

## News & Notes

### AWARENESS TIPS

The following safety awareness tips should help keep you safe when you are out:

- \* If you will be out during evening hours, park in a well-lit area. Always try to find a parking spot as close to the entrance of where you are going.
- \* Make a mental note of where you parked. Would-be thieves are just looking for your vulnerability. The distressed "Where did I park my car" look is a dead giveaway that you are elsewhere in thought and not aware of your surroundings, making you an easy target. Make note of what aisle and which direction the headlights are facing.
- \* Only carry the credit card or cards you think you will need, not your entire collection. Have a list of all your credit cards, along with contact phone numbers for each card, and keep it in a safe place at home. This will help in the event they are lost or stolen.
- \* Be alert and aware of people "hanging around" parking lots/garages, or just inside or outside the store or establishment you are visiting.
- \* Have your car keys ready in hand before you go into the parking lot. Fumbling for your keys also makes you a vulnerable target.
- \* If you carry a purse, make sure you have zipped or closed it all the way to avoid pickpockets.
- \* Make sure your purse, wallet, bags and whatever you are carrying are secure by your side.
- \* If at all possible, hold all cell phone calls or texts until you are locked inside your car.
- \* Once inside your vehicle, lock your doors.
- \* Be very careful at the ATM machine, day or night. Always be aware both before and after you visit the machine. Protect your access code by covering the keypad with one hand.
- \* As you are parking, whether it's in a parking lot, side street or your own driveway, check your surroundings before exiting your locked car.
- \* Trust your gut instinct! If you have a bad feeling about something, don't do it or leave the area immediately!! Intuition is often ignored and never should be!

February is Healthy Heart Month

### VALENTINE'S DAY RIDDLES

- 1) You can touch me and you can break me, but if you want me, you'll have to win me. What am I?
- 2) What flowers can you kiss?
- 3) What do you call two birds in love?
- 4) What did one light bulb say to the other?
- 5) Did you hear about the romance in the tropical fish tank?

Answers on page 2 Safety Bits and Pieces

# Safety Matters



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## Why is Workplace Safety Important?

Because, every person who leaves home for work should return home in good health. Please follow these general safety guidelines to make this happen:

**1. Be aware of your surroundings and stay alert:** As an employee you should consistently check your work area for hazards. A review of work hazards should include the actions of both yourself and your fellow co-workers. Once acquainted with the particular hazards that occur in your workplace, this awareness will help you in reducing the risks and assist you in taking precautionary steps to protect yourself and your co-workers at your workplace. Always remain alert to what is happening around you so that you can react to any situation.

**2. Reduce workplace stress:** Many employees experience stress because of their busy schedule, pressures dealt with at home/work and conflicts which may occur with co-workers or their supervisor. Instead of gradually allowing this workplace stress to build, it is recommended that you get up from your desk or work area and take regular walk breaks, exercise when possible, maintain correct posture at all times and eat an appropriately healthy diet. It is also helpful when you can schedule your work accordingly, manage workplace responsibilities, and work through employee conflicts to reduce workplace stress.

**3. Use tools safely:** Take appropriate precautions while using machinery or any other tool, instead of taking shortcuts. Shortcuts promote workplace injuries. For this reason, it is necessary to use the correct tools, follow the established safety procedures for the tools, including an inspection of the tool's integrity before use, and reduce the opportunities for workplace injuries.

**4. Keep fire exits easily accessible:** In case there is an emergency, you will need quick access to the exits and other critical emergency situation items. It is necessary to keep equipment shutoffs, electrical panels and all emergency equipment clear so that they are easily accessible in any emergency situation. Do not block sprinkler heads. Between eighteen and thirty-six inches of clearance is recommended around any of the afore-mentioned items.

**5. Inform Your Supervisor about any unsafe conditions:** It is important that you inform your supervisor about the hazards or risks present in your workplace. Supervisors need to ensure that their employees are working in a safe environment. And, if not, then it is the responsibility of the supervisor to listen and understand the safety issues present and provide a safe working environment for employees. If the unsafe condition persists continue to follow up with your supervisor.

**6. Use mechanical assistance whenever possible:** If an item or items are too heavy to be lifted by you, seek out available mechanical assistance, like forklifts, dollies or hand trucks or ask for assistance from co-workers. If you lift items be sure to follow the proper lifting guidelines by lifting with your legs and not your back. Never twist or turn when lifting something! Follow all other back safety/lifting guidelines to prevent injury to your back.

**7. Wear the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the job being performed:** PPE comes in many forms such as earplugs, earmuffs, hard hats, gloves, full-face masks, safety gloves, safety vests and any other equipment which is required to remain safe while performing a specific task. Remember that PPE is required when the dangers of a task cannot be engineered out of the task, but remain as a safety threat to the employee. Where and when designated, wear PPE!

**8. Utilize proper posture:** If you have a sitting job, then it is essential that you keep your posture correct while working. You need to keep your shoulders in line and back straight to avoid any spine problems. Refrain from stooping and twisting regularly. Attempt to set up your work area so all necessary items are within easy reach. Adhere to all other ergonomic precautions consistently.

