

# SafeSupervisor

YOUR FRONT-LINE MANAGER SAFETY RESOURCE SINCE 1929

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## Quiz: Team Building

### QUESTION

What are the principal ingredients that bring people together to mirror team building in competitive work environments?

- A. Competitive, creativity, co-operation.
- B. Innovation, collaboration, imagination.
- C. Co-operation, collaboration, creativity.
- D. Resourcefulness, corporate culture, creativity.

### ANSWER

Co-operation, collaboration, creativity.

### WHY IS IT RIGHT

#### Purpose of Team Building

Team building activities are usually designed to promote and improve the quality of interactions between members of a team by learning about each other while having common experiences.

People pulling ropes or climbing mountains can be part of team building.

Those are some examples of team building activities, however, team building goes beyond single events or outdoor activities. Team building activities are tailored to company needs and participant preferences. What happens after the activities when the team returns to its regular routine is just as or, even more important than, the activities.

#### Planning a Teambuilding Program

First, define your outcomes and to decide on your definition of "team building". At one end of the spectrum team building is just fun activities that enable a natural sense of camaraderie to develop, while at the more sophisticated end of the spectrum is a program that works towards specific team development outcomes. It is risky to invest time and without careful program design and facilitation, so we recommend considering what the key issues or challenges are that need to be addressed through the program, and then deciding what approach will best meet these needs. No matter what the specific outcomes, an effective team building program will take

the participants on a journey, developing a memorable theme and providing an engaging series of experiences that work towards a positive conclusion. Effective team building programs also allow participants to explore behaviors and ideas in a safe environment where actions can be trialled without serious ramifications in the real world. A good way to choose a program can be to consider the most cynical team member and think what will be most likely to engage that person and meet their needs. Cynical people want to enjoy the process and see the value for themselves and their team, so imagining how they would react can help.

#### Bring People Together

Businesses have moved away from competitive work environments to workplaces where collaboration and co-operation between staff is seen as the key to success.

As part of this change more and more companies are undertaking regular team building activities. These activities can range from a short, problem-solving activity to a retreat lasting a couple of days. And whilst some people see team building activities as a 'nice break' from work, they do have a serious purpose: and that is to develop the skills and knowledge of your staff.

Improving productivity is one of the most common goals of team building activities. Take the opportunity to identify ways to improve the three Ps (policies, processes and procedures) that can affect productivity. By encouraging employees to learn to work together more effectively and reduce duplication of effort your employees can work more efficiently. You don't have to be in the same room to bring people together. Many companies are using online meetings to get people together - even if it's virtually.

#### Increase Motivation

Team building activities can help increase employee motivation and nurture a successful company culture in a number of ways. When a group of employees successfully complete a team building activity it creates momentum and

makes them feel good about themselves, it increases employees' confidence in their, and their team's, ability and it also shows employees that the organization is willing to invest in them.

Increased Collaboration

One of the most important benefits of a properly planned team building activity is greater collaboration between employees. Collaboration is about knowing who has what knowledge (or can answer to a question), trusting them and their experience and being able to get access to that person when you need it. By creating activities that people enjoy and can experience as a group, employees can build relationships and develop networks of contacts outside their day-to-day role that will help them in the future.

Improved Communication

Perhaps the key benefit of a properly planned team building activity is improved communication between employees. Enjoyable, fun activities enable employees to get to know each other, create a better understanding of each other and break down walls of mistrust by encouraging people to focus on what they have in common rather than their differences.

Team building activities can be a powerful way to develop collaboration and trust, improve motivation, nurture strengths, and address weaknesses. However, they need to be have a real purpose and be properly planned in order to make a genuine impact, rather than just providing "a nice day".

Getting Employees to Report Near Misses

It is necessary to enforce safety policies but also a potential chilling effect on the reporting of dangerous conditions. Near miss reporting is an excellent example of the negative impact discipline can play. Here's the problem and a Best Practices solution for resolving it.

Why You Need Employees to Report Near Misses

In the course of conducting an injury investigation, nothing is more frustrating than to learn that the same circumstances that led to an injury resulted in prior incidents that went unreported by employees because accidents were narrowly missed and nobody got hurt. You hear: "That guard has been loose for two weeks;" or, "I slipped on that same spot yesterday;" or, "that's been malfunctioning for 3 days."

