

## LOSS CONTROL

# EMPLOYEE SAFETY UPDATE

## Workplace stress

*If stress on the job is negatively affecting your work performance, health or personal life, it's time to take action. Here are some things you can do to reduce and manage your overall stress levels:*



- **Reach out.** Turn to coworkers for support, confide in friends and family, and build new meaningful friendships.
- **Practice self-care.** Exercise is a great way to let off some steam and get your endorphins going! It's also important to nourish your body by eating healthy foods, staying hydrated with lots of water and getting enough quality sleep each night (aim for eight hours).
- **Organize.** When life starts to get hectic, you can manage stress by setting priorities, developing routines and maintaining an accurate calendar of commitments.
- **Break bad habits.** Jobs can become more stressful with negative thoughts and behaviors. You can make stress easier to handle by setting realistic goals, thinking positively about your work and focusing on things you can control.
- **Be mindful.** Mindfulness, or maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of your thoughts, can be an effective tool for reducing stress. When you practice mindfulness, you're trying to be fully present, aware of where you are and what you're doing, and not overly react or get overwhelmed by what's going on around you.

View more tips by the [World Health Organization](#).



## Your right to a safe workplace

*The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) sets rules and standards that your employer must follow to keep you safe. Here are some actions you can take to practice safety in the workplace:*

- Speak up if you think something is hazardous.
- Report injuries and illnesses that you experience on the job.
- Report unsafe working conditions to OSHA. You are encouraged to report hazards to your company first so they can be fixed.

- If your employer is ever inspected by OSHA, you have the right to talk privately with OSHA inspectors before and after the inspection.
- If your employer receives citations resulting from an OSHA inspection, you have the right to see copies of the citations.
- Obtain any personal protective equipment (PPE) necessary for your job at no cost to you and be trained on how to use it properly.
- Complete training on how to do your job safely in a language and vocabulary you can understand.
- Know about the chemicals and other hazardous substances you could be exposed to while at work.
- Review your employer's injury and illness records and written safety and health programs.
- Know the results of any workplace monitoring and get copies of your medical records.

If you believe you have been retaliated against for exercising any of these rights, you have the right to file a complaint with OSHA within 30 days.

## NATIONAL CLEANUP DAY

National CleanUp Day is held annually in the United States on the third Saturday of September, with this year's date falling on Sept. 16. There are cleanups held in every state and territory. The day promotes organized and individual cleanup events and volunteering opportunities to keep the outdoors clean.

The inaugural National CleanUp Day was held in 2017 and had more than 225,000 volunteers. The following year had over 1.5 million volunteers, and 14 million pounds of waste were collected. The idea for the day originates with Steve Jewett, an avid hiker and climber, and his hiking partner, Bill Willoughby, who both became aware of the trash on their favorite hiking trails. They began picking up the trash during their hikes and brainstormed how to

motivate others to have fun while cleaning trails. They wanted to take their idea nationwide, which eventually led to the creation of the National CleanUp Day nonprofit organization.

The organization asks the question: **What if everyone picked up just one piece of litter?** The answer is clean cities, trails, mountains, beaches, lakes, neighborhoods and rivers. Their road map to achieving this goal is to recycle, litter less, pick up litter when you see it and join or create an organized cleanup event. Major events occur in April for Earth Day and in September for CleanUp Month.

The theme of this year's CleanUp Day is "Good, Clean, Fun." The best way to partake in this observance is by joining or organizing your own cleanup. The [National CleanUp Day website](#) provides steps for those looking to organize their own cleanups.



# PREVENTING BACK INJURIES

Many industries, ranging from nursing and construction to manufacturing and office work, can place significant demands on your back. Back pain can make it difficult to concentrate at work and lead to injuries. It's important to understand what causes back injuries in the workplace and what you can do to prevent them.

## BACK INJURY CAUSES

There are three primary safety hazards in the workplace that can lead to back injuries:

1. **Force.** The most common cause of back injury in the workplace is force, such as lifting or carrying a heavy object.
2. **Repetition.** Repetitive strain on the back, such as frequent twisting and bending, can cause chronic back pain and injuries in the workplace.
3. **Inactivity.** Sitting for prolonged periods of time, especially with poor posture, can put a lot of strain on your back.

## BACK INJURY PREVENTION AT WORK

To reduce strain on your back and prevent injuries while you're working, consider these three tips:

**Use proper lifting techniques.** Before lifting an object, assess your ability to handle the object. Should you ask a coworker for help or can you use lifting equipment?

**Modify repetitive tasks.** It's helpful to modify repetitive tasks to make them more comfortable and reduce the strain on your back. For example, if you frequently lift objects at work, use lifting equipment such as forklifts, hand trucks and conveyors. If you are regularly taking phone calls, use a headset instead of a hand-held phone.

**Practice good posture.** To protect your back while at your desk, use an ergonomic chair and make sure you're sitting in an upright position. You may consider using a lumbar pillow for extra lower-back support. If using a computer, place your monitor where you can see it without having to lean forward or backward or twist uncomfortably. Be sure to:

- Sit with both feet flat on the ground and knees at a 90-degree angle so your thighs are parallel to the floor.
- Adjust your desk so you're looking straight ahead rather than craning your neck up or down.
- Get up at least once an hour to stretch and move around.

**In the event you do sustain an injury while on the job, you should:**

- Immediately report the problem to your supervisor.
- Seek medical attention. Remember that early treatment and intervention may prevent the injury from worsening or becoming a chronic condition.

Best practices for lifting, carrying and unloading an object to prevent injuries:

- Have a clear path to carry the object.
- Stand close to the object with your feet shoulder-width apart.
- Bend at the knees, not at the waist, and try to maintain your body's natural curve throughout the lift.
- Pull the object close to you and grip it firmly.
- Tighten your stomach to act as a back support, and power the lift with your legs.
- Keep the object close to your body and don't twist or lean while carrying the object.
- Take small steps, and make sure your footing is stable.
- To unload an object, squat and bend your knees while keeping your back straight.
- Keep your fingers away from the bottom and sides of the object so they don't get pinched or crushed as you lay it down.



# Chemical spotlight

## *Fluorobenzene*

Fluorobenzene is a colorless liquid. It's used as an insecticide and as a reagent for plastic and resin polymers.

Fluorobenzene isn't compatible with oxidizing agents, ammonium nitrate, chromic acid, halogens and nitric acid. Store the chemical in tightly closed containers in a cool, well-ventilated area. Sources of ignition are prohibited where fluorobenzene is used, handled or stored. Metal containers involving the transfer of 5 gallons or more of fluorobenzene should be grounded and bonded. Use only nonsparking tools and equipment, especially when opening and closing containers of the chemical.

If fluorobenzene is spilled or leaked, avoid breathing vapors, mist or gas, and ensure adequate ventilation. Remove all sources of ignition, and evacuate personnel

to safe areas. Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including goggles or safety glasses, gloves, flame-retardant protective clothing and respiratory protection.

Prevent further leakage or spillage if safe to do so, and don't let the product enter drains; sewers; underground or confined spaces; groundwater; waterways; or discharge into the environment. Absorb liquids in vermiculite, dry sand, earth or similar material, and deposit in sealed containers. Ventilate and wash the area after cleanup is complete. It may be necessary to contain and dispose of fluorobenzene as a hazardous waste. Contact the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and local environmental regulatory agency for specific recommendations.