



Safety Newsletter

The Safety and Health of the Aging Workforce

Today, one in every five American workers is over 65, and in 2020, one in four American workers will be over 55, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Although there is no consensus on the age at which workers are considered "older workers," the aging workforce phenomenon is real. These demographic shifts have made the issue of healthier workers, especially those of advanced age, much more pressing. Aging is a relevant process experienced by all workers throughout their life. Vital to any workplace is the safety, health and well-being of workers, from their first day on the job to their last.

As for safety on the job, workers who are older actually tend to experience fewer workplace injuries than their younger colleagues. This may be because of experience gathered from years in the workplace, or because of factors such as increased caution and awareness of relative physical limitations. The caution is well-founded. When accidents involving older workers do occur, the workers often require more time to heal, underscoring the need for a well-planned return to work program.

In addition, incidents affecting older workers are more likely to be debilitating, underscoring the need for employers to be mindful of how best to adapt the conditions of work to protect workers as well as explore opportunities for preventative programs that can maintain or build the health of employees through their working life.

4 Strategies for an Age-Friendly Workplace

Below are 4 simple strategies for preparing your workplace for a healthier, safer, and more age-friendly workforce. Consider putting these strategies in place today:

Avoid prolonged, sedentary work. Prolonged, sedentary work is bad for workers at every age. Consider sit/stand workstations and walking workstations for workers who traditionally sit all day

Invest in training and building worker skills and competencies at all age levels. Help older employees adapt to new technologies, often a concern for employers and older workers.

Provide and promote ergo-friendly work environments. Workstations, tools, floor surfaces, adjustable seating, better illumination where needed, and screens and surfaces with less glare.

Manage hazards. Including noise, slip/trip hazards, and physical hazards - conditions that can challenge an aging workforce more.



Staying Safe from Outdoor Hazards

Spending more time outdoors & enjoying California's wonderful temperatures can lead to unexpected accidents and injuries. Emergency departments and urgent care centers see predictable spikes in injury visits during the summer months. Fortunately, not all summer illnesses or injuries require the emergency room. In fact, urgent care centers are well suited for many unexpected summer health needs. Below are a few common hazards to be mindful of while indulging in the great outdoors .



Stings and Bites—Bees, mites, ticks, parasites, snakes and other insects can bite or sting you while you enjoy camping or a hike. For small bites there are a number of OTC topical creams available to reduce itching and swelling. For more serious bites, visit your local urgent care center for immediate treatment.



Dehydration— Up to 60% of our body weight is water. Just a 1% to 2% drop in water weight can cause dehydration. Summer sports and athletic activities significantly increase your perspiration, draining the body of water and electrolytes. Warning signs can include nausea, weakness and fatigue. If dehydration is suspected, act quickly to drink water. Minimizing alcohol consumption in heat and humidity is also recommended.



Burns— Minor burns from BBQ grills, fire pits and hot playground equipment can happen in an instant. Avoid distractions and make sure little ones are playing away from hot areas. Tragic accidents can occur when someone is accidentally pushed into a flame or clothing gets too close to the fire.



Athletic and Sports Injuries—Whether its football practice , swim team, cycling or tennis, common injuries occur in many team and individual sports that take place during the summer months. Most sports injuries tend to involve the joints, but the tears of the tendons and joint inflammation can occur with physical fatigue in the heat. Head injuries should be immediately evaluated to determine if you have a concussion.











Sunburn—Sunburn is easily preventable by applying a UV (ultraviolet protection) sunscreen with a SPF of 45 or greater which blocks 98% of harmful sunrays. Avoid the sun during peak hours and find shade if possible. Heat injury can easily escalate from heat cramps and exhaustion to heat stroke.