Why Near Misses Go Unreported

One common reason employees are reluctant to come forward and report near misses is they fear discipline—against both themselves and their co-workers. Keeping the incident to themselves is thus a self-defense mechanism as well as a way for employees to protect colleagues and not be branded as a "snitch."

Other reasons for failure to report near misses include:

- Employees don't recognize the event (incident) as a near miss that needs to be reported. "I didn't get hurt – so nothing actually happened," the thinking goes.
- Reporting takes time – time that no one has. "I have to write a report for this?"
- Employees don't know how to report near misses or who to report them to.

Overcoming Reluctance

Everyone – managers, supervisors, and especially the folks working on the floor – needs to be educated so that a red light goes off in their heads when they witness a near miss. They need to understand that the same conditions, unless addressed, are likely to result in future

incidents and that the next time it might lead to actual amputations, broken bones, head injuries or even fatalities. And they need to understand that the situation might not be addressed, unless they report it.

Supervisors play a key role in education and awareness building efforts. They need to instill the urgency of reporting the near miss into everyone.

5 Ways to Get Employees to Report Near Misses

Here are 5 steps you can take to obtain this valuable information:

5. Require that all incidents be reported immediately.
6. Expand the definition of incident to include not only injuries and illnesses but also near misses and hazards.
7. Educate employees about what constitutes a near miss and why they're to be reported. Employees need to know that reporting a near miss is a Good Thing!
8. Make it easy for employees to report a near miss.
9. When an employee reports a near miss, thank them and use their input to remedy the situation.

Conclusion

Near misses are a source of valuable data. However you choose to do it – whether it's through promotion, education, simplified reporting or revised safety metrics – you need to find a way to collect this data. Because when you get good information, you can act to prevent injuries.

Supervisor Tip: How to Deal with Coronavirus Burnout and Pandemic Fatigue

We have been living with the coronavirus for several months and the spread of COVID-19 is still going strong in many areas of the world. As the pandemic wears on, it is understandable that some people are feeling burnout and exhaustion caused by the situation. As the pandemic still remains present, mental health is continuing to take a hit. Anxiety and stress due to the pandemic is being fueled by uncertainty, lacking a sense of control, and having a number of important values in our lives threatened. Now more than ever, we need to work extra hard to manage our emotions.

How to Combat Pandemic Burnout

There must be a method for signaling and the person(s) who performs signaling operations must be capable of doing his/her/ their job properly.

1. **Find those uplifting and close social supports:** Set up regular video and phone calls with the people closest to you. This is easier now with all of the unlimited technology and resources readily available. Taking time to share your feelings and to listen and support others will go a long way. Talking with others who have our best interests at heart makes us feel safe and validated. Starting a book club online or hosting a dinner using a video platform are examples of ways to stay connected positively.
2. **In a world of confusion and upheaval, find ways of expressing kindness and compassion:** First and foremost, you must remember to be kind to yourself. This is a hard time for everyone. It is important to remember that we are all in this together and we may all emerge with a renewed appreciation for our connections which creates more purpose to our days and well-being.
3. **Continue to create new routines and practice healthy behaviors:** Routine and rituals are healing to us. Our brain wants predictable activity so we can relax our nervous system. Remember that our activities, thoughts and mood are closely linked. If you want to change your mood, change your activities and/or your thoughts. Good nutrition helps our mood. For many, stress makes us seek comfort foods and often we may make poor choices. Junk foods and processed foods are linked to depression and anxiety. Try to fill your home with fresh produce and whole foods whenever possible. But don't be afraid to indulge occasionally and enjoy it!
4. **The power of focusing on the present and finding gratitude in challenging times:** Focusing on the present is a way to get through stressful and overwhelming times. Consider taking each day as it comes. There is often a pressure to get things back to where they were before, but the pandemic has shown us that life often takes unexpected turns. Learning to be grateful and mindful of the present moment can change our outlook for each day. Gratitude is something that with a little practice can become a regular habit. It can help you cope better with the stress of these uncertain times.



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# FITS LIKE A GLOVE

## Choosing the Right Glove for the Job

What part of your body is most exposed to chemicals in lab work and demos?

*Your hands, of course!*

Protecting them with gloves is quick and easy, if you know which type to use.



