



AOI Introduces Bill on Medical Marijuana

Article by: J.L. Wilson - January 29, 2009

One of AOI's top priority pieces of legislation was introduced in late January by Representative Mike Schaufler (D-Happy Valley). HB 3052 clarifies that employers are not required to accommodate medical marijuana in the workplace, regardless of where the use occurs. AOI, which is working in conjunction with Associated General Contractors and the Oregon Self Insured Association, has been seeking clarification on this issue since 2005. AOI members have shown particular concern for being able to implement effective drug-free workplace policies in light of a medical marijuana program that has grown exponentially in size. Today, well over 20,000 Oregonians are medical marijuana cardholders.

In addition to being able to enforce effective drug-free workplace policies, Oregon employers also have significant liability concerns stemming from medical marijuana

in the workplace. The current state of the program also compromises the ability of Oregon employers to gain federal contracts, which require certification of a drug-free workplace.

HB 3052 is strongly supported by Speaker of the House Dave Hunt (D-Oak Grove) as well as Schaufler, who chairs the House Business Committee. The bill has landed in Schaufler's committee, and is scheduled to receive a hearing on March 18, 2009.

A coalition of business groups is lining up in support, including:

- Associated General Contractors
- Oregon Farm Bureau Federation
- NW Food Processors Association
- Oregon Self Insured Association
- Oregon Home Builders Association
- Oregon Restaurant Association
- Oregon Metals Industry Council
- Oregon Trucking Association
- Oregon Bankers Association
- Oregon Forest Industries Council

- Oregon State Chamber of Commerce
- Serenity Lane Treatment Centers
- Oregon Association of Hospitals
- NFIB/Oregon
- Portland Business Alliance
- Salem Area Chamber of Commerce
- Medford Chamber of Commerce



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Eye Protection in the Workplace

by Elizabeth Marik, FNP-C

Every day an estimated 2,000 eye injuries occur in American workplaces.

The financial cost of these injuries is enormous—more than \$300 million per year in lost production time, medical expenses, and workers compensation. No dollar figure can adequately reflect the personal toll these accidents take on the injured workers.

What contributes to eye injuries at work?

- Not wearing eye protection. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that nearly three out of five workers injured were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.
- Wearing the wrong kind of eye protection for the job. Side protection is required any time there are hazards from flying objects. The older styles used side shields but many newer styles provide side protection as wrap around safety glasses

What causes eye injuries?

- Flying particles (bits of metal or glass). The Bureau of Labor Statistics found that almost 70% of the accidents studied resulted from flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye.
- Air-blown and wind-blown particles (dust, wood and sand)
- Tools (screwdrivers and wrenches)
- Handling chemicals that may lead to splashes in the eye (gasoline, oil, solvents, fertilizers, acids)
- Welding leads to exposure to welding arcs and flashes.

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Computer Vision Syndrome



Some 125 million American workers suffer from Computer Vision Syndrome, a condition caused by prolonged computer use, according to Dr. Scott Nehring Optometric Physician.

“March is Eye Safety in the Workplace month, and as our nation has moved from a manufacturing society to an information society, Computer Vision Syndrome has become a workplace concern,” Dr. Nehring said. “While prolonged computer use will not damage vision, it can make you uncomfortable and decrease productivity”.

Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) is caused by the eyes constantly focusing and refocusing on the characters on a computer screen. These characters don’t have the contrast or well-defined edges like printed words and the eyes’ focus cannot remain fixed.

“Symptoms of CVS include headaches, loss of focus, burning or tired eyes, blurred vision and neck or shoulder pain,” Dr. Nehring said.

“Research has also shown CVS contributes to decreases in the accuracy of work and, as a result, decreases in productivity.”

Dr. Nehring added that CVS can be partially alleviated by changes in the ergonomics of the work area. “Proper lighting and monitor placement can go a long way toward reducing CVS, as can giving your eyes frequent ‘breaks’ from the computer,” he said. “But the underlying cause of CVS – the ability of the eyes to focus on the computer screen – may need to be remedied by specialized computer glasses.”