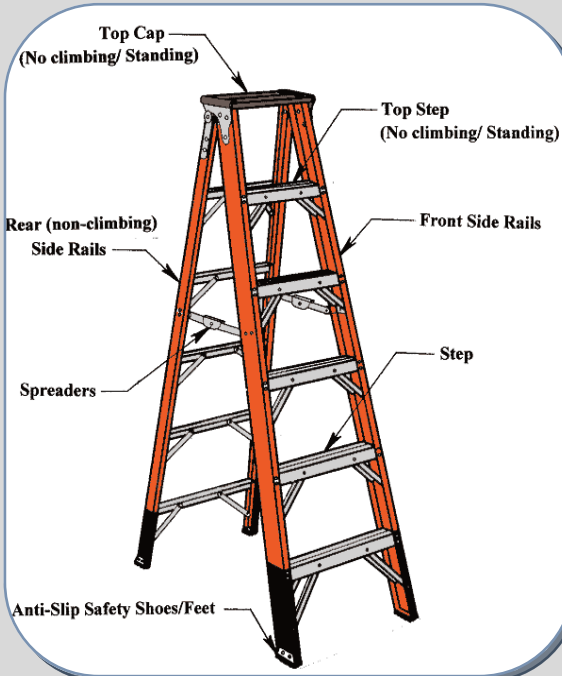
Ref: San Antonio Regional Hospital.

Chemical Storage

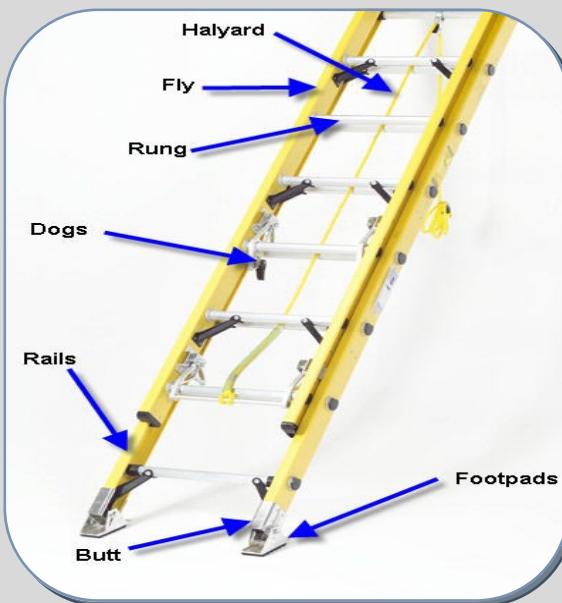
Does your office or department store chemicals? If so, be aware that not all chemicals are created equally. Due to the multitude of variables involved, it is important to know how and where to store your chemicals. To protect employees from the potential dangers of chemicals, OSHA and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) utilizes a color code and placard system to assist in the proper and safe storage of chemicals. The table below provides an overview of the color codes and their respective storage methods.

Color Code	Type of Hazard	Storage Method	Logo	Examples
RED	Flammable <i>If flammable cabinets are stored in a shed or other enclosure, an additional placard should be affixed outside the building as a means of alerting firemen of its presence.</i>	Flammable Cabinet or flammable storage area		
BLUE	Health Hazards/ Toxins	Designate as poison area or keep separate from other chemicals		
YELLOW	Reactive / Oxidizers	Store corrosives in this group in chemical resistant secondary containers or in corrosive-proof cabinets.		
WHITE	Corrosives and Contact Hazards <i>Under the NFPA system, the white area is used to denote special hazards (ex. Reaction to water, oxidizer, asphyxiant, etc).</i>	Store in chemical resistant catch trays or corrosive cabinet. Store acids separate from bases.		

Type 1
Stepladder/Self Supporting



Type 2
Extension Ladder/Not Self Supporting



Portable ladders are one of the most commonly used pieces of equipment in industry. They are easy to carry, versatile and used in a variety of jobs. There are two basic types of portable ladders (which can be made of metal, wood, plastic or fiberglass) which are:

Two Types

1. Stepladder/Self Supporting
2. Extension Ladder/Not Self Supporting

Reasons why accidents occur with ladders include workers not being trained on their proper use, improper positioning, unsafe work practices, using the wrong ladder for the specific job or using ladders with defects.

Ladder Safety

- Stand your ladder on flat ground
- Do not stand on the top 2 steps of a ladder
- Stand in the center of a ladder step
- Never use a folding ladder when it is closed - Open the ladder and press side locks into place
- While on a ladder, do not reach to the side
- While on a ladder, do not push or pull anything

Using ladders safely involves:

- Providing Employee Training
- Selecting the Correct Ladder for the Specific Job
- Inspecting the Ladder Before Use
- Positioning the Ladder Correctly
- Using Safe Work Practices

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