

SafeSupervisor

YOUR FRONT-LINE MANAGER SAFETY RESOURCE SINCE 1929

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The 7 Things to Prevent Hand Tool Infections

OHS laws require you to take reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of your workers and prevent known hazards.

Here are 7 best practices for preventing hand tools from becoming a conduit for COVID-19 infection at your workplace based on guidance from the Infrastructure Health & Safety Association (IHSA):

Proper Hand Washing

Frequent hand washing is crucial to keep the virus off your hands. As a general rule, all workers should be instructed in proper hand washing techniques and required to clean their hands before touching their face, eating and getting into their vehicle to go home.

Cleaning Hand Tools

The supervisor or person in charge of safety should ensure that hand tools are frequently and properly washed, including at the start and end of each day and immediately after each use. Be sure to instruct workers how to properly clean and disinfect their tools.

Banning Workers from Sharing Tools

If possible, furnish enough tools at the site so that workers don't have to share.

Flagging Shared Tools

If sharing can't be avoided, shared tools should be identified in some fashion, e.g., a red label, that lists cleaning instructions. Also be sure to store shared tools in a separate toolbox with washing supplies kept nearby.

Making Workers Use Gloves

Where reasonably practicable, require all workers, including those who use hand tools, wear protective gloves.

Treating Clothing as a Potential Source of Infection or Exposure

Infection can be transmitted via hand contact. But the virus can also cling to clothing. Instruct workers to place their work clothes into a bag before leaving work and laundering it once they get home, ideally in a separate load - only if there

is a perceived risk in your industry.

Disinfection & Isolation

If a worker is discovered to have COVID-19 or its symptoms, the worker must be sent home and everything he touched in the past 48 hours immediately isolated and disinfected, including his tools and PPE. Other best practices include designating one or more persons to be responsible for moving, cleaning and disinfecting tools, equipment and PPE and ensuring they use PPE such as gloves and coveralls to perform those tasks.

How to Clean and Disinfect Your Tools and Equipment

- Wear PPE such as waterproof gloves for your hands and face shield and mask to protect your eyes, face and mouth.
- Wear coveralls to protect your clothing.
- Make sure all power is off and disconnected on power tools and equipment.
- Read the manufacturer's directions for cleaning to avoid possible damage from liquids and chemicals.
- Clean surface with soap and water to remove all visible debris and stains.
- Follow labeled instructions and safety data sheets on all containers of cleansing products you use.
- If disinfecting products aren't available to buy, you can make your own by mixing a water and bleach solution. Check the bleach manufacturer's recommendation for mixing ratios.
- To disinfect, typical recommendation is to allow surface to remain wet for 5-10 minutes. Rinse thoroughly, and air dry.
- Remove disposable PPE and discard. Remove coveralls and place in a bag for washing in a bleach wash as per the bleach manufacturer's guidance.
- Wash your hands after removing all PPE.

FOCUS ON *WORKING REMOTE*

Health & Safety Concerns for Employees That Are Suddenly Working Remote

I spent two years in my career working from home. My office was an unfinished basement at first, and in the last year I moved it to the garage so I could open the door and have a panoramic view of the driveway.

I learned early that I needed to have a routine to be effective. I needed to shower, move from my bed to an actual work environment, get dressed as if I were going to the office (like the weatherman and not the anchor of the late-night news – pants required).

It wasn't easy by any stretch, the fantasy of trading in the commute for a workout at lunch or being able to make "good coffee" as opposed to the dregs of the shared office carafe, never actually came to fruition. Reality was more like frequent 12-hour days that ended with my wife opening the garage door and saying dinner had been ready for a couple of hours and she was tired of hearing "five more minutes." Reality was more like colleagues starting every meeting with "how was Oprah today?" Reality was my neighbors giving me strange cockeyed looks while they walked their dog past the neighborhood weirdo in a shirt and tie with three monitors and a desk in his garage talking to walls. I'll admit that sometimes I did talk out loud when I wasn't in a video conference.

The technology wasn't as good as it is now. I had connectivity issues. Video would buffer or freeze every time I had the funniest look on my face. I was never more than 30 feet from my family, but I rarely saw them.

I'm not complaining or looking for sympathy. I made the choice to work remote. It allowed me to take my son to and from school, and it was a necessity for those two years.

I was hyper-productive, probably because I felt an internal guilt and unmentioned pressure to overperform because the first thought everybody had was that I was on a work-vacation.

