

# Injury Prevention Can Be as Easy as 1-2-3

Remind your workers to *recognize* and *report* all workplace hazards and to review their use of PPE and other safety procedures. Their health, and the company's, depends on it.

Here's a simple three-pronged training strategy to help you eliminate workplace injuries:

**1. Train employees to recognize and understand workplace hazards.** Analyze jobs and inspect work areas to identify all possible hazards. Then teach your workers to keep alert for these hazards while they work. Also train them to think safety all the time. For example, they should be thinking about:

- What materials they'll be working with
- What equipment they'll be using
- What tasks they'll be performing
- What could go wrong at each step in a job

Your workers also need to understand the nature and seriousness of the hazards they face. Be sure to tell them:

- How hazardous situations might arise
- How hazards could hurt them-and how badly
- How a hazard could cause other damage (for example, a fire that not only injures employees but also destroys materials, equipment, and structures)
- How and where to find more information about workplace hazards

**2. Focus on reporting and correcting workplace hazards.** You can't correct hazards you don't know about. So make sure all employees in your organization understand that it is their *responsibility* to report hazards they spot anywhere in the facility-not just in their own work areas. To do this, they need to know how to report hazards. They should also know what to report. For example:

- Specifically what they saw
- Where they saw it
- When they noticed this hazard
- How serious it appeared to be
- What, if any, action they took to minimize or correct the hazard
- Who might be affected by the hazard

Once a hazard is reported, appropriate personnel must be mobilized to check out the problem and take whatever corrective action is necessary. Reporting and correcting workplace hazards also involves accident and near-miss reporting and investigation.

Make sure employees know that *they are required to report ALL safety incidents*-whether or not anybody got hurt or how minor an injury is. Don't just make it an order, though.

Give employees the reason, which is that by reporting accidents and near misses, they are helping prevent future accidents and injuries.

**3. Review PPE and safe work practice requirements.** Sure you've been over and over the safety rules and talked yourself hoarse about wearing assigned PPE. But do it again, anyway, this month. PPE and safe work practices are two keys to any successful injury prevention program. Remind workers to:

- Select appropriate PPE to protect against the specific hazards they may face.
- Always choose PPE that provides maximum protection against the hazards.
- Inspect their PPE before each use to make sure it's in good condition.
- Follow the work practices and procedures they've been trained to use.
- Ask questions about anything they don't understand about safety requirements.

### **Why It Matters...**

- Despite OSHA regulations, workplace inspections and safety rules, more than 4 million workers are injured on the job every year.
- About one-quarter of those injuries result in lost workdays.
- Medical costs associated with workplace accidents are constantly increasing, and only an emphasis on injury prevention can help keep costs down.
- OSHA requires you to take positive and effective steps to prevent injuries in your workplace, and failure to do so can lead to costly penalties and negative publicity.

*Source: BLR's Safety Daily Advisor*