### POLYETHYLENE

#### Advantages:

- Excellent protection from common acids and bases
- Inexpensive

#### Disadvantages:

- Limited tear resistance

#### Good protection from:

- Acids
- Detergents
- Common dilute lab reagents

#### Poor protection from:

- Concentrated reagents and solvents



### NEOPRENE

#### Advantages:

- High density
- Tear resistant

#### Disadvantages:

- Impaired dexterity

#### Good protection from:

- Peroxides
- Fuels
- Alcohols
- Organic acids and bases

#### Poor protection from:

- Halogenated compounds
- Aromatic compounds



### NITRILE

#### Advantages:

- Flexible
- Sturdy
- Easy to see punctures

#### Disadvantages:

- Limited chemical protection

#### Good protection from:

- Oils and greases
- Acids, caustics
- Alcohols
- Chlorinated solvents

#### Poor protection from:

- Strong oxidizing agents
- Aromatic solvents
- Ketones
- Acetates



### BUTYL

#### Advantages:

- Sturdy
- Reusable

#### Disadvantages:

- Limited sizes
- Impaired dexterity

#### Good protection from:

- Peroxides
- Strong acids and bases
- Alcohols
- Aldehydes
- Ketones
- Esters
- Nitro compounds

#### Poor protection from:

- Hydrocarbons (aliphatic, aromatic)
- Halogenated solvents



### LAMINATE FILM

#### Advantages:

- Protection from a wide variety of chemicals
- Can be a liner under other gloves
- Good dexterity
- Good for hazmat work

#### Disadvantages:

- Not puncture-resistant

#### Good protection from:

- Alcohols
- Hydrocarbons (aliphatic, aromatic)
- Chlorines
- Ketones
- Esters

#### Poor protection from:

- Check manufacturer information

*Individual brands vary. Always check glove compatibility against the manufacturer's recommendations.*

Special thanks to the ACS Committee on Chemical Safety.

#### References

[www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3151.html](http://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3151.html)  
[www.ehs.berkeley.edu/workplace-safety/glove-selection-guide](http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/workplace-safety/glove-selection-guide)

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## SAFETY TALK PPE HAND PROTECTION

### Hand Protection is a Good Deal

There are a number of hazards your hands encounter every day on the job. Here are a few examples:

- Blades which can cut and amputate fingers or hands.
- Rough surfaces which can scrape the skin.
- Machinery which can pinch or crush fingers.
- Chemicals which can irritate or burn the skin.
- Chemicals which can be absorbed into the body and cause poisoning.
- Heat and cold.
- Electric current which can give you a fatal shock.
- Bio-hazardous materials which can cause disease.
- Repetitive strain and impact which can cause injuries over a long period of time.

There are various ways to protect your hands, and gloves are probably the most common. Because we also wear many different kinds of gloves off the job, it's easy to take this kind of Personal Protective Equipment for granted.

It is imperative to wear the correct hand protection depending on the hazard; that is, cuts, burns, electric shock, chemicals and others. There are different kinds of gloves designed for special hazards, and your safety supervisor can advise you on which gloves to wear for your particular circumstance.

#### Examples are:

- Metal mesh gloves to prevent cutting injuries.
- Special rubber gloves for insulation against electricity.
- Leather gloves to protect against splinters and abrasion.
- Synthetic or rubber gloves for protection against certain chemicals.
- Gloves made of materials such as aluminized fabric for protection against extreme temperatures.
- Besides gloves, there are finger guards, cuffs, mitts and other kinds of hand protection.

#### Here are some of the other ways to protect your hands:

Work with respect around machinery, hand tools and other hazards to avoid hand injuries. You should not wear gloves when working closely with moving machinery because of the danger of becoming entangled.

Machine guards should always be kept in place – they are there for your protection.

Avoid repetitive strain on the tendons and nerves. Some ways to do this are by changing your grip and your wrist position, by using a tool which is designed to prevent injury, or by using a wrist support. You should also rotate tasks to give your hands and wrists a rest.

Leave your jewelry at home. Rings or watches catch in machinery and cause debilitating crushing injuries, amputations and electrocution.

### Final Word

The issue of hand protection is complex and will probably differ with each work circumstance. If you have any questions about how to protect your hands in your own work area, please ask.