It was a unique experience, and in my career I have sat with friends and colleagues at conferences and workshops who had also experimented with a long-term remote work schedule and we would trade war stories about what worked and didn't, disasters avoided, and some that were shared over video conference that exposed an intimacy to board meetings you wish could be taken back.

Now we are in a place where a large segment of the world is forced to experience the same ups and downs I had.

Of course, it is very different, nobody is actively choosing this Pandemic work schedule. If you are lucky enough to be working and not having an interruption in your financial well-being, the added stress of the omni-present COVID-19 nightmare is far more reaching than anything I had to experience. But we have a new shared experience, the community of remote workers is much bigger. As an employee and employer, it is a strange and unprecedented time.

We have been in the safety training, compliance, and awareness business since 1929 and I can speak from experience, in saying that remote work, especially this sudden remote work, and especially while in the midst of a public-health crisis, poses some serious OHS concerns for employees and employers – far beyond what I experienced in my garage for two years.

State of the Union

As of my writing this article, both the US and Canada are experiencing the highest rates of unemployment, and the fastest growth in unemployment ever recorded. These trends are global. Some essential businesses are running at 2-300% capacity, while other industries are shuttered.

- According to Labour Statistics, only 29% of workers can work from home, mostly in the Service and Information industries. Manufacturing can't be done from home. We are seeing how hard a sudden shift to education from home can be.
- 78% of North Americans have access to broadband internet, so even if technology seemed ubiquitous, it really isn't.
- According to Gallup, only 43% of organizations had, prior to COVID-19, some form of remote work available to employees. Just over 30% had some type of formal policy and procedures in place.

Although we had a toe in the water, the economy was in no way prepared for a dramatic shift to an entirely remote work environment.

But here we are... so what do organizations have to consider when it comes to OHS and remote employees, especially in the shadow of this health crisis?

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Computer/Internet Security

For modern tech companies, the policies and infrastructure for remote work was most likely already in place, and the vast majority of employees were already laptop users. In fact, tech giants like Amazon, Facebook, Apple, Google and others transitioned to a 100% remote work environment with a weekend email.

For smaller organizations, the situation is very different, as remote work is mainly just email and other non-operational systems.

Currently, if you didn't have a strong and secure IT policy/procedure in place (and even if you did), your employees are exposing company devices and information to greater risk due to unsecure networks. Home environments have vulnerabilities your IT staff have removed from your organization's networks.

So, what should you be doing? I'd recommend having employees audit their home networks through a process built by your IT department or consultant. It may mean using a VPN, having security protocols for the use of USB storage and external devices on company laptops, endpoint security protocols such as firewalls and antimalware, and limiting the ability to download and copy sensitive company data.

Your remote employees may be using Zoom, Microsoft Teams or other collaborative tools, but many of these tools are not as secure as you hope. It isn't difficult to remotely turn on cameras, zoomboom a meeting, or phish for data via collaboration tools.

Lastly, cybersecurity awareness training should be an annual requirement to say the least, but an immediate refresher is probably in order.

Ergonomics

It is estimated that musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) have an economic burden in excess of \$150 billion in North America each year. It is a top-5 OHS hazard across every industry.

In the past 3 weeks, the internet memes have been on fire with COVID offices. Employees have converted ironing boards to stand-up desks. They are taking zoom meetings from bathrooms because it is the only room in the house with a lock to keep the kids out.



I laugh at the pictures like everybody else, but the ergonomic impact on your employees is real and it isn't funny.

According to the General Duty clause, you have an OHS responsibility, even for remote employees, to ensure they are working in a safe environment – free of risks and hazards. An employee taking a meeting while sitting on a toilet hunched over the laptop is not ergonomically sound, and the health and MSD risks are obvious.

The COVID surge might not have afforded the time to set up remote offices. It might be logistically impossible, if not financially unavailable, to order or purchase the right office equipment online to set-up your employees for ergonomic success; but there are general seating and posture rules that can be applied and enforced even if your work is being done at the dining room table.

Educate your employees of the importance of ergonomics, how to modify the principles for remote work, and check in on it before you are stuck with eventual worker compensation claims that will add more pain to this already difficult time.

Mental Wellness

Human beings are social creatures. A lot of talk in OHS and the media has been about the isolation, loneliness, and effects on overall mental health that have directly resulted from the social distancing and isolation guidelines associated with COVID-19.

In fact, we held a webinar with some mental health professionals on this very topic.

The increase in stress and decrease in physical health are common in remote work, and only exasperated by the added stress and anxiety with the public health scare. Your employees are scared for their families, their relationships, their financial security.

