



TDCJ Risk Management's *Training Circular*

Volume 13 Issue 6

Risk Management Issues

June 2013



June

National Safety Month



National Safety Month is an annual observance to educate and influence behaviors around the leading causes of preventable injuries and deaths.

The National Safety Council (NSC) recognizes June of each year as National Safety Month.

As an agency, the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ) is committed to emphasizing a safe environment for all employees and offenders.

This year there are four primary areas of focus for National Safety Month, which includes Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls, Employee Wellness, Emergency Procedures, and Ergonomics,

PREVENTING SLIPS, TRIPS, AND FALLS

Most falls are preventable. Many people attribute falls to being clumsy or not paying attention, but many risk factors exist.

Risk factors include physical hazards in the environment, age-related issues, and health conditions. Reduce your risk and look out for fall hazards in your workplace and home to prevent injuries and keep yourself and others safe round the clock.

and falls. Shoes with slip-resistant soles can help avoid injuries.

How often do you perform a common job without realizing you are creating a potential danger? Like mopping a set of stairs just before a coffee break, moving equipment into the halls at shift turnout, or standing on a chair (just for a second) to reach something on a shelf.



Taking shortcuts or not following an established route are often common acts that result in a slip, trip fall injuries.



Footwear selection is a contributing factor to slip, trip and fall related incidents. The shoes we wear can play a big part in preventing falls. The slickness of the soles and the type of heels worn need to be evaluated to avoid slips, trips,



Falls are by far the leading unintentional injury accounting for more than 8.7 million



emergency room visits each year in the United States. This also holds true to the leading cause of work related injuries within the TDCJ workplace. The worst falls, which often result in serious injuries or death, are from heights like ladders and scaffolding. Be sure to practice ladder and scaffolding safety.



Slips and falls occur every day as a result of inattention. You can minimize accidents and injuries by practicing safety. It is important to spot unsafe conditions that may lead to slips and falls and prevent them before they happen.

Remember to always keep your focus on the task at hand. When you lose concentration, you make yourself vulnerable to unsafe conditions.

Older adults are more prone to become the victim of falls and the resulting injuries can di-

minish the ability to lead active, independent lives.

One in every three adults age 65 and older falls each year.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, older adults, and people of all ages can prevent falls by:

- Staying active: Chances of falling can be reduced by improving strength and balance. Examples of activities include brisk walking, tai chi and yoga.
- Fall-proofing your home: This includes taking advantage of the tips above and removing all tripping hazards.
- Choose footwear that is appropriate to the type of work and environment which you may be exposed.
- Reviewing your medications: Have your doctor or pharmacist review all the medications you take both prescription and over-the-counter. Some medications or combination of medicines can make you drowsy or light-headed, which can potentially lead to a fall.
- Checking your vision: It's best to have your vision checked at least once a year to make sure you have the best prescription for your glasses. Poor vision greatly increases your risk of falling.



EMPLOYEE WELLNESS

Wellness Initiative Now (WIN) is the wellness program for the TDCJ. It was implemented to promote personal well-being, fitness, and nutrition for all TDCJ employees.

The WIN site (listed in the references section) has Activities & Events, Agency Challenge, Health Information & Links, Recipes, and more. Utilize the resource and check it out.

Small changes can make a big difference to your health and wellness. If people made the choices to eat better, engage in more physical activity, reduce the harmful use of alcohol, and quit smoking, at least 80% of all heart disease, stroke, and type 2 diabetes – and over a third of cancers – could be prevented, according to the World Health Organization.

Poor eating habits and lack of physical activity are the major contributing factors to being overweight and obese in the U.S.

Make healthy eating choices

Healthy eating can reduce the risk of chronic illness and disease, including the three leading causes of death: heart disease, cancer, and stroke.

Stay active

For substantial health benefits, adults are encouraged to engage in 30 minutes of moderate exercise*, five days a week

Employee Wellness is affected by many variables like Lifestyle, Psychological, and Health/Biological.

Lifestyle Variables

Lifestyle Variables were broken down into smoking, physical activity, alcohol/drug use, medication use, seatbelt use, and ergonomic considerations.

Psychological Variables

Psychological Variables take into consideration perception of physical health, life satisfaction, job satisfaction, and stress.

Health/Biological Variables

Health/Biological Variables include blood pressure, cholesterol, relative body weight, serious medical problems, illness/absence days, and a Health/Age Index. The biological variables of blood pressure, high cholesterol, and body weight are interrelated. Quite often when someone loses weight, his or her blood pressure and cholesterol levels go down.

Employers and employees alike have a responsibility to help in the reduction of illnesses and injury in the workplace and to reduce health care claims and costs. It is to everyone's benefit to practice strategies to improve health and wellness.

**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS**

The possibility of public health emergencies arising in the United States concerns many people in the wake of recent hurricanes, tsunamis, acts of terrorism, and the threat of pandemic influenza. Though some people feel it is impossible to be prepared for unexpected events, the truth is that taking preparedness actions helps people deal with disasters of all sorts much more effectively when they do occur.



When planning for a potential emergency, the basics of sur-

vival are important. Consider maintaining a basic supply of necessity items to have on hand during an emergency.

Planning is the key to success during an emergency. Become familiar with your department's emergency plan as well as the Incident Management Plan for those unit facilities. For individuals who occupy a Leased Office Space, refer to Office of Space Management's Tenant Manual Chapter 6 Emergency Response Preparedness

Conducting frequent drills allows staff to become familiar with their responsibilities during an emergency.

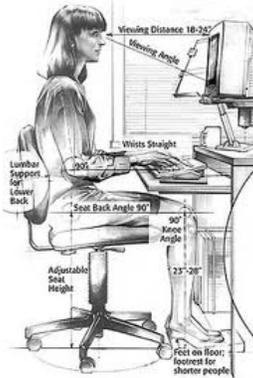


Be informed. Monitor conditions and events that may potentially affect your area. Know the changing weather conditions and plan accordingly. Understand how emergencies in your area affect things such as traffic and availability of resources.



ERGONOMICS

Ergonomics is the science of work / the "laws of work." The science of ergonomics pulls from several different disciplines to collect information on human abilities, limitations, and characteristics as relevant to designing a better workplace.



Ergonomics involves designing the job environment to fit the person and is important to take into consideration at work, but also while working on projects at home. It's about learning how to work smarter and preventing conditions such as overexertion.

Ergonomic conditions are disorders of the soft tissues, specifically of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, blood vessels, and spinal discs.

Remember, these can occur from activities at work, such as working on an assembly line, using heavy equipment or typing on a computer.

They also can result from ac-

tivities at home like playing video games, helping someone move, participating in hobbies such as sewing or through home repair projects.

NATIONAL SAFETY COUNCIL

"On the Journey to Safety Excellence, successful organizations engage everyone in safety and create a culture where people feel a personal responsibility not only for their own safety, but for that of their coworkers, family and friends," said Janet Froetscher, president and CEO of the National Safety Council. "While safety is important year-round, June is a great time to get everyone involved as the nation observes National Safety Month."

REFERENCES:

- <http://www.tdcj.state.tx.us/win/>
- <http://www.nsc.org/Pages/Home.aspx>
- NSC, Employee Wellness, 83718b
- NSC, Ergonomics, 83718c
- NSC, Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls, 83718d
- SORM-Safety Puzzle – Slips, Trips, and Falls.
- TDCJ Office of Space Management Tenant Manual
- <http://www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/>
- TDI, DWC, Workplace Wellness Factsheet, HS05-054A

- TDI, DWC, Ergonomics, HS99-149D
- TDI, DWC, Slips and Falls Prevention, HS93-019G



Training Circular
TDCJ Risk Management Department
Volume 13 Issue 6
June 2013

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The *Training Circular*, a publication of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice Risk Management Department, is published monthly in an effort to promote and enhance risk management awareness on issues relating to TDCJ employees. Design and layout of the *Training Circular* is performed by Robert C. Warren, Risk Management. Comments, suggestions and safety related items are welcome. Send Suggestions to:

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