## PPE - HAND, WRIST, FINGERS

### HAND AND FINGERS INJURIES

- LACERATIONS & CUTS
- PUNCTURES
- SKIN IRRITATION
- BURNS
- SPRAINS & STRAINS
- FRACTURES & BROKEN BONES
- AMPUTATIONS



### WRIST INJURIES

CARPAL TUNNEL SYNDROME  
QUERVAINS TENOSYNOVITIS  
INTERSECTION SYNDROME  
DAMAGE TO THE FLEXOR TENDONS AT THE WRIST AND FOREARM

### PREVENT INJURIES

- ALLOW ROTATING PARTS TO COME TO A STOP BEFORE WORKING ON THEM.
- PERFORM MAINTENANCE ONLY WHEN THE TOOL OR MACHINERY IS NOT IN OPERATION.
- KNOW WHEN TO WEAR GLOVES.
- HANDLE SHARP OR POINTED TOOLS CAREFULLY.
- BE AWARE OF HOT AND COLD SURFACES



### WHEN ARE GLOVES A BAD IDEA?

THEY ARE A BAD IDEA WHEN WORKERS USE MACHINERY WITH SPINNING OR ROTATING PARTS. GLOVES ARE, ESSENTIALLY, AN ITEM OF "LOOSE CLOTHING" THAT CAN BE CAUGHT AND PULLED INTO THE MACHINERY, TRAPPING THE WORKER AND CAUSING FAR MORE SERIOUS INJURY THAN A SPLINTER OR SCRAPE.

# SAFETY TALK SUBSTANCE ABUSE

## What's At Stake

When someone has a substance abuse problem, it affects his or her family members and friends. And since most drug users, binge and heavy drinkers, and people with substance use disorders are employed, the problem is also a concern for employers and co-workers

## What’s the Danger?

Safe workers rely on their sharp senses, and accurate and quick reflexes. These are the very qualities affected by substance abuse. As well, people who abuse alcohol and/or other drugs often make poor decisions and have a distorted perception of their abilities. Falls, fires, traffic accidents and violent acts are common results of alcohol and drug abuse in the workplace.

### Example:

A 25-year-old fishing boat captain was sentenced to 40 months imprisonment after being found guilty of negligent manslaughter, reckless endangerment and boating under the influence of a drug in connection with the death of one of his crew members.

The captain failed a toxicology test after his 58-foot fishing boat rolled three times in 25-foot (7.6-meter) waves off the Oregon coast in January 2007. One crew member died, while the captain and two others survived after being rescued by US Coast Guard personnel.

## How to Protect Yourself

There's a tendency to consider substance abuse as a private matter, but in the workplace, it is definitely not. You have a right and a responsibility to prevent drug and alcohol abuse at work.

The people we work with are often our friends, and sometimes our supervisors, so it's hard to consider reporting their substance abuse. But keep in mind that their behavior could cause a fatal mistake? And you could be a victim. Here are some warning signs and symptoms of substance abuse to be aware of in a coworker, although they may not necessarily stem from an addiction:

- Weight loss
- Sweating
- Chills
- Slowed or slurred speech
- Impaired coordination
- Slow reaction time
- Irritability
- Excessive talking
- Inability to sit still
- Limited attention span
- Poor motivation and lack of energy
- Aggressive, unpredictable or violent behavior
- Money problems, including asking coworkers for loans
- Carelessness, frequent mistakes
- Risky behavior or lack of concern for others

Very often when someone is suspected of drinking or doing drugs, nothing is said, due to our desire to avoid conflict or cause difficulty for someone we like.

But who picks up the slack for this person and runs the risk of injury or worse because he or she can't function properly? The co-workers do.

## Final Word

You have a right to a safe workplace. You have a right to be free of the kinds of dangers caused by substance abuse at work. Any person working under the influence of drugs or alcohol should be reported immediately. It will probably be one of the hardest things you ever have to do. But it will be worth it in the long run if it saves someone from injury or death.

## Quiz

1. Symptoms of substance abuse in a person include sweating, slowed or slurred speech, slowed reaction time and irritability.  
☐ True  
☐ False
2. Considering substance abuse “a private matter” and not reporting it makes the workplace less safe for everyone.  
☐ True  
☐ False
3. If a co-worker seems careless or makes frequent mistakes, that person could be impaired by alcohol or other drugs or suffering hangover/withdrawal effects.  
☐ True  
☐ False
4. Co-workers of substance abusers often have to pick up the slack because productivity often slides when people are tired and disoriented from a night of partying.  
☐ True  
☐ False

## What Would You Do?

During your coffee break, you step outside for some fresh air and bump into a coworker, who's polishing off a beverage. You can tell by the smell that it's alcohol. Before you even say anything, your coworker starts apologizing, saying it won't happen again. She starts talking about all the problems she's going through at home and how she's having a hard time keeping it together. You want to believe this is just a one-time lapse in judgment. What do you do?\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# SAFETY TALK INCIDENT REPORTING

## What's At Stake

Whenever, there is a workplace accident or illness, or a close call/ near miss is experienced, the situation must be reported. Often times many of these incidents, especially first aid type of injuries are not reported. Injuries / illnesses / close calls are not reported for a variety of reasons.