Workplace stress is also always a leading OHS concern across industries. I read an article recently that talked about a case study with Ctrip, a Chinese travel agency that randomly assigned a small call-center staff to start working remotely. In the short term, the company reduced costs, improved retention rates, and employees reported being happier. But two weeks later, the tune changed, and sick-time increased, retention rates dropped, and overall employees complained of a feeling of loneliness and being disenfranchised with the company. Productivity plummeted because there was a break in the social bonds necessary for productive teamwork.

So, what can you do right now?

- 1. Overcommunicate** – utilize technology to bridge the isolation gap by having more than just meetings. We've implemented a weekly lunch, where we just get together via video conference and eat together, play games, talk about binge-watching. It's helped. No matter what, formalize a procedure and person to check in on remote employees at predetermined intervals.
- 2. Document communication policies** – online communication is a minefield. Texts do not communicate sarcasm or jokes. What may be innocuous in person can be perceived as harassment online. Sometimes the lines are clear, but sometimes they're fuzzy. If you add external stressors like a public-health scare, unguided online communication can be disastrous.

...continued on page 4

3. Make mental well-being a priority. Maybe you can't organize walks, but your health provider/partner has evolved, and a lot of online and remote tools exist to improve mental health. Maybe purchasing a group/team license for apps like CALM is the right kind of OHS purchase at this time and for the long term.

Overall OHS

I've already said it, but you have a duty to protect your employees, regardless of where they work.

You should be taking extra care to ensure that your newly remote employees are aware of their OHS rights and are following safe work behaviors.

Do you have updated emergency contact information? Do your remote employees know how to report workplace injuries when they are remote? Has your safety committee discussed or reinforced training about worker's rights, such as their right to refuse unsafe work? Are they exercising good workplace hygiene? Are they ensuring the cleanliness of themselves and the work environment?

I made a joke earlier about working in the bathroom, but the increased risk of a slip or fall in a wet bathroom is real, and it is still work if they are in a meeting in that bathroom, and their potential injury is still your responsibility.

If you were fortunate enough to be one of the few companies that had a remote working policy in place and a pandemic preparedness

procedure, consider yourself lucky. But even if you did, you couldn't have imagined what is our current daily reality.

What do your employees need to know regarding overall OHS while they are working remote due to COVID-19?

1. What steps your workplace has in place for the pandemic. What is the continuity plan? What is their role?
2. What training should they be doing. You might have employees doing the work for others, do they have the training required? Can they do that work safely?
3. Do they have a remote work emergency/OHS plan/kit? What are their new risks and hazards? How do they mitigate those risks? What do they do in an emergency?
4. What are their rights? What work can they refuse?
5. Wash their hands, exercise social distancing, know that they are part of a community that will get through this.

A pandemic is not a good litmus test for remote work and OHS strategies, but I know that businesses can persevere, and that tools and resources are there to help. It might be too hard to look out too far into the future right now, but with some diligence and thought, remote working can work, and work very well.



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Get Moving: Why Health & Wellness Matters

What's At Stake

To many of us live sedentary lives. We spend most of our waking hours at work sitting behind a desk, behind the wheel, or behind a counter. Then we plop down on the couch and relax in front of the TV when we get home. Even those of us who have more active jobs likely don't get enough exercise. A lack of physical activity is hazardous to your overall health and wellness.

Workers who are depressed often feel tired, unmotivated and have difficulty concentrating. Depression can cause problems with decision-making abilities and an increase in errors and accidents. Workers with depression also miss work more often and experience a higher level of presenteeism, where a worker is present at work but less focused and productive than workers without depression.

What's the Danger?

Due to the stigma of mental illness, many people find it hard to talk about their depression and seek help for it. Getting help is important, because if left untreated, depression can lead to job loss, damaged relationships, substance abuse and suicide.

How to Protect Yourself

Too little activity has been shown to increase the likelihood of:

- Cancer
- Heart attack and heart disease
- Stroke
- Diabetes and obesity

Without enough exercise you lose muscle mass, strength and flexibility, and bone loss progresses faster in people who aren't active. These factors can lead to falls, broken bones and mobility issues.

Lack of regular exercise has also been linked to an increased risk of dementia, mood swings and depression.

Lastly, a sedentary existence can leave you with a weakened immune system and make you more susceptible to illnesses such as colds and the flu.

Get Moving!

