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Top 5 Ways to Increase Jobsite Safety

1. Influenza H1N1 Flu Prevention

Preparedness planning for the H1N1 flu is the focus of much talk in schools, universities, and offices around the country. OSHA's Federal Advisory Council on Occupational Safety and Health has even called a special meeting to be held on Tuesday Sept 15, 2009 to address pandemic influenza preparedness in the federal workforce. It will discuss the findings from the Spring 2009 H1N1 flu outbreak.

According to the World Health Organization, H1N1 flu might affect up to two billion people worldwide. Safety officers across the country need to work together to prevent the spread of the virus by posting prevention techniques at central locations and especially bathrooms.

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Steps that will decrease the risk and spread of H1N1 at the jobsite:

- A. Cover your nose and use a tissue when you cough or sneeze.
- B. Wash your hands often with antimicrobial soap or alcohol.
- C. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.

For more information regarding H1N1 at the jobsite, please refer to the Center of Disease Control.

2. Keeping current on OSHA standards for PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

On September 9, 2009, Occupational Safety and Health published the final rule revising the PPE sections of its general industry and marine industry standards for eye and face-protecting devices, head and foot protection. The major change involves a new requirement that filter lenses and plates in eye-protective equipment meet a test for transmission of radiant energy such as light or infraredⁱ.

The new standards would incorporate new advances in technology and materials. Other noteworthy changes include deleting consensus standards for PPE purchased before a specified date and amending its provision for safety footwear to be ANSI and ASTM compliant. This is a major revision of workplace safety footwear, and should



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assist many safety managers by consolidating the numerous consensus standards. The previous footwear standard, written in 1967, was badly outdated and obsolete. By removing these standards, OSHA believes companies would not be overly burdened as the relevant ASTM standards have been in place since 1998.

For more information regarding this [OSHA rule](#).

3. Use of bilingual safety signs and labels

According to government data, nearly one quarter of all construction workers in the United States are Latino, and more than two-thirds of construction-related accidents occur among these workers. Safety managers across the country should be updating safety materials to be bilingual English and Spanish. The main reasons for providing bilingual materials are increased comprehension and awareness.

When designing bilingual safety signs, it is important to pay attention to:

- A. Use of culturally significant images
- B. Use unambiguous Spanish words, as not all Latin American countries have the same idioms.
- C. Pilot test graphics and terminology as no standard set is currently available

While incorporating bilingual signs at the jobsite is not mandatory, safety managers have seen decreases in the number of accidents due to these signs. Participants in several studies have shown increased effectiveness if warning materials were developed in Spanish rather than literally translatedⁱⁱ. For more information on custom bilingual safety signs and labels, [please contact a safety expert](#) at William Frick.

4. Keep your onsite first aid kit updated

Is your emergency first aid kit stocked and ready? OSHA requires adequate first aid supplies available for employees. The uses for a first aid kit are diverse. For minor injuries, an adequate first aid kit will allow the injured employee or co-worker to administer first aid and get the employee back to work. For major injuries, the presence of an emergency kit may mean the difference between life and death. First aid kits need to meet federal OSHA regulation 1910.151(b) and the ANSI Z308.1-2003.

Safety managers should regularly check first aid kits as materials get used, and kit contents are sometimes exposed to the elements. [Use durable labels](#) to mark the back



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of first aid kits with inspection dates. Any damage to the outer casing of the kit might allow moisture to enter the kit, thus damaging the contents. Replace any defective or worn casings immediately.

A construction site survey should always be conducted to ensure that proper first aid supplies are available for the types of injury that may occur. For help on OSHA standards regarding jobsite first aid kits, [see the OSHA website](#).

5. Respirators and PPE are last line of defense against nanoparticles

CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health has recently shown certain nanoparticles (1 to 100 nanometer sized particles) can be toxic to the heart and lungs of mice and rats. Workers in printing, coating, maintenance, and metals industries can be exposed to such particles.

Studies in workers exposed to microscopic (fine) and nanoscale (ultrafine) particles have reported lung function decrements, fibrotic lung diseases, pulmonary inflammation, and lung tumors. In September 2009, investigators Y. Song, X. Li, and X. Du of Chaoyang Hospital in Beijing reported on seven previously healthy young women who developed serious heart and lung disease after exposure to a chemical paste of 30 nanometer materials.ⁱⁱⁱ Two of the seven died within 21 months of the study.

Because there are no exposure limits for the majority of engineered nanomaterials, a qualitative assessment must be used to determine whether nanomaterial emissions occur. Respirators and other skin protective equipment are the last line of defense (see NIOSH 2004 for respirator selection). As such, it is vitally important to use only rigorously tested PPE equipment.

As the uses for nanomaterials grow, more and more workers will risk serious diseases without adequate access to quality processes, engineering and filtration enhancements, and certified respirators and skin protective equipment.

ⁱ OSHA, "U.S. Labor Department's OSHA issues final rule updating personal protective equipment standards based on national consensus standards"

ⁱⁱ Committee on Communicating Occupational Safety and Health Information to Spanish-speaking Workers, "Safety is Seguridad: A Workshop Summary"

ⁱⁱⁱ Song, Li, Du. "Exposure to nanoparticles is related to pleural effusion, pulmonary fibrosis and granuloma"