Dr. Nehring said a comprehensive eye exam, including questions about a person’s computer use habits, is the first step. “If we determine that vision correction for computer use is required, we can prescribe computer lenses that are designed to improve your vision in the 18” – 28” range, the optimal distance between your eyes and the computer monitor.

Incorporating anti-reflective coating in the lenses can reduce glare from the computer screen and reduce eye fatigue”.

Dr. Nehring owns and practices at Woodburn Vision Source located at 590 Glatt Circle in Woodburn and is a member of Vision Source, the nation’s number one network of private practice optometrists. Founded in 1991, The Vision Source network includes more than 1,500 offices in all 50 states and in Canada.



Scott Nehring, OD

Eye Protection in the Workplace

(continued)



- Eye injuries can result from simply passing through an area where work is performed. Coworkers around or above you may generate the hazard.

Where do accidents occur most often?

Potential eye hazards can be found in nearly every industry, but The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that more than 40% of injuries occurred among craft workers, like mechanics, repairers, carpenters and plumbers.

Over a third of the injured workers were operatives, such as assemblers, sanders, and grinding machine operators.

How can eye injuries be prevented?

- Always wear effective eye protection. OSHA standards require that employers provide workers with suitable eye protection. To be effective, the eyewear must be of the appropriate type for the hazard encountered and be properly fitted.
- Use engineering controls such as machine guards that prevent particles flying or welding curtains for arc flash protection.
- Better education and training. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that most workers were hurt while doing their regular

jobs. Workers injured while not wearing protective eyewear most often said that they believed it was not required by the situation. Even though the vast majority of employers furnished eye protection at no cost to the employees, about 40% of the workers received no eye safety training on where and what kind of eyewear should be used.

- Maintenance. Eye protection devices must be properly maintained. Scratches and dirty devices reduce vision, cause glare and may contribute to accidents.

What type of safety eye protection should be worn?

The type of safety eye protection worn depends upon the hazards at a particular workplace. In areas where particulate matter, flying objects, or dust is present, safety glasses with side protection (side shields) are required. Those exposed to chemicals should wear goggles, and those working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics) must use special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed specifically for that task.

Prevention is the first and most important step a company can take in protecting their workers from eye injury. Taking some preventative action now and making sure that supervisors recognize the importance of eye protection will reduce the chances of a painful and possibly debilitating injury.

John Michael Paz

President, Godwin Pumps



Godwin Pumps®, worldwide manufacturer and supplier of the Dri-Prime® automatic self-priming pump, maintains a fleet of over 6,000 portable rental pumps and 3,200 pieces of related equipment for use in dewatering in construction, mining and quarrying; in drinking water supply; and in wastewater bypasses in municipal, industrial and environmental markets. Available for rental and sale, the Godwin Dri-Prime pump is complemented by a wide range and variety of electric submersible Sub-Prime®, hydraulic submersible Heidra® and gasoline-powered Wet-Prime pumps.

BHS: How many people do you employ? We maintain a staff of over 20 employees at our Hubbard facility.

What is the biggest employee health and safety challenge you face? On a daily basis, our employees face

the environmental challenges of the locations where our equipment operates.

In addition, there is a significant health and safety challenge to operating an emergency response business. While the environments and emergencies may be unique to each individual client, they are not unique to our experiences and allow us some measure of preparation prior to being called upon.

What health and safety programs have been successful for you? Our field and shop personnel engage in Toolbox Talks to review physical and environmental hazards. If conditions should change, they are trained to regroup and revise their approach. To the extent that we can mitigate hazards through planning and preparation, these Talks have been tremendously helpful.

How has Business Health Services helped your business? We rely on

Business Health Services to take care of our most valuable asset: our people. Our people are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, and we rely on a medical provider who is available to them when they need it most.

What else would you like to share with other business owners or managers? For years now, we have used

the phrase “Think Orange. Think Godwin. Great Pumps. Great People.” and it’s our people who go the extra mile to get our equipment where it needs to be, when it needs to be there. They keep Godwin Pumps up and running, and we do our best to return that commitment to them.