- Research consistently shows that engaging in three days of physical activity per week, totaling 150 minutes or 50 minutes per session, produces health benefits.
- Brisk walking, running, bicycling, jumping rope, and swimming are all great examples of cardio exercises.
- Start with light or moderate aerobic exercise, for short periods of time (10 to 15 minutes) with sessions spread throughout the week to reduce your risk of injury and fatigue. Gradually build up to 50-minute sessions as your level of fitness improves.

Pump it up!

- Strength training, including lifting weights or resistance training, improves bone density and helps slow bone loss as you age.
- Weight training strengthens connective tissue, muscles and tendons. This decreases your risk of falls, sprains and strains.
- Strength training also helps prevent loss of muscle mass.
- Remember to start slowly to reduce the risk of injury and give your muscles time to rest and recover. Wait at least 48 hours before you train the same muscle group again. Talk to your doctor before beginning a workout routine to make sure you are healthy enough for physical activity.

Final Word

If you aren't already, start incorporating health and wellness activities into your daily routine. Regular exercise can help you live a longer, happier and healthier life

Six Habits of Highly Healthy People

Wellness is more than the absence of illness. It encompasses a person's total being – physical, mental, emotional, family, social, spiritual and occupational.

Wellness is about balance between the various aspects of a person's life. When things go wrong, it is often because these areas are out of balance.

Consider these suggestions for keeping your life in a healthy state of balance:

1. **Have fun exercising.** Walking outdoors for 30 minutes a day is good for your body and spirit. If this doesn't do it for you, find another form of exercise you enjoy.
2. **Eat well.** Increase your intake of fruits and vegetables, replacing most of the high-fat, heavily-processed foods in your diet.
3. **Get enough sleep** – something that probably doesn't happen for you now, as studies show most adults to be sleep deprived. You need to get sufficient sleep on a regular basis to recharge your mental and physical batteries.
4. **Instead of fretting about life's problems, decide you will solve the ones you can and put aside the ones you can't.** Manage your stress by doing the most important things first and doing them well.
5. **Don't let other people get to you.** There will always be somebody who gets under your skin. Learn to laugh off unimportant conflicts.
6. **Keep learning throughout your life.** New ideas feed enthusiasm and exercise your brain. Learning also keeps you in contact with other people.

Wellness and safety go hand in hand.

Radiation (Non-Ionizing)

What's At Stake

Radiation or Electromagnetic Radiation (EMR), is energy in a wave form. Non-ionizing radiation is very prevalent and comes from both natural and human – made sources. It includes electric and magnetic fields, radio waves, microwaves, infrared, ultraviolet and visible radiation.

The litmus test is how do workers protect themselves or limit their exposure to non-ionizing radiation.

What's the Danger?

Ultraviolet light Generated by black light, sunlight

Visible light Generated by sunlight, LEDs, light bulbs, lasers

Infrared light Generated by sunlight, thermal radiation, incandescent light bulbs, lasers, remote controls

Microwave radiation Generated by microwaves, cellphones, and data transmission

Radio frequency radiation Generated by AM and FM radio signals, cellphone and data communications, and by radio frequency heaters used to bond vinyls and plastics

Extremely low frequency radiation Generated by transmission lines, old CRT computer monitors

TYPES OF NON – IONIZING RADIATION Most people are not aware that they are being exposed to these non – ionizing radiation.

MORE DANGERS

Each type of radiation causes different effects on human tissue. The closer workers are to the source of non – ionizing radiation, the more exposure they will experience.

Some jobs expose workers to more non-ionizing radiation than others. Higher exposure work includes:

- Maintenance on radio, cell or TV towers
- Roofing
- Painting
- Building maintenance
- Building inspection
- Window washing
- Welding
- Glassmaking
- Furnaces
- Outdoor workers

RADIATION HEALTH EFFECTS

Workers will be exposed to radiation dependent on what type of radiation they are exposed to:

Extremely low frequency radiation Little to no health effects even when working directly at the source of the radiation

Radio frequency radiation and microwave radiation Nerve or muscle stimulation, Heat stress as the body warms up, especially in warmer weather, Eye damage (cataracts), Numbness in the hands

Ultraviolet radiation Sunburn, Skin cancer, Welder's "arc-eye", Cataracts

Infrared radiation Skin burns, Cataracts, Retinal burns

There is increasing concern around the world that exposure to Very Low Frequency and Extra Low Frequency increases the incidence of a number of cancers. A number of studies have found:

- Increased rates of cancer, in particular leukemia and brain tumors in adults and children living close to power transmission lines.
- Workers in the electricity supply, electronics and communications industries.
- For workers exposed to electronic equipment such as computers and telephone equipment a possible association between the exposure and effects such as miscarriage and various cancers.