## What’s the Danger?

There is a myriad of reasons why incidents involving properly damage, near misses, spills, illnesses and injuries go unreported.

- Pride – people do not want to admit their mistakes to others.
- Fear the outcome from sharing what occurred with a supervisor.
- Fear from being afraid of being disciplined.
- What others may think or fear the repercussions from the incident.
- The energy it takes to do the paperwork.

With injuries, even minor ones it is important to get them looked at by a supervisor or safety representative. While many injuries such as a small cut, or insect sting, may not seen like a big deal, can turn into a big one.

**Example:** You are bit by some type of insect on a Friday afternoon at work but decide not to tell anyone. You go home and within a few hours you can see the bite area is swelling up. You also notice you have hives. You have trouble breathing.

You realize you need medical attention because you can see you are having an allergic reaction.

You tell the doctor what happened at work beyond first aid. It is a recordable injury. Since the injury was not immediately reported at work, there are problems.

1. There is no record or witness to it happening at work which could raise concern by the employer whether or not the injury occurred at work. This may end up in a drawn out dispute since there have been many people in the past who have faked or had injuries off the job, but stated it occurred at work in an attempt for it to be paid through worker's compensation.
2. If the injury was reported immediately someone may have been able to recognize that it may develop into an allergic reaction. There could have been options for first aid instead of medical treatment to treat the issue before it worsened which would have saved you a trip to the hospital and the company a recordable injury.

## How to Protect Yourself

Most workplace injuries and illnesses are **PREVENTABLE**. So, when a work-related injury or illness occurs, it is critical to investigate immediately why it happened. By investigating changes, corrective action can be taken to prevent it from happening again.

## Purpose of investigation:

- Not to play the “blame game” but to identify factors which can then be controlled.

Similar incidents can be avoided in the future by identifying the factors that led to the incident and then changing the conditions or actions.

## Investigatory protocol:

- Basic facts (who, what, when and where) of the incident that resulted in injury are reviewed to determine the “Why” and “How” to prevent the incident from happening again.
- The information desired from the investigation is shared only with those on a need – to – know basis while maintaining worker confidentiality.

## Trends / Tracking of Workplace Injury and Illness

Summaries of work – related injuries and illnesses help identify trends and stabilize processes to prevent recurrence.

The trends identify unhealthy behavior or hazardous conditions by **TRACKING** work – related injuries and illnesses. Information so gained targets occupational health and safety education activities to prevent future worker work – related injuries and illnesses.

## The trending analysis includes:

- Tracking and monitoring workplace injuries and illnesses on an on-going basis.
- Determining if any trends in workplace injuries or illnesses exist and graphing those trends if possible.
- Identifying any equipment, materials, or environmental factors that may be commonly involved in workplace injury or illness incidents.
- Identifying possible solutions and suggesting improvements to reduce or prevent the likelihood of future workplace injuries or illnesses.
- Reviewing data for quality assurance.
- Monitoring safety program

## Final Word

All injuries need to be reported, no matter how small. Not only does it protect you, but it also protects the company as a whole by possibly preventing a first aid injury developing into a recordable injury. Something minor in nature can develop into something more serious. Lessons can be learned from minor injuries, to prevent other injuries occurring in the future.

## What would you do?

It is close to 5 o'clock whistle to end the day and the start of a long weekend. You are anxious to get home but you slip in a pool of water in the lunch room as you get your lunch box to leave work. Do you report it? Clean up? Or go home?? What would you do?



# SAFETY TALK LADDER SAFETY

## What's At Stake

Many types of ladders are available, and each is designed to do a certain kind of work. There are stepladders made for industrial, commercial, and household use. There are single ladders, sectional ladders, extension ladders and rolling ladders. Ladders may be made of wood, fiberglass or metal, and they may be portable or fixed.

