



10 Steps to Prevent Occupational Eye Injuries

Good vision is priceless! Luckily, 90% of all workplace eye injuries are preventable with the use of proper safety eyewear. Nearly one million Americans have already lost some degree of sight due to an eye injury. With more than 700,000 work-related eye injuries happening each year, we can use a few tips on how to prevent eye injuries in the workplace.

*Source: www.preventblindness.org

1. **Assess** – Look carefully at plant operations. Inspect work areas, access routes and equipment. Study your company’s eye accident and injury reports. Identify operations and areas that present eye hazards.
2. **Test** – Uncorrected vision problems can cause accidents. Use vision testing in your employee pre-placement and routine physical exams. Talk with an eye care professional to determine if this screening should involve additional screening such as depth perception, color vision, field of view, or night vision.
3. **Protect** – Select protective eyewear designed for a specific duty or hazard (such as potential impacts, airborne dusts, chemical splashes, etc.). Protective eyewear must meet the current ANSI standards referenced by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and later revisions.
4. **Participate** – For maximum protection against eye injuries, establish a 100% mandatory program that requires eye protection in all operation areas of your plant. Experience shows that this kind of program prevents more injuries and is easier to enforce than one limited to certain departments, areas, or jobs.
5. **Fit** – Workers cannot be expected to use their protective eyewear unless it fits well and is comfortable. To ensure that eyewear is adequate, solicit feedback from employees and offer a few different types of eyewear. Provide the means for repair and require each employee to be responsible for his or her own gear.
6. **Plan for an emergency** – Establish first-aid procedures for eye injuries. Make eyewash stations accessible, especially where chemicals are used. Educate workers in basic first aid and identify those with more advanced first-aid training. Remember, an exposure to the eyes by a chemical will require at least 15 minutes of flushing directly into the eyes. Eye washes are specifically designed to deliver the proper flow and duration. Those small bottles that might be hanging on the wall won’t provide the necessary volume, and last only a few seconds!
7. **Educate** – Conduct ongoing educational programs to establish, maintain, and reinforce the need for protective eyewear. Add eye safety to your regular employee education/training programs and include it as part of new employee orientation.
8. **Support** – Management support is key to having a successful eye safety program. Management should set an example by wearing protective eyewear whenever required.
9. **Review** – Continually review and, when needed, revise your accident prevention plan.
10. **Put it in writing** – When all parts of your eye safety program have been created, put them in writing. Display a copy of the policy in areas where workers go and include a review of the policy in new hire orientation.



Source: Getty Images