There is a great deal of controversy regarding the potential health effects of some types of non-ionizing radiation. There is no doubt that UV radiation causes cancer, but the effects of lower frequency radiation (for example radiation from mobile phones, power lines, electric equipment) are not well known. The truth is that no-one really knows exactly how dangerous some forms of radiation are. There are various reasons for this: the effects may be small and difficult to detect. We are all exposed to various types of radiation in our daily lives, and not enough research has been done.

How to Protect Yourself

The best way to reduce the risk of exposure to non-ionizing radiation is to eliminate the source of exposure. If that's not possible, there are other RISK CONTROLS to use which will be identified in your exposure control plan. To protect workers from discreet sources, creating distance between them and the source of the non-ionizing radiation is often effective. As the worker moves away, exposure quickly decreases. If the source is not from a specific location or increasing the distance from the source is not possible, shielding might be appropriate.

RISK CONTROLS

Engineering: Making physical modifications to facilities, equipment, and processes can reduce exposure.

Administrative: Changing work practices and work policies, and using awareness tools, and training, can limit the risk of non-ionizing radiation exposure.

Personal protective equipment: This is the least preferred control. It must always be used in addition to at least one other control.

Final Word

Talk to your members of your work group about the hazards of radiation and their control and any effects they may be experiencing on a regular basis.

SAFETY TALK *TOOLS*

Be Handy and Safe with Hand and Power Tools

What's At Stake

Tuck your thumbs into the palms of your hands and try to tie your shoes, open a bottle, or hold a utensil. How hard was it? Could you even do it? Think about how hard it would be to do these and other everyday tasks if your hands were injured. Hundreds of thousands of hand, wrist and finger injuries occur at work every year.

What's the Danger?

How do these injuries happen? Many of these occur from faulty or improperly used hand and power tools. Another common cause of tool accidents and injuries is inattention. Taking your eyes off your task for a split second is long enough to leave you with a life-changing hand, wrist or finger injury.

Other causes include: inexperience or overconfidence. Inexperience is an easy to understand danger. You simply may not know how to use the tool properly because you haven't used a lot, if at all, or you haven't been properly trained on the safe use of the tool. Overconfidence may be a little trickier to understand. When you're confident in what you're doing, or do something for a long time, you tend to get comfortable and forget it can be dangerous. Confidence makes it tempting to take short cuts and work too quickly. You pay less attention to safety practices and are less alert to hazards.

Finally, bypassing, removing, or using tools with missing guards and not wearing PPE or not wearing the right type of PPE are two other common causes for tool injuries.

How to Protect Yourself

Pay Attention

- Focus on the task at hand and if you get interrupted or distracted for any reason, stop immediately and don't start work again until you can give it your undivided attention.

Make it Personal

- Personal protective equipment is a must for working with tools. Hard hats, gloves, safety glasses, ear plugs and safety shoes are required for most work with tools.

Hold on Tight

- Use clamps or a vise to prevent accidental slipping. Clamps and vises also leave both hands free to operate and control the tool.

Don't be a Tool

- Use the correct tool and don't take shortcuts by using a makeshift tool. For example, a screwdriver is not a chisel. Using it like one could cause the screwdriver to snap, fly up and injure someone.

That's Shocking

- Metal tools that contact live electrical wires or energized equipment can shock and kill you. Remember to never use

power tools in or around water.

Don't be a Bad Influence

- Never use tools under the influence of medications, drugs, or alcohol. This includes prescription and over the counter medicines. Being under the influence can make you less alert and slower to react. This puts you and your co-workers in danger.

Don't Forget

- Finally, always inspect your tools before each use. Keep your tools clean, sharp and well maintained, and store them properly for maximum safe and effective use.

Final Word

Your hands are two of the most useful tools you have. Follow safe work practices and wear proper PPE to protect them and keep them working for you.

Quiz

1. Experience and overconfidence can be as hazardous as inexperience and lack of training.
 True
 False
2. You only need to wear PPE if you haven't been trained on how to use a tool.
 True
 False
3. Over the counter medication does not affect your mental alertness.
 True
 False
4. Never use a tool with a missing guard.
 True
 False

What Would You Do?

You're working a table saw and a co-worker comes up to ask you a question. It's an easy question with a quick answer, but it means taking your eyes off your work. What would you do?