And it's a good thing there are so many options, because using a ladder is a safer alternative to using a makeshift climbing device, like a chair, or an improvised work platform, such as an old box. However, using a ladder incorrectly can result in serious, even fatal injuries.

## What’s the Danger?

Broken bones and head injuries are common results of falls involving ladders. In addition, workers can be shocked or electrocuted when a ladder contacts an energized line, cable, or piece of equipment.

## How to Protect Yourself

Here are 10 ways to work safely when using almost any portable ladder.

1. Make sure you use the best ladder for the job. It should be the right design and constructed of the right material.
2. Do not use the ladder for any purposes other than those recommended by the manufacturer.
3. Never use a metal ladder or wire reinforced wood ladder when working near a live electrical conductor.
4. Remember, your weight and the weight of materials and tools on the ladder should not exceed the recommended load limit.
5. Examine the ladder for any defects or damage. Check for looseness between the rungs and the siderails and check moving parts and bindings for too much play. Check for split or cracked wood, corroded metal, and frayed ropes.
6. Wooden ladders should not be painted because this can hide defects; instead, they should be coated with a clear lacquer.
7. If you find a problem with the ladder, immediately take it out of service so it can be repaired or destroyed. Tag it "Do Not Use."
8. Position the ladder correctly, the way it was designed to be used. Place the base on a solid, non-slip surface. Both siderails should be supported at the top unless the ladder is designed to be used with a single support attachment.
9. A straight ladder should be set up using the four-to-one rule. For every four feet that goes up in height, the base of the ladder should be placed one foot away from the wall.
10. Use both hands while climbing. Do not carry tools or materials in your hands; carry small tools in a belt and use a hoist for larger items.

**Pro Tip:** Ladders are also common in our homes, used for construction, painting, pruning and cleaning projects. Follow these same tips to use them safely

## Final Word

It doesn't take long for you to select the right ladder for a job, set it up properly, and use it safely.

## Quiz

1. A worker can be electrocuted when a ladder touches a live electrical circuit.  
☐ True  
☐ False
2. Falls from ladders can be fatal.  
☐ True  
☐ False
3. The load limit on a ladder refers to the materials you are carrying, not to your own weight.  
☐ True  
☐ False
4. All ladders should be painted.  
☐ True  
☐ False

## WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Your job for the morning is at the top edge of a newly constructed wall. The wall is fully in place and safe to work on. There is a step-ladder and an extension ladder at the job site. Both are long enough to reach the work.

What would you do?

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# Ladder Safety Checklist

Use this ladder safety checklist to ensure that the ladders in your workplace are in good operating condition and that your workers are setting up and using ladders safely.

## Ladder Inspection

- ☐ Are all the rungs, cleats, or steps in good condition?
- ☐ Are the side rails intact without any cracks, bends, or breaks?
- ☐ Do the rungs, cleats, or steps fit snugly into the side rails?
- ☐ Is the ladder free of corrosion? Are the side rails and steps free of oil or grease?
- ☐ Are the ladder's hardware and fittings secure and undamaged?
- ☐ Do moveable parts operate freely without binding or excessive play?
- ☐ Are the ropes on extension ladders intact without fraying or excessive wear?
- ☐ Are damaged ladders removed from service and marked "Do not use"?

## Ladder Usage

- ☐ Ensure step ladders are fully open and locked before climbing them.
- ☐ Place the ladder on a flat, secure surface.
- ☐ Place the ladder on a hard surface, as it will sink into a soft surface.
- ☐ Place the ladder on a non-movable base.
- ☐ Lean the ladder against a secure surface, not boxes or barrels.

- ☐ Do not place a ladder in front of a door.
- ☐ Position base of a ladder 1 foot away for every 4 feet of height to where it rests (1:4 ratio).
- ☐ Ladder rails should extend at least three feet above the top landing.
- ☐ Check shoes to ensure they are free of grease or mud.
- ☐ Mount the ladder from the center, not from the side.
- ☐ Face the ladder when ascending or descending and hold on with both hands.
- ☐ Carry tools in pockets, in a bag attached to a belt, or raised and lowered by rope.
- ☐ Do not climb higher than the third rung from the top.
- ☐ Work facing the ladder.
- ☐ Do not overreach. Always keep your torso between the ladder rails.
- ☐ When using a ladder for high places, securely lash or fasten the ladder to prevent slipping.
- ☐ Avoid outdoor ladder use on windy days.
- ☐ Avoid aluminum ladders if work must be done around electrical wires or power lines.



