



SAFETY FIRST

PERRY TOWNSHIP SCHOOLS EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER AUGUST 2017

DON'T LET THIS HAPPEN TO YOU!

Here are descriptions of two recent accidents in our township:

1. While walking toward a bus, an employee stepped down from a curb and turned her ankle. There are many distractions in today's world. Keep in mind, you should watch where you are walking. Try to keep the distractions out of the picture. Don't carry large items. Keep your cell phone in your pocket or purse. Also, watch for changes in the walking surface.
2. While pulling a pallet jack loaded with boxes, an employee strained his back. Many employees find themselves moving items with a cart, dolly, or pallet jack. Whenever you operate one of these machines, always PUSH rather than PULL. One is much less likely to sustain an injury by pushing. Perry employees incur several injuries each year by not following this safety rule.

LIFTING 101 OR HOW TO AVOID BACK OR SHOULDER STRAIN

We have an expensive history in Perry Township with lifting, pushing, or reaching injuries. Over the past few years, these types of injuries resulted in claims of close to \$1 million. Lifting injuries are the largest cause group of strains with an average of \$12,114 per incident. Here are some simple reminders that will help you avoid a lifting injury. These are easy to do, but are often taken for granted.



Know your physical limitations and remember these guidelines.

1. Be realistic when assessing the load. Plan the move in your mind before you begin the physical task. If you think the load is too bulky or heavy, it is.
2. Never store heavy objects higher than your shoulders. Lifting even the lightest objects over one's head puts additional strain on the back.
3. Ask for assistance or break the load into smaller, more manageable sizes.
4. Use carts when possible.
5. Warm-up your back and leg muscles. Learn some simple stretching exercises.
6. In preparation for lifting, stand close to the object with your feet about a shoulder width apart.
7. Squat down, bending at the hips and knees. Keep your back straight and rise looking forward.
8. Grip the load, arch your lower back inward and rise slowly. Again, keep the load close to your body.
9. Avoid twisting your torso while carrying a load. Turn your whole body in the direction you want to go. Twisting places additional stress and strain on the spine and back muscles.
10. To lower the load, squat first, bending naturally at the hips and knees. Keep your lower back arched inward.

Report unsafe conditions

A safe and healthy workplace is your legal right, but employees are often the ones who spot safety problems in the work place especially in one's own work area. So when you see unsafe conditions, be sure to report them. If you find unsafe working conditions--anything from a blocked fire exit to a wet floor in the cafe—bring it to the attention of your custodian or supervisor. You may also report an ongoing safety concern or hazard to any employee safety committee member.

BEST OF THE BEST—JEREMIAH GRAY ELEMENTARY, SOUTHPORT ACADEMY, AND PERRY MERIDIAN ACADEMY

Congrats to the staff members of these three schools. Each reported zero accidents for the 2016-2017 school year. The employee safety committee is very grateful for their combined efforts in keeping their respective buildings accident-free. The committee also wishes to thank all employees at Glens Valley, Douglas MacArthur, and Homecroft Elementaries. Each of these buildings had only one accident for the same time period. Let's keep it safe and help reduce accidents for this school year.

STEP STOOL OR STEP LADDER SAFETY

Many of you have the need to use a step stool in your work area or classroom. I have observed several unsafe step stools during my recent building safety audits. Be sure your step stool is the right size for the job.

- Before you use the ladder or step stool, carefully inspect the equipment. Is it in proper working order? Is it stable? Are the feet level? Is this the right size equipment for the job?
- Wear proper shoes. Do not wear open toe shoes or high heels. Slip-resistant shoes are best.
- Make sure all of the feet of the ladder or step stool are level. Do not use the equipment if it wobbles.
- Maintain three points of contact with the equipment (two feet and one hand, or one foot and two hands).
- Do NOT stand on the top step of a ladder. Maximum safe working height is two rungs from the top.
- Do NOT stack step stools, chairs or any other furniture or use inappropriate equipment to reach a height.
- Do NOT overreach or extend your body beyond the lines of the ladder or stool.
- Always face the ladder when climbing or descending.
- Do NOT hold objects in your hands while climbing or descending.

EMPLOYEE ACCIDENTS IN JULY

1. An employee fell while using a chair to hang pictures.
2. An employee broke an arm after falling from the top step of a stepladder.
3. An employee tripped over a rug and sustained an injury.
4. A young student struck an employee on the first day of school.
5. An employee tripped while walking backwards causing an injury to her elbow.