Take the Bite and the Sting out of Working Outdoors

What's At Stake

Working outside puts workers at risk for countless hazards. One group of hazards that doesn't get as much attention are biting and stinging insects and animals

What's the Danger?

Often these pesky creatures are little more than a nuisance, but for people allergic to bees and wasp stings, that nuisance can mean a life-threatening situation. Mosquitoes, ticks and stray animals can carry disease such as Zika virus, Lyme disease and rabies. Some spider bites can result in pain and tissue damage and in some cases, can be fatal.

How to Protect Yourself

Mosquitoes, Spiders and Ticks:

- To protect yourself from biting and stinging insects, wear long pants, socks, and long-sleeved shirts.
- Tuck pant legs into socks or boots.
- Wear high boots or closed shoes that cover your feet completely.
- Wear a hat.
- Use insect repellents that contain DEET or Picaridin.
- Check before drinking from cups, bottles or cans. Stinging insects are attracted to sweet drinks.
- Avoid wearing heavy perfumes or scented lotions or soaps.
- Avoid fire ants; their bites are painful and cause blisters.
- Severe reactions to fire ant bites (chest pain, nausea, sweating, loss of breath, serious swelling or slurred speech) require immediate medical treatment.
- Treat other, less serious bites and stings with over-the-counter products that relieve pain and prevent infection.

Bees and Wasps

- Be alert! The best protection against bee and wasp stings is to stay away from their hives and nests.
- Bug spray, like the kind you use for mosquitoes, does not work to protect against bees and wasps.
- Wear long sleeve shirts, pants, and closed-toed boots or shoes. Wear a hat with netting, like bee-keepers wear, if you can. Wear light-colored clothing and stay away from bright colors, patterns and black clothing.
- Power tools such as lawnmowers, leaf blowers, weed eaters and chainsaws agitate bees and wasps and may cause them to swarm.
- Don't swat at bees or wasps or make sudden movements. This may scare or startle them into attacking. Instead, stay calm and let them fly away or walk slowly away.

- If you have disturbed a nest or hive and hear a loud, wild buzzing, protect your face with your hands and run away immediately.

Rodents and Wild or Stray Animals

- Dead and live animals can spread diseases such as Rat Bite Fever and Rabies.
- Avoid contact with wild or stray animals and rats or rat-contaminated buildings. If you can't avoid contact, wear protective gloves, a respirator or mask if needed, and wash your hands regularly.
- Get rid of dead animals as soon as possible.
- If bitten or scratched, get medical attention immediately.

Snakes

- Watch where you place your hands and feet when removing debris. If possible, don't place your fingers under debris you are moving. Wear heavy gloves.
- If you see a snake, step back and allow it to proceed.
- Wear boots at least 10 inches high.
- Watch for snakes sunning on fallen trees, limbs or other debris.
- A snake's striking distance is about 1/2 the total length of the snake.
- If bitten, note the color and shape of the snake's head to help with treatment.
- Keep bite victims still and calm to slow the spread of venom in case the snake is poisonous. Seek medical attention as soon as possible.
- Do not cut the wound or attempt to suck out the venom. Apply first aid: lay the person down so that the bite is below the level of the heart, and cover the bite with a clean, dry dressing.

Final Word

Don't let the pests of spring and summer get the best of you. Know how to protect yourself and take the bite and the sting out of working outdoors.

What Would You Do?

You notice several yellow jackets hovering over their nest in the ground. Right where you are about to work. What would you do?

Infographic: Working Outdoors

1. Protect your skin! Always use sunscreen when working outdoors – even in the winter – and remember to reapply throughout the day. Protect your face, eyes, and skin and wear a wide-brimmed hat, sunglasses, and long pants and long-sleeved shirts.



2. PPE is important when mowing, cutting, trimming, and other landscape-related activities. Wear goggles, closed-toed safety shoes, and long pants to protect against flying debris.



3. Gloves aren't just for winter months! Wear gloves to protect your hands from cuts and chemicals such as weed killer or other landscaping chemicals.



4. Listen to your body and watch for signs of heat stress in yourself and your co-workers - high body temperature, headache, dizziness, rapid pulse, nausea, confusion, or unconsciousness.



5. Drink lots of water and sports drinks – and stay away from alcohol and sugary drink. Remember, the effects of drinking alcohol in the evening can carry over to the next day.



What should I do if I might have been exposed? What should I do if I feel sick? What should I do if I have a confirmed COVID-19 infection?

