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Join us in celebrating National Safety Month this June

When most people think of workplace safety, dramatic incidents like explosions or amputations often come to mind. But many common—and preventable—hazards are frequently overlooked, such as heat-related illnesses, slips, trips, falls, and even disease-carrying mosquitoes.

The second most common cause of workplace injury is a trip or slip hazard that leads to a fall. Twenty to thirty percent of workplace falls results in a moderate or severe injury like deep bruising, broken bones, or concessions. *According to the Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA), slips, trips, and falls cause nearly 885 workplace fatalities per year – that's 17% of all workplace deaths.*

Falls are a hazard found in many work settings and can occur during walking or climbing a ladder to change a light fixture, or because of a complex series of events.

How can a workplace prevent these types of incidents?

- Adequate lighting
- Handrails
- Slip-resistant surfaces in high-risk areas
- Effective drainage, ventilation, and other methods to keep surfaces dry
- Marking the edges of steps or elevation changes
- Proper footwear
- Safe work practices
- Frequent cleaning
- Good housekeeping practices that keep walkways free of clutter
- Noticing and marking slip or trip hazards

Another safety concern, especially as summer nears, is heat-related illness. Remind employees of the following tips:

- Drink cool water.
- Take rest breaks.

- Find shade or a cool area.
- Dress for the heat.
- Watch out for each other.
- Sunscreen.

Remember the following are signs of a medical emergency:

- Abnormal thinking or behavior.
- Slurred speech.
- Seizures.
- Loss of consciousness.

Then focus on the first aid for heat illness techniques below:

- Call 911 immediately.
- Cool the worker right away with water or ice.
- Stay with the worker until help arrives.

Another safety concern that is often overlooked, especially for outside workers, is diseases mosquitoes carry like West Nile Virus. The best way to prevent exposure to mosquitoes is preventing mosquito bites and controlling mosquitoes around you or your worksite. While outside, turn over, cover, or throw out any items that could hold water, such as tires, planters, toys, and pools. Finally, remember to apply an EPA-registered repellent (e.g., DEET) on skin and clothes to decrease bites. These small steps can keep you and your employees safe.

“OSHA has several initiatives aimed at making workplaces safer for employees and to assist employers with achieving that goal,” said Billie Kizer, OSHA Regional Administrator in Kansas City.

OSHA reminds us not to overlook the importance of heat safety. As we head into the summer months the HEAT National Emphasis Program highlights the importance of companies establishing a viable Heat Illness Prevention Program. OSHA's Heat Illness Prevention campaign, launched in 2011, educates employers and workers on the dangers of working in heat, whether indoor or outdoor. For more information on this initiative, please visit www.osha.gov for additional material and resources.

For additional information about worksite wellness, visit the website or call Nicole Berosek at 308-279-3496. The Panhandle Worksite Wellness Council is proudly part of Panhandle Public Health District and specializes in supporting employers in the Panhandle region. We recognize that many employers support a diverse and remote workforce and offer innovative ways to overcome the challenge of working with a virtual team. We understand that many of our employers do not have full-time wellness resources and work to provide resources and training to make running a worksite wellness program as easy as possible.

Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.

Sources: <https://www.osha.com/blog/slips-trips-falls-prevention>; <https://www.nsc.org/faforms/national-safety-month-materials>; [Prevent Heat Illness at Work \(osha.gov\)](#); [Mosquito-Borne Disease Prevention](#); [Falls in the Workplace | NIOSH | CDC](#); <https://www.bls.gov/iif/fatal-injuries-tables/fatal-occupational-injuries-table-a-9-2023.htm>; [Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries - 2023](#)