

THE

CONNECTION

SEPTEMBER 2001

Four Reasons Why Workers Fall From Ladders

There are many factors that can contribute to a fall from a ladder. It is possible to separate these risk factors into several groups...

First, there are appropriate uses for stepladders and for extension ladders, but if a worker tries to use one for an inappropriate task, he or she is at an increased risk for a fall.

Second, positioning of the ladder is very important. The ladder can slip at the bottom if it is not properly secured. It can also slip at the top from whatever it is resting against.

Third, defective ladders can cause falls. Whether it is a rung giving out, or the ladder bowing or breaking, a defective ladder is a hazard.

Fourth, worker movement can cause a fall. Workers on ladders might over-reach for something, causing them to slip. They might also slip on the rungs or steps.

Safety and the Supervisor

Safety Myths

We hold these truths to be self-evident: There are some things we know are true about safety. They are not open to debate or discussion. They have always been that way and always will be.

Now, perhaps for the first time, here are some safety myths many safety supervisors would swear are true, yet the evidence does not support the notion.

Myth 1: Mining and Construction are the Most Hazardous Industries.

Construction employers had a higher rate of 8.6, but this still wasn't as high as manufacturers of durable goods. These employers posted a rate of 10.1. Although non-durable goods manufacturers fared much better at 7.8. The average for the manufacturing industry was 9.2, making it the industry with the highest lost-time workplace injury and illness rate.

Myth 2: Back Belts Prevent Back Injuries.

The problem with this is that new evidence suggest that back belts do not help prevent anything - not back injuries or even back pain. Researchers for the National Institute on Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) have concluded that there is no statistically significant difference between the number of workers' compensation claims filed by employees who wear back belts and those who do not wear them.

Myth 3: Ergonomic Injuries Are On The Rise.

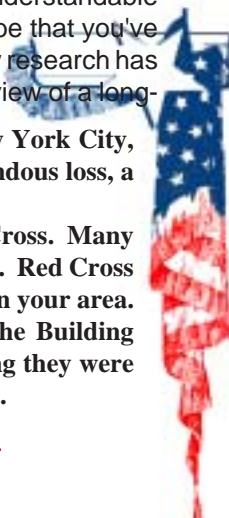
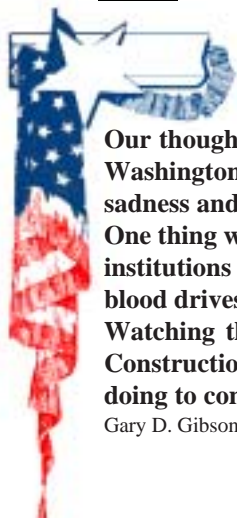
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), lost-time injuries in both the 'sprains, strains, and tears' category and the number of carpal tunnel syndrome cases has fallen consistently in the past few years.

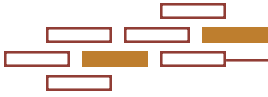
No matter what you steadfastly believe about safety, there is usually a reason why you cling to an idea. It might be an understandable assumption based on sensational information. It might be that you've received incorrect information. It is also possible that new research has uncovered evidence that forces us to take the opposite view of a long-held belief about safety.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to all who suffered a loss in the horrendous tragedy of September 11 in New York City, Washington D.C. and Pennsylvania. Words cannot truly express a loss of this magnitude. We all feel a tremendous loss, a sadness and an awkward feeling of not knowing what we can do or say to help.

One thing we all can do is to make a donation to the American Red Cross and also to donate blood to the Red Cross. Many institutions have been set up to accept donations for the American Red Cross, including McDonalds restaurants. Red Cross blood drives are going on all the time, you need only call the Red Cross to find when the next one is scheduled in your area. Watching the coverage of the World Trade Center rescue work made all of us very proud to be part of the Building Construction Industry. Many of the volunteers who came to help were tradespeople. They dropped everything they were doing to come down to Ground Zero and put themselves at risk unselfishly and do whatever they could to help.

Gary D. Gibson, Personnel/Safety Officer





Carpenter, Nailed in the Head, is 'Lucky Guy'



When the carpenter walked into the emergency room, only the head of the 3-inch nail could be seen against the red inside surface of his lower eyelid. The eyelid was pinned open.

An X-ray and CAT scan revealed that the nail, shot from a co-worker's nail gun, had missed half a dozen vital areas by an eighth of an inch.

"This has got to be the luckiest guy in the world. He is the luckiest guy in the world," said Dr. Anne Hayman, the Baylor College of Medicine radiology professor who X-rayed the 56-year-old man last year.

The CAT scan and X-ray images of the extraordinary accident are now being used in medical classes.

The man's name remains sealed in the records of Ben Taub General Hospital in Houston, though his X-ray was published in Thursday's New England Journal of Medicine. It and a new feature - an "Images in Clinical Medicine" entry published only on the Internet - can be seen at the journal's Web site.

The galvanized nail punched through two sinuses, following the path used by brain surgeons to reach the pituitary gland.

It narrowly missed the eye itself, tear

ducts, muscles which move the eye, the artery which brings blood to the eye, the carotid artery to the brain, the optic nerve, the pituitary gland, nerves which control eye movement and one controlling feeling and movement of the face.

The nail broke the board it was fired into, but that apparently slowed it down just enough.

"If the nail had continued on, it would have gone through the skull itself and pierced the section of the brain stem that control heartbeat, respiration, and so on," hayman said.

Four Tips For Better Safety Meetings

Nobody particularly enjoys them. In fact, some people dread them. But the reality is that safety meetings are a necessary part of a safety program. Here are a few tips for making your meetings run smoothly and effectively:

- Get employees involved
- Avoid a lecture style of presentation
- Stick to the agenda
- Keep the meeting as short as possible

FOUR SIMPLE TIPS TO HELP RELIEVE HAND STRESS

Hands are gluttons for punishment especially from an ergonomics standpoint. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) has recommended a few ways supervisors can relieve the stress placed on workers' hands and wrists when repetitive tasks cannot be avoided:

- ✓ The weight and size of objects that must be handled repeatedly should be reduced whenever possible.
- ✓ Tools that create pressure on the base of the palm can restrict blood flow and should be avoided if possible.
- ✓ Tasks that require repeated pounding with the base of the palm should be avoided or reduced.
- ✓ Avoid repetitive, forceful pressing with the fingertips.



Never Pass a Stopped School Bus

Children who have just stepped off a bus may be passing in front of or behind it in an effort to cross the street. Since buses usually block a driver's view, you should never attempt to pass a stopped bus. Wait for caution lights and other warning signals to stop before continuing to drive.

Leave for work a few minutes early. If you're ahead of schedule, you won't feel compelled to drive beyond the speed limit or pass a school bus to get to work on time.

Be ready to stop at all railway crossings. School buses stop at railway crossings, so be prepared ahead of time to stop.

Wear your seat belt. Protect yourself and your passengers by buckling up.