COVID-19 SAFETY ADVICES

If you might have been exposed

Self-Monitor

Be alert for symptoms. Watch for fever, cough or shortness of breath. Take your temperature, and follow prevention tips. Act as if you have tested positive to protect your family and community, until you know different.



Fever



Cough



Shortness
of Breath

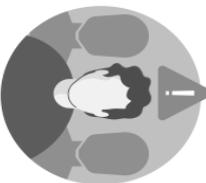
If you feel healthy or sick

Self-Quarantine

Check your temperature twice a day and watch for symptoms. Stay home for 14 days and self-monitor. If at all possible, stay away from people who may be at high risk for getting very sick.



Check Temp



Avoid contacts with
other people



Stay at home

If you have symptoms or a diagnosis

Self-Isolate

Stay in a specific sick room, away from people if possible. Use a separate bathroom and follow your health provider's guidance.

Prevention



Wear a mask



Don't touch face



Wash your hands



Avoid handshaking



Avoid contacts with
animals



Avoid travelling



Keep objects clean



Cover your mouth
with elbow



Practice social
distancing



Put tissues in
the trash



Maintain a healthy
diet



Cover your nose
and mouth

Are You Doing Enough to Protect Lone Workers?

Here are ten things to consider if you are responsible for the safety of lone workers.

#1 INVISIBLE WORKPLACE HAZARDS

Not every hazard can be seen before moving into an area. Although the health effects of poor air quality are often long-term, workers in high areas can be exposed to rising heat and fumes that can leave them unconscious away from help.

#2 TRIPS AND FALLS

Trips and falls are one of the most frequent causes of workplace injury. These hazards can affect employees at any workplace, despite job responsibilities or other contributing factors.

#3 HEAVY EQUIPMENT ACCIDENTS

Heavy equipment accidents can take many forms, and the resulting injuries such as machine entanglement have been identified among the most common workplace injuries. Following heavy equipment accidents, lone workers can be left immobilized away from assistance.

#4 ENVIRONMENTAL DANGERS

For employees working outdoors, the environment itself can pose many risks. Besides threats from exposure including heat stroke and hypothermia, workers may encounter attacks from wild animal.

#5 EMPLOYEES UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE

Many safety systems rely on workers to call for the people nearby when they need help. Unfortunately, it's impossible to predict situations where someone will be unable to call for help when they need it, ranging from medical emergencies to situations of extreme workplace violence.

#6 REMOTE WORKERS IN DISTRESS

Remote workers are a special case, because in very remote areas employers can face an incredible challenge locating a missing worker. Tracking employees with GPS is a start, but additional details are necessary since an employee can become separated from the equipment that's tracking them.

#7 MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

To protect their workers, employers need to plan for health-related dangers that can't be anticipated. Medical emergencies like heart attacks and severe allergic reactions can be sudden and happen anywhere.

#8 HAZARDOUS OBJECTS

Whether working in construction, warehousing, or even retail, workers are often put at risk by the objects near them as they work. Injuries from being struck by or against nearby objects can be serious and include cuts, lacerations, and concussions.

#9 VEHICULAR ACCIDENTS

Lone workers often need to be mobile, meaning that vehicles are part of their daily routine. Just like when employees are at a worksite,

employers are responsible for the safety of their employees when they travel.

#10 VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE

People don't always recognize that when they work with the public, they are working alone. Employees working with the public who can easily become isolated are particularly at risk of violent attacks.



DID YOU KNOW?

MOST OF US KNOW SOMEONE who's struggled with mental health issues. Whether it's depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder or another problem, mental health issues are common. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reports that 3.9% of adults aged 18 and older have experienced serious psychological distress in the past 30 days.

- 6% of persons aged 12 and older have depression in any two-week period.
- 4% of children aged 6 to 17 have been diagnosed with anxiety and/or depression.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death in 10 to 34-year-old. (Unintentional injury is the leading cause in this age group.)

The Well At Everyday Health provided a survey with takeaways.

- Almost 1/3 of survey say they visited a doctor about something stress-related.
- 57% of the survey respondents say they are paralyzed by stress; 43 percent say they are invigorated by stress.
- 51% of the women surveyed say they don't see friends at all in an average week.
- 59% of baby boomers have never been diagnosed with a mental health issue; 52 percent of Gen Zers already have been.
- Just over a third of all respondents say their job or career is a regular source of stress. Among millennials and Gen Zers, the chronically work-stressed rises to 44%.
- More than half of women (51%) say they feel bad about their appearance weekly, and 28% say their appearance regularly

SUPERVISOR SECRET cont...

causes them stress. Only 34 percent of men say they feel bad about their appearance weekly.