# Damage Control 101: Rising to an Apology

When Elton John sang his famous song, "Sorry Seems to be the Hardest Word," he was talking about love, but his words ring equally true in any situation where an apology is necessary.

Peter M. Sandman, a risk communications consultant based in Princeton, NJ, says apologizing seems to be particularly difficult for people in companies and government agencies.

Many people believe that apologizing is admitting liability, which could lead to a lawsuit, but Sandman says an apology done properly, without admitting liability, can "reduce the impulse of prospective plaintiffs to sue."

If you have blasted one or more employees and are feeling guilty afterwards, the need for apologizing is probably niggling at your brain. But how should it be done? Sandman offers the following advice:

**Say what you did:** Clearly admit to what you did wrong before offering your apology. Don't be vague or try to defend your side of the story. For example, if you embarrassed a co- worker by berating him or her in front of other workers, it would be appropriate to say to

that person, in private: "It was unprofessional of me to yell at you in front of everyone. I should have taken you aside."

**Say you're sorry and make it heartfelt:** Don't say that you "regret" what happened. That's too impersonal. Saying, "I feel terrible about what I did" is good, but saying "It was all my fault" is dangerous. Often people will try to slip in a fast "I'm sorry" without explaining what they did wrong. That isn't good enough. You may find that the person becomes angry with you after you say what you did, but before you have a chance to apologize. That's perfectly understandable, since you have offended them. Let them vent without interruption.

**Make it right:** Correct the problem. It's tempting to fix a problem without acknowledging that there ever was one, but doing so won't defuse people's outrage. Similarly, apologizing without taking steps to ensure the situation isn't repeated isn't sufficient. If it happens again you'll look twice as bad.

**Do a penance:** This involves performing an act of contrition. If you have ruffled the feathers of one or more co-workers, maybe it's time to buy pizza and thank them for their hard work.

# Managing Music in Your Workplace

A little music in the workplace has many benefits—although in jobs where maximum concentration is vital to safety, focus and productivity, a quiet, music-free work setting is a must.

In the average workplace, listening to music can reduce stress, make monotonous or repetitive tasks less tedious, and increase morale and productivity. But supervisors or managers who permit music listening on company time need to keep a handle on how loud music is, whether workers are using personal headsets. Why? Because in addition to possibly causing irreversible hearing damage, there are several safety issues related to music listening in the workplace.

Here are three examples:

1. Workers listening to music through headphones or earbuds may lose situational awareness and walk in front of moving machinery.
2. Warning bells and buzzers, or warnings shouted by co-workers may not be heard if the person using headphones/earbuds has the volume set too high.
3. Workers may not clearly understand what co-workers are saying to them and may make mistakes that damage property or worse, cause injury.



If you allow workers to listen to music at work, here are some tips you should pass on to them to protect their hearing and keep them safe and focused on their work.

- Encourage them to take periodic breaks from listening to music through headphones/earbuds.
- Encourage them to reduce the volume on their personal music devices. Many of these devices have features that will limit loudness to prevent hearing damage.
- If workers are listening to music through speakers, you can ensure that the music is audible, but not so loud that it can create the types of hazards outlined above. The type of music that is being played also relates to the level of distraction it creates—for example, instrumental music may be less intrusive than vocal music.
- Tell your workers that if others must shout at them to get their attention, they are listening at too loud a level.
- Tell them that the hazards don't disappear once they are off the job. For example, cranking up the tunes in a car to super-loud levels can also cause permanent hearing damage and prevent a driver from hearing an emergency vehicle's siren. So can sitting through a super-loud concert or spending hours in a nightclub without using proper ear protection.

# FOCUS ON

## Cool It and Avoid Snow and Ice Hazards

If—like tens of millions of North Americans—you live in an area that experiences real winter, you know that short of an ice storm that takes down power lines and grinds a city to a freezing halt, life pretty much goes on as normal.

But people who are complacent about winter and its associated hazards and don't make adjustments to ensure their safety can easily get hit with a "snowball" they never saw coming.

Here are some examples:

- Not slowing down and driving for the road conditions can send a vehicle into the ditch, or worse, over a cliff or into the path of oncoming traffic.
- Being physically unfit and tackling the task of moving hundreds of pounds of wet, heavy snow from a driveway can cause a heart attack that puts one in the hospital, or the morgue.
- Hitting the road during the winter without carrying emergency supplies, including a sleeping bag or blankets, a candle, a well-charged cell phone and a shovel, can be deadly in the event of a vehicle breakdown in freezing temperatures.
- Ignoring the build-up of heavy snow or ice on a roof can lead to a deadly roof collapse.

The list goes on. Share these snow and ice hazard safety tips with your workers and encourage them to watch out for their safety when they are off the job as well.

1. **Tread carefully on snow or ice:** An unexpected fall on snow or ice can hurt much more than your pride. People have suffered brain injuries or even been killed as a result of slipping and striking their heads on pavement. Wear appropriate footwear with lots of tread, take smaller steps and don't rush. Don't walk with your hands in your pockets, because if you start to fall, you can't use your arms to regain your balance.
2. **Drive for the conditions:** Never set off without scraping and defrosting all windows in your vehicle. When driving on snow or ice, slow down and increase the space between your vehicle and the vehicle ahead by two to three times what your regular safe following distance would be on dry roads. Allow extra time to reach your destination. Tell people on the other end when you are leaving, the driving route you are taking and when you expect to arrive.
3. **When snow gets thicker, mind your ticker:** Shoveling heavy snow is hard on the back and more importantly, hard on your heart unless you are physically fit and used to the exertion. Lay off the coffee and the cigarettes, if you smoke, before you start shoveling because both increase your heart rate and constrict your blood vessels, increasing your risk for a heart attack. Slow and steady gets the job done. Don't try lifting shovels laden with heavy snow. Where possible, push snow instead of lifting it and when you must lift snow, keep the load light and manageable. If you suddenly find yourself lightheaded or

dizzy; experiencing discomfort in your chest, arms or neck; experiencing shortness of breath; or are feeling nauseated, stop shoveling and seek medical attention.

4. **Reducing the snow load on a roof:** If you must remove snow accumulations from roofs, either at work or at home, it is safest to not be on the roof, because of the possibility of slipping and falling. Aerial lift devices are often used for safe snow removal from workplace roofs. If workers are standing on a roof to remove snow, they must be trained on fall hazards and be using fall protection. Block off pedestrian access to areas where snow is being removed from roofs to prevent injuries to others from falling snow. Workers must also know the locations of any skylights, because people can easily fall through snow-covered skylights. If possible, work from the ground, using a roof rake to pull snow from the roof. Keep rakes well away from overhead power lines. If you hear creaking, groaning or cracking sounds inside your home or workplace during the winter, get out immediately.
5. **Watch out for icicles:** Icicles can turn into deadly missiles if they fall from heights onto unsuspecting people below. Supervisors should examine walking routes and remove any icicle or snow buildups that could fall from roofs or other overhead areas.





# PICTURE THIS

## Ladder Safety

While it might be the easiest way for this workers to get his work done, this ladder-balancing act is something you never want to see on a job site. Not only is this completely unsafe but it could hurt both the worker on the ladder and anyone working at the lower level should the ladder fall to the ground.

If your workers don't have the right type of ladders for the job, they should get one that is.

Here are 8 ladder safety do's and don'ts to help remind your workers about ladders safety for their next job.

1. DO maintain 3 points of contact with the ladder at all times
2. DON'T work from the top two rungs, steps or cleats or bucket/pail shelf of a portable ladder unless the manufacturer's says it's safe to do so
3. DON'T splice, lash or tape ladders together to make them longer
4. DO face the ladder and stand in the centre of the side rails.
5. DO make sure the ladder is stable and securely anchored before you use it
6. DON'T use ladders that have damages or defects
7. DO make sure the ladder can support the weight of yourself and any tools and equipment you're using
8. DON'T place ladders in front of or against a door unless the door is blocked in the open position, locked or otherwise guarded.



## Upcoming Webinar

### INFLUENCING SAFETY: WHAT THE MOST SUCCESSFUL SAFETY LEADERS DO DIFFERENTLY

This highly informative and entertaining session reveals how skilled leaders at all levels create safety. From this session, leaders acquire specific communication tools they can use to dramatically reduce resistance to change, improve situational awareness and create a safer work environment. The impact of this program reaches far beyond the session itself, creating an emotional shift that fuels immediate implementation.

*Expert Speaker: Garrison Wynn, CSP, Fortune 500 Leader, and Professional Stand-up comedian*

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