motorist to pass.
- Pull over when it is safe and let the traffic go by.
- Have your flashing lights turned on. If pulling equipment without lights, mount a slow-moving sign as high and to the left as possible. These signs should be kept clean and replaced when no longer reflective.



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<http://www.kcrg.com/news/local/9840236.html>

[http://www.uwex.edu/ces/news/ce\\_news.cfm?ID=3231](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/news/ce_news.cfm?ID=3231)

# Use Your Head, Wear Your Hard Hat



Your head is the most important part of your body. You think, feel, talk, smell and hear with your head. Therefore, it makes sense that you should protect your head from any injury.

On the job, wearing a hard hat is the first line of defense against head injuries. A hard hat can protect your head against the hazard of falling material and guard against accidental bumping. The hard hat softens any blow to the head. It resists and deflects the blow and distributes the impact over a large area. The hat's suspension acts as a shock absorber. Even if the hat dents or shatters, it still takes some of the force out of the blow and off your head. It can also shield your scalp, face, neck and shoulders against spills or splashes.

Choose the hard hat most suitable for the work being performed. Only wear approved hard hats manufactured to meet required standards. These are

made to give your head maximum protection. Make sure your hat fits correctly. Hats that have the right fit provide the most comfort and protection.

The ability of a hard hat to protect a worker depends on the shock absorbing space between the shell and head by the suspension provided. It is important that sweatbands and suspension straps be properly adjusted to obtain the maximum protection. Take good care of your hard hat. Sunlight and heat can rot the sweatband and straps. Don't drop it, throw it or drill holes in it. Inspect your hard hat every day for cracks, gouges, frays or breaks in the straps.

All levels of supervision should set the example by wearing hard hats. Observe and comply with "Hard Hat Area" sites. Remember—A hard hat is a status symbol. It identifies a safe worker, one who believes in and practices safety.

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## Safety Meeting Resources

<http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/SafetyMeetingArticle.aspx?ArticleID=649>

# Occupational Vibration



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In industry, “more power” can cause serious problems. If a process in an industrial setting is deemed to be highly repetitive, the solution is often automation or the addition of power tools. One of the problems of power tools is vibration.

Two classifications of vibration affect the human body—whole-body vibration and hand-arm vibration. Whole-body vibration can cause lower back or internal problems. It usually is transmitted to the body via the feet or the buttocks by ill-designed seats or floors. Hand-arm vibration is associated with such illnesses as carpal tunnel syndrome (CTS) or Raynaud’s phenomenon. It usually is transmitted to the whole body through the power or pneumatic tool that a worker uses. Carpal tunnel syndrome and Raynaud’s phenomenon have been scientifically linked to extended use of vibrating hand tools.

In Raynaud’s phenomenon, the fingertips turn white and feel numb when exposed to cold. These attacks last several minutes to an hour, and can be very painful. Exposure to hand-arm vibration over many years may cause decreased hand muscle strength, and may cause the numbness and cold sensitivity to

persist between attacks.

Taking preventive actions before the onset of symptoms will reduce the risk of developing CTS or Raynaud’s phenomenon or reduce the progression of the condition. Preventive actions are:

- Properly maintaining hand tools.
- Using anti-vibration hand tools.
- Using vibration-damping gloves.

Besides vibration reduction, three other factors need to be considered to minimize the risk:

1. Keep hands warm and dry when working with vibrating tools. Studies show a dramatic increase in incidence when the climate becomes colder.
2. Avoid using tobacco or stimulant drugs. The use of these drugs restricts blood flow to the skin by as much as 40 percent.
3. Maintain a neutral posture to reduce exposure to the unnecessary forces associated with non-neutral postures.

## Safety Meeting Resources

<http://www.hooah4health.com/environment/occuphealth/handArmVibration.htm>

# Safety in an Aging Workforce



Those of us that were born between 1946 and 1964, the baby boomers, know a couple of things.

One—we are getting older. Two—we are still facing work safety issues. Research shows that workplace injury rates for older workers are the lowest of any age group, but older workers have the highest fatality rate. Most fatalities are transportation-related, followed by falling, struck by an object, or from homicide.

Employers need to be prepared for the changes the older workforce may face—physical, sensory and some mental impediments. As we get older, we get shorter and heavier and our muscle strength decreases. By age 65, the

mean maximum aerobic power is about 70 percent of what it was at age 25. Hearing and vision also diminishes.

Older workers tend to bring experience, knowledge and an excellent work ethic to their job, making them a valuable part of the workforce. Equipment, facilities and work processes can be improved to account for physical, sensory and mental changes of the aging workforce, at the same time benefit all employees.

Knowing that there is no one-size-fits-all solution, the following are some suggestions that may increase workplace safety for an aging workforce:

- Improve lighting, add color contrast.
- Eliminate heavy lifting, elevated work from ladders, and long reaches.

- Design work floors and platforms with smooth and solid decking, allowing some cushion.
- Reduce static standing time.
- Remove clutter from control panels and computer screens and use large video displays.
- Reduce noise levels.
- Install skid-resistant material for flooring and especially treads.
- Install shallow-angle stairways in place of ladders when space permits.
- Utilize hands-free, volume adjustable telephone equipment.
- Increase task rotation to reduce the strain of repetitive motion.
- Lower sound system pitches, such as on alarm systems, as they tend to be easier to hear.
- Lengthen time requirements between steps in a task.
- Increase the time allowed for making decisions.
- Consider necessary reaction time when assigning workers to tasks.
- Provide opportunities for practice and time to develop task familiarity.

Implementing these changes will help older workers, but they will also benefit all in your workforce.

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<http://www.statefundca.com/safety/safetymeeting/SafetyMeetingArticle.aspx?ArticleID=345>

# Safety and Substance Abuse Don't Mix

Drug use and alcohol consumption are normally considered personal issues. They become an employer's concern when they affect safety and worker performance. Drug and alcohol abuse costs employers through high absenteeism and sick pay. Abusers hurt themselves and their families if they lose their job as a result of their actions. If they are fired or cannot function on the job, the company loses the services of an experienced worker. Those under the influence of drugs or alcohol cause friction in the work group, lower morale and work efficiency, use poor judgment resulting in bad decisions, and give the company a poor public image.

There are certain times of the year when individuals should be especially aware of their alcohol and drug consumption. In the winter months, when the days are dark and dreary, some people experience a sense of depression or seasonal affected disorder (SAD). They may turn to drugs or alcohol in the mistaken belief it will relieve their symptoms.

The holiday season, with increased social gatherings or added financial stress, leads some people to misuse drugs or alcohol. Those who over-consume alcohol or drugs and are hung over, may not give all their attention to the safety aspects of their job. Their judgment and safety performance becomes impaired. The likelihood of an accident or injury to themselves or coworkers increases.

Sometimes a personal or health problem persists. In most cases, the problem gets resolved. If it is not resolved, some people turn to alcohol or drugs. Even some prescription drugs can interfere with job performance. The individual cannot think clearly or becomes distracted. This can lead to accidents. Irresponsible consumption of drugs or alcohol not only jeopardizes the safety and health of the worker and coworkers, but it can impact the employer's business and affect the future of all families involved.



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