- 52% of respondents say financial issues regularly stress them out, well above the 35 percent who cited jobs and careers as the next most common stressor.
- 47% of all respondents — with women and men almost evenly matched — say that their response to stress is to take it out on themselves.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that “approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. (46.6 million) experience mental illness in a given year. This breaks down into:

- 1% (2.4 million) of American adults living with schizophrenia.
- 6% (6.1 million) living with bipolar disorder.
- 9% (16 million) living with major depression.
- 1% (42 million) living with anxiety disorders.

Mental Health America in 2019 Report

- Over 44 million American adults (18.07%), have a mental health condition. That actually represents a slight decrease from the 2015 report, which found 18.19% of adults had a mental health condition. The rate of youth experiencing a mental health issue continued rising, and 62% of teens and children with a major depressive episode received no treatment.
- Access to care is improving, but most Americans still have no access to care. The report states that 12.2% (5.3 million) adults with a mental illness remain uninsured, and 56.4% of adults with a mental illness received no treatment.

KEEP IN MIND

Mental health problems are common in the United States and around the world. Mental health issues, much like other health issues, can be mild, but can also be life altering, affecting the emotional, social, and psychological well-being of the person. Common types of mental illness include mood disorders, anxiety disorders, eating disorders, and personality disorders. Common symptoms of mental health issues include changes in sleeping and eating habits, social withdrawal, feelings of hopelessness, anger, and prolonged sadness, suicidal thoughts, and substance abuse.

Depression is one of the most common types of mental disorders, Depression is more common among younger people and females are more susceptible than males. Disparities in poor mental health in the U.S. exist among the various races and ethnicities, as well as among the different states. American Indians/Alaska Natives report the highest rates of poor mental health, while Asians/Pacific Islanders report the lowest rates.

Substance abuse has been known to promote symptoms of mental illness and those with mental illness will often abuse substances as a form of self medication. Those suffering from mental illness use illicit drugs of all kinds at higher rates than those without such illness.

Treatment for mental health issues can come in many different forms and depends on the type and severity of the disorder. Common treatment methods include psychotherapy, behavioral therapy or counseling, medication, hospitalization, or support groups. Somewhat ironically, the use of psychedelic drugs has also recently been explored in treating a number of mental health disorders. The most common types of professionals seen for treatment among adults with a major depressive episode include a general practitioner or family doctor, psychiatrist, psychotherapist, or psychologist.

Research shows that chronic stress is a national epidemic for all genders and ages, particularly those who are 25 to 35 years old. To unpack this problem is a matter partly of mental health and partly of physical health. Here's the hard truth: The causes and solutions to chronic stress are a complex mixture of socioeconomic, environmental, genetic, physical, and spiritual factors.

Although there are different types of stress (some are even positive), the type we need to pay attention to, say experts, is chronic stress. This is the stress that makes it hard to sleep well, makes it nearly impossible to lose weight, and finds us fighting one cold after another. It's the stress that can both cause medical conditions and trigger and exacerbate flare-ups from existing conditions. This kind of stress depresses the immune system, alters our moods, and damages our professional and personal relationships. Just as, on the positive side, yoga has been shown to lengthen the protective caps at the ends of our DNA strands called telomeres and keep us more youthful, ongoing stress can actually change our DNA for the worse.

Based on the epidemiological (or population-based data curated by organizations like the CDC), the most prevalent mental health disorders are anxiety, number one, and then depression closely following it. Bipolar disorder and schizophrenia trail behind, but are still fairly prevalent conditions.

20% of people in the country have some form of mental health issue at some point in their lives, with less than 5% having severe problems with mental health issues, such as bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or another less common, severe mental health issue.

Another issue that takes a big toll is substance abuse and alcohol use disorders. Statistics from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health that indicate more than 25% of adults in the U.S. report binge drinking in the past 30 days. (Binge drinking is defined as consuming five or more drinks in a sitting, and a drink is defined as 12 ounces of beer, 8-9 ounces of malt liquor, 5 ounces of wine or 1.5 ounces of spirits.) The CDC also reports that 1 in 6 U.S. adults binge drinks four times a month. The NSDUH reports that 6.2% of adults, or approximately 15 million people, have an alcohol use disorder, and 2.5% of teenagers have an alcohol use disorder.

The statistics and current trends in mental health are especially troublesome. A recent article from CDC talks about depression among teenagers. The rate of increase from 2009 to 2017 has increased over this time by 52%.