



Tailgate Safety Talk

Information You Can Use to Prevent Accidents & Injuries

Here are some actual examples of what went wrong in the workplace. You can decide if your work unit needs some refresher training or if there's a better way to do the job.

1. Watch your footing. You've got to watch where you walk, whether it is a construction project or picking up litter. There are too many injuries every year with twisted ankles and bruised knees such as "walking along a ditch line, tripped and fell." Stay away from the floor drains in the older garages. There have been many cases of a foot which drops into a drain hole and results in a twisted or broken ankle.

Employees have been known to simply trip and fall along the pavement edge or have their feet slide out from under them on loose gravel. Hands and knees hit the berm gravel and there are cuts and bruises to deal with. Many trips and falls occur when clearing brush and trees, usually when pulling limbs and so forth off the job site to the chipper. Either the ground is frozen and slippery, or the limb is too big that you can't really see where you're walking.

2. Know the right way to use heavy-duty power tools. Chainsaws, pavement saws, and jackhammers are the primary focus here. If you don't know what you're doing, these tools can get caught up in the tree and kick back, go too deep into concrete, or get buried in the asphalt. Then when you try to pull it out, you strain your arm, elbow, or shoulder. And it is embarrassing because you leave no doubt in your co-workers' minds that you might not really know what you're doing.

3. Use drum and barrel handlers. Whether it is hydraulic oil, motor oil, crack sealing material, or whatever in that 55 gallon drum, use a cart designed to get it from point A to point B. Every year we have cases of strained lower backs when trying to roll drums across the floor and plenty of pinched fingers when gloves aren't worn.

4. Guardrail repair. Many recorded cases of strained backs and shoulders lifting rail sections and posts. Occasionally, there's a case of a finger or hand being crushed by a sledge hammer when driving bolts through the rails and into to the post. A very serious incident occurred when a loader and chain was used to pull a section of rail in place. The chain somehow came loose, the rail section snapped and hit an employee in the head who was standing in the wrong place. Wear work gloves when handling rail sections - brand new stock has very sharp edges which can produce serious cuts and lacerations to the fingers and palms of the hands.

Users of this tailgate talk are advised to determine the suitability of the information as it applies to local situations and work practices and its conformance with applicable laws and regulations.