# Safety Bits & Pieces

## OFFICE ERGONOMIC RISK FACTORS

Here are five ergonomic risk factors to be mindful of in the office:

**1. Repetition.** Do you perform the same motions repeatedly throughout the day, such as typing on a keyboard, flipping through paperwork, clicking a mouse or using a calculator? Doing so can result in trauma to your joints and surrounding tissue.

**2. Static loading or sustained exertions.** These terms may not be familiar to you but these risk factors have increased in the computerized office. Static loading is when the muscles hold the body in a single position for a long stretch of time, which can result in circulation problems and cause muscle tension. Sustained exertions are a form of static loading that occurs when force is continuously applied for long periods of time. Examples include keeping your head still while looking at your monitor, sitting without making any movements for long periods of time and holding down the shift key on your keyboard.

**3. Awkward positions and postures.** Postures that bend the joints into positions where they are more likely to become injured are termed awkward. An office worker can experience awkward postures by slouching or leaning forward in his or her chair, cradling a phone between the ear and shoulder, reaching up and over to access the keyboard or mouse, and bending at the waist to load a copy machine.

**4. Mechanical contact stress.** This risk factor occurs when a hard or sharp surface or object presses into a person's soft tissues, such as the tendons, nerves and blood vessels, which can lead to serious injuries over time. Examples of mechanical contact stress are when a wrist rests on the edge of a desk while typing, when elbows lean against a hard armrest or when sitting in a chair that places pressure on the back of a worker's thighs.

**5. Force.** A number of office tasks require a moderate amount of force to be applied to small muscles, which may result in muscle and ligament strains, swelling and fatigue. Tasks that may exert too much force on a worker include grasping heavy folders, gripping a mouse too tightly and "pounding" on a keyboard to type.

## VALENTINE'S DAY RIDDLES ANSWERS

- 1) A heart.
- 2) Tulips.
- 3) Tweet (Sweet) Hearts.
- 4) I love you a whole watt!
- 5) It was a case of guppy love.

# Safety Awareness at Home

How safe is your home and office from invasion by criminals? Do you feel secure when you go to work? How about your home computer system? Is it as safe as it can be?

Have you taken the necessary preventative or safety countermeasures to insure the safety of your house and family? Let 's take a quiz and find out:

1. Do you have enough smoke alarms installed in your house?
  - a) When is the last time you tested the batteries?
  - b) When is the last time you replaced the batteries?
2. Are your house address numbers clearly visible to emergency response personnel from the street?
  - a) Do you have your name on your mailbox? (you shouldn't)
3. Do you keep your ladders and tools in a locked garage or storage shed? When you go out in the evening do you leave several lights and the radio on inside your home?
4. Do you have quality deadbolt locks on all of your exterior doors?
5. Do you have a home inventory of all your personal property stored in a safe location or a fire-proof place?
6. Are the windows and doors of your home clearly visible from the street or from your neighbor's yard, and not obstructed by bushes?
7. Did you re-key all the locks in your house after you moved in?
8. Are your entry doors made of steel, solid core wood (at least 1-3/4 inches) or metal wrapped wooden doors?
9. Do you have any additional door safety devices (Strike Master II, Door Club, door alarm, etc?)
10. Does your community have a 'Neighborhood Watch' or similar program?
11. Do you keep an extra set of keys with a trusted neighbor or in a quality key hider, rather than putting it under the mat outside your home?
12. Are your sliding glass doors secured with locks, jammed with a dowel rod from inside, and protected from being easily lifted out from their frames?
13. Do all of your entry doors have a peephole with a wide-angle viewer?
14. When you are gone, do you have random timers on some of your lighting to turn the lights off and on to create the illusion that someone is home?
15. Can anyone gain access to your home through a mail slot, dryer vent, or pet entrance?
16. Have you installed extra, motion-sensitive security lighting around your home?
17. Do you shred or otherwise destroy your sensitive mail (financial statement, applications, etc) before discarding it?
18. Do you have a home alarm system?
  - a) Does this system have a cellular call system
19. Do you have enough fire extinguishers in your house or car?
20. Radon is a leading cause of lung cancer. Have you tested your house for radon since moving in? Do you have a radon and carbon monoxide detectors installed?
21. Do all of your electrical outlets have faceplates?
  - a) If you have small children, are the outlets covered?
22. Do you have emergency numbers easily accessible next to the phone, in case of an emergency?
23. Does your family have a plan in case of fire, on an evacuation plan for disasters?
24. Can you get to all your important papers just in case you have to leave in a hurry?
25. Does your car have a functional spare tire and jack?

How did you do? Are all these bases covered? If not what is stopping you?

## QUOTATION OF THE MONTH



## ON THE LIGHTER SIDE



"I've got one arrow left,  
I'm going to close my eyes  
and shoot and see who it hits  
... Could be good for a few laughs."

## SAFETY TIPS OF THE MONTH

February is Safety Awareness Month. Save yourself valuable minutes during an emergency or time sensitive situation and have the following phone numbers stored in your cell phone:

1. Your ICE (In case of emergency) numbers (Husband, Wife, Mother, Father, Child)
2. Local Fire Dept., Police Dept., Water & Power Companies
3. Poison Control
4. Local hospitals
5. Next door neighbors
6. Insurance Agents
7. Animal Control.