



RISK MANAGEMENT
SAFETY AND
LOSS CONTROL

Risky Business

RISKY BUSINESS

VOL 6, NO 12

**THIS
MONTH'S
SAFETY
EMPHASIS IS
OFFICE SAFETY**

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Office Safety, A Team Effort



Many employees may think working in a comfortable, climate-controlled office doesn't require safety awareness, but risks are all around us every day and in every location. The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports work-related injuries and illnesses in office

workers each year. Slips and trips are the most common office accident, accounting for the greatest number of injuries, according to the National Safety Council. Other office hazards include sprains and strains, poor workstation ergonomics, indoor air-quality concerns, insufficient or excessive lighting, electrical hazards, and workplace violence. Fortunately, many office injuries can be prevented when employees and supervisors recognize hazards and take action to eliminate or mitigate them. Stay vigilant to hazards in the office to help all employees work safely!

~Kayvan Vafa

A Step in the Wright Direction

by Norman Wright

The summer between high school graduation and my freshman year at college in the days before OSHA, I worked as a roofer. I was able to experience working with a wide variety of roofing materials. I gained experience with composite shingles, mission tiles, shingles and shakes, and tar and gravel (hot decks) roofs in those three months. I had to learn several essential things when working on a tar and gravel roof, above and beyond not falling off the roof, such as not coming in contact with the hot tar.

Depending on the tar or asphalt used, the material's temperature as it leaves the kettle is 450 to 600°F. The tar or asphalt is given the nickname 'hot' for apparent reason.



My job was to fill two 5-gallon buckets with 'hot' and carry them (we did not have carts like the one pictured above). I would fill the buckets at the draincock, where the tar had been pumped from street level to the roof

(SEE WRIGHT PAGE 2)

Wright Direction *continued...*



and bring them to where the more experienced roofers mopped the ‘*hot*’ onto the roofing felt. The only safety instructions given were, “if you get the stuff on you, do not try to wipe it off; it will only increase the burn area. Douse the area with water to cool the tar.” I would carry the buckets as far away from my legs as possible as I maneuvered through a course of vertical rolls of roofing felt, buckets of water, and other paraphernalia. I was not to lollygag as the ‘*hot*’ needed to

be as fluid (as hot) as possible when it arrived at the mopping area. After several days of hauling ‘*hot*,’ I felt pretty confident in my ability to run the course. I could run the course blindfolded. In a very real sense that was what I was doing when my mind was elsewhere.

On the second day at a new roofing job location, after running the course for several hours, I rounded a corner where a roll of roofing felt had been moved a foot from where it was on my last trip. I heard a lapping sound as the bucket in my right hand hit the roll. The pain was excruciating, but I remembered not to wipe against all my instincts. I set the buckets down and walked to the nearest water bucket, plunging my right hand into the water to my mid-forearm.

In some aspects, office safety is much like my experience on a hot deck; we think we are observant, but most suffer from blindness. Not loss of sight, but not seeing what is in right front of us. We tend to miss changes in our work environment. It’s called “change blindness;” it’s the way our minds process our surroundings. Our brain cannot detect alterations to something right in front of our face.

There are several theories for why we don’t see that which is in front of us, but basically, we have limited resources for our visual attention. There is more information in our field of vision than we can analyze. We lack the bandwidth to focus on everything, so our mind picks and chooses the things in view that it considers essential, ignoring everything else. Our mind chooses what it will and will not perceive as “selective attention.”

Making assumptions based on our experiences is one way we deal with our



What is perceived

What is on the beach

You
can't
always
trust
your
eyes.

(SEE WRIGHT DIRECTION PAGE 4)

County Office Safety Tailgate Training Resources

Check out the new safety training tailgates available on the Risk Management intranet site!

They are available at [Safety Tailgates | Contra Costa County Intranet](https://www.insidecontracosta.org/678/Safety-Tailgates) (https://www.insidecontracosta.org/678/Safety-Tailgates)

Housekeeping and Office Safety

Office Electrical Safety

Ergonomic Handout

Indoor Air Quality

Housekeeping - Do Your Part

Good housekeeping is an important part of accident and fire prevention, and a simple, effective way to prevent office injuries. Housekeeping doesn't apply just to cleanliness; it includes keeping work areas neat and orderly, maintaining halls and floors free of slip and trip hazards, and removal of waste materials (e.g., paper, cardboard) which can create fire hazards. It includes attention to important details such as the layout of the entire workplace, aisle marking, the adequacy of storage facilities, and facility maintenance. The following are simple housekeeping steps to keep your office safe:

**— GOOD —
HOUSEKEEPING
PROMOTES
SAFETY
DO YOUR PART**

Isolate or clean spills immediately

Keep walkways clear of clutter, debris, and electrical cords

Keep work areas properly lit

Store materials properly, with heavier items at mid-level

Keep cubicles clear of unnecessary trash, paper, or other materials

Segregate and properly store trash and wastes

Wright Direction *continued...*

limited attention capacity. We don't expect a building to disappear or for the color of a person's shirt to change, so why should we bother to keep checking on it? Changes that occur with motion are easily detected. When we do not observe the change happening, it may go unnoticed. We follow the same path we always follow, with our goal to get to the end, ignoring the small, inconsequential changes that our minds have filtered out.

This same thing happens in an office setting. Filing cabinets do not move, so we ignore them in our sensory information gathering, perhaps forgetting the drawer that we left open or missing the drawer that someone else left open. Floors are constant, so we do not see the slipping or tripping hazards that are new. Suddenly, your routine journey to the exit door ends in an incident as you encounter a box left in the aisleway, a box that was never there before. It doesn't have to be a box; it could be a surplus chair, garbage, or a power cord – all items our minds might dismiss as an inconsequential distraction as it gathers information about our surroundings.



What you perceive.

What is there.

It is vital to scan even your most familiar environments before acting. Change blindness is a problem in familiar settings that rarely change. Maybe that is why 76% of all preventable fatal injuries occur in the home.

The pain from the *'hot'* splashing on my right hand caused me to believe that it was covered with tar from my knuckle down. I feared that I my hand, to my surprise there were only three 1/8 inch drops of tar on my index and ring fingers. The damage was not nearly as bad as the pain led me to beliemight lose full use of my right hand. When I removed my hand from the water to inspect ve. It left me with three small burn scars that faded over the years, a desire to be aware of my environment at all times, and a fondness for wearing work gloves. ✨

Important Safety Training Dates for December 2021

2021 is almost over so it is a great time to catch up on safety training that you need for the year.

Required COVID-19 Training in Vector Solutions:

- CCC COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace
- COVID-19 Field Safety Training - for staff that conduct field work.
- TAILGATES - CCC - COVID-19 Safety Training
- TAILGATES - CCC - Emergency Evacuation Procedures during

Recommended for Departmental Personnel Contacts in Vector Solutions

- COVID-19 - Reporting Positive Results to Public Health General

Coronavirus Training in Vector Solutions:

- Courses - Coronavirus 101 - What You Need to Know (Newest Version)
- Courses - Coronavirus 102 - Preparing Your Household
- Courses - Coronavirus 103 - Managing Stress and Anxiety
- Courses - Coronavirus 104 - Transitioning to a Remote Workforce
- Courses - Coronavirus 105 - Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Workplace

General Safety Training:

- CCC Injury and Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) Training
- CCC Wildfire Smoke Safety for Employees (Annual requirement)
- CCC Driver Safety Training
- CCC Office Ergonomics Awareness Training
- CCC Emergency Evacuation Procedures - All County
- CCC HSD 2021 Workplace Violence Prevention
- TAILGATE - Workplace violence
- TAILGATE - Shelter in Place Procedures - Violence

**Hybrid CPR Classes
Available Now!**

**Check Vector Solutions for
Dates and Instructions**

We are planning the 2022 Safety Training Schedule. Classes and dates will be posted SOON !

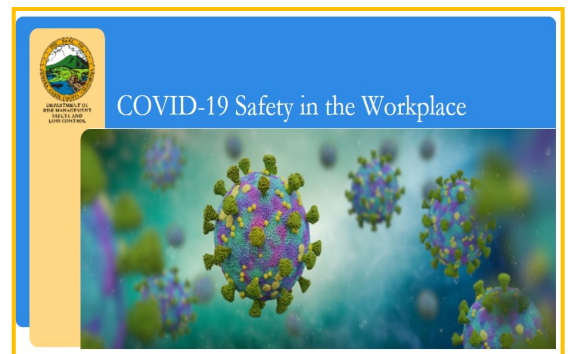
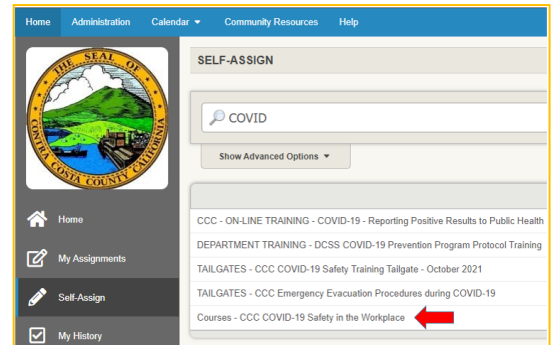
Log into the Vector Solutions website at
www.targetsolutions.com/ccc for the full list of
ONLINE, ZOOM, and HYBRID classes!

NEW! COVID-19 Online Safety Training

The custom County training “*CCC COVID-19 Safety in the Workplace*” is now available in Vector Solutions. The new course is animated and interactive.

Taking this course will meet the Cal/OSHA training requirements for COVID-19 Prevention. You may be assigned this training by your Department or find it on the Self-Assign feature in Vector Solutions.

Thanks for your continued attention to COVID-19 safety for your health and safety and the protection of the County’s clients, patients, and public visitors.



Mail Security

The threat of harmful use of chemical, biological and radiological material in the mail is considered low.

However, these types of hazards and their effects are potentially life-threatening. The County follows the United States Postal Service (USPS) recommended mail handling procedures, outlined in their ‘USPS Mail Center Security Guidelines.’ These guidelines provide guidance on mail security and recommended protective measures to help workers assess, prevent, and respond to weapons of mass destruction, mail bombs, and other suspicious packages. If you receive a package you believe may be dangerous, take precaution to minimize potential risks. First and foremost, leave the package unopened and do not attempt to open or determine what is inside the package. Do not pick up or shake the item, which may cause the release of harmful materials or activate triggers. If the item is partially or fully opened, all its associated material should be retained and/or isolated as much as possible. Isolate the area where the package was received and contact your Facility Manager, local law enforcement as necessary, and Risk Management at (925) 335-1400.



Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

Injuries from slips, trips, and falls can happen to anyone at any time. Based on 2019 data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), 27% of the 888,220 nonfatal work injuries resulting in days away from work were related to slips, trips, and falls. These accidents can cause broken bones, strained muscles, twisted/dislocated joints (knees, hips, ankles, shoulders), head injury, and spinal damage. Always stay vigilant when walking or working in areas where these types of hazards exist. The following are examples of slip and trip hazards that may be present in an office environment:

Slip Hazards

Slips are primarily caused by a slippery surface. The likelihood of these incidents is increased by the incorrect footwear, which can cause the forward or rear foot to lose traction, throwing off an employee's center of gravity. Slick or inappropriate footwear, such as smooth leather soles, worn down rubber soles, or high heels can contribute to slips. The correct footwear for the task and environment, with regular repair, maintenance or replacement, can help prevent slips.

Trip Hazards

Trips occur when one foot strikes an object and is suddenly stopped. The upper body is then thrown forward causing a fall. Tripping hazards often occur when employees are busy with tasks or activities that take their attention away from surrounding hazards. Large objects are easily recognized as tripping hazards, but small objects are also dangerous because they are often harder to identify. Examples of trip hazards include open file drawers, electrical cords in walkways, raised rugs, floors, and sidewalk sections, and cluttered walkways.

Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

- ✓ **Recognize Hazards:** Be alert to spot hazards in advance, keep walking areas and stairways free of clutter, follow proper housekeeping practices and procedures.
- ✓ **Avoid Hazards:** Do not wear sunglasses indoors and avoid moving from light to dark areas too quickly. Slow down! If you must go through a hazard, slow down, take smaller steps, and avoid sharp turns. Watch Out! Distractions, not watching where you are going, and carrying bulky loads can prevent you from identifying hazards.
- ✓ **Wear the Right Footwear:** Rubber soles with traction patterns are the best footwear for preventing slips, avoid smooth leather soles and high heels, keep the soles of your shoes clear of debris and oil.
- ✓ **Control and Repair Hazards:** Alert others if you see a hazard. If necessary, notify supervisors or maintenance personnel for correction. If possible, fix, mark, or section off the hazard to prevent injury to others. Clean up spills immediately.



Preventing Falls on Stairs

Falls from stairs can be just as dangerous as falls from ladders or other elevated height. The National Safety Council (NSC) reports that over 1 million injuries and 12,000 fatalities occur annually from stairway falls in the United States. They also report stairway accidents are the second leading cause of accidental injury, second only to motor vehicle accidents. If they are not ascended and descended correctly, or properly maintained, stairs can pose serious risks. Some common causes of falls on stairways is provided below:



Behavioral Factors

- Rushing or running up and down stairs
- Carrying objects which require two hands
- Using the stairs without a turning a light on
- Using a cellular phone while ascending or descending stairs
- Not using the stairway handrail



Personal Factors

- Decreased balance
- Illness
- Impaired vision
- Medication side effects
- Reduced physical strength



Environmental Factors

- Carpet or step surface in poor condition
- Loose rugs or mats positioned on or at top of stairs
- Objects left on the stairs
- Poor lighting over the stairs
- Lack of anti-slip coatings
- Poorly marked bottom and top stairs steps
- Loose flooring or handrails

There are simple and effective methods all employees should follow to prevent falls on stairs. Many of these rely on practicing good habits every time you use a stairway. These include always using the handrail and not using your cell phone, which can distract attention from where you are stepping, leading to a potential fall. These practices can help prevent falls not only at work, but also at home. Certain hazards may be more prevalent in your personal life, such as children's toys on stairs, or assisting a family member up and down a stairway.

Preventing Falls on Stairs *continued...*

Before using a stairway, perform a brief visual inspection of the stairs. Be aware of your surroundings, including slippery floors, top and bottom stair steps, and stair condition. Additional safe practices when using stairways are provided below.

- Turn on lights to improve visibility
- Perform a quick visual inspection of the floor leading to the stairs and the stairs to identify dangerous conditions, such as wet or slippery surfaces
- Always use the handrail when ascending or descending the stairs
- Avoid distractions, such as using a mobile phone
- Do not carry excessive materials that block your view
- Always keep at least one hand free
- Avoid engaging in horseplay or rushing
- Ensure proper footing on each step
- Identify and remove trip hazards, such as boxes, tools, or other items

In addition to always using handrails and identifying and removing stairway trip hazards, proper maintenance can greatly reduce the likelihood of falls. Periodic inspections should be made to proactively identify and correct stair deficiencies before they can cause injury. Some key components of a thorough stairway inspection include the following:

Yes	No	N/A	Stair Inspection Questionnaire
			Are all stairs inside the building in good repair?
			Do the steps have a non-slippery surface?
			Are stairs free of protruding nails, torn carpet edges, lumps, etc.?
			Is there a handrail or banister available?
			Are the handrails well fastened and in good repair?
			Are the stairs well-lit with no shadows?
			Are the stairs and stairwell free from glare?
			Are the stairways free from clutter and other hazards?
			Are all the stairways free from spills and wet spots?

Any **NO** answers require evaluation and a corrective action!



TRAINING TIME

...is *all* the time!

Compliance Trainings

- ✦ [Workplace Diversity](#)
- ✦ [Anti-Harassment for Non-Supervisory Personnel](#)
- ✦ [Anti-Harassment for Supervisors and Managers](#)

Upcoming Trainings (2022)

Art of Managing and Supervising People (AMSP) – Onsite

- See Vector Solutions Bulletin Board

To enroll, email [Samantha Schirado](#).

Training Time Resources

- ✦ [Compliance: The Musical](#)
- ✦ [The Sound of Compliance](#)

Training Unit Contacts

Training Assistant

Ivy Hughes

rmintern@riskm.cccounty.us

Training Manager

Ron Martin

ron.martin@riskm.cccounty.us

Vector Solutions Validations and VSPOCs

As we approach the end of the year and yet another season of New Year's resolutions, an excellent item to add to your list of resolutions is becoming current on compliance trainings. A



helpful way to maintain compliance is to ensure that your email is validated in Vector Solutions. This allows your department's Vector Solutions Point of Contact (VSPOC) to send you reminders to complete compliance trainings after they have assigned them to you. Without a validated email address in Vector Solutions, the reminders that VSPOCs send will not reach you. In order to determine whether or not your email is validated in Vector Solutions:

- 1) Login to Vector Solutions at <http://www.targetsolutions.com/cc>
- 2) Click on your name in the upper right-hand corner of the page.
- 3) Click on **"My Profile."**
- 4) If your email is validated, you will see your email address and **"(Validated)"** next to it in the **"Email"** line.

If your email is not validated in Vector Solutions, there will not be an email listed in the **"Email"** line or **"(Pending Validation)"** will be displayed next to your email. If you do not currently have a validated email address linked to your Vector Solutions account, it is *imperative* that you add your email to your account by clicking on **"Edit"** in the **"Email"** line, and then clicking on **"Add a new email."** Type your County email address into the box that appears,

and click on **"Add."** It will say **"(Pending Validation)"** next to your email. From there, navigate to your County email inbox, open the email from platform@targetsolutions.com, and click on **"Validate your email"** to validate your email address. You will automatically be navigated back to a Vector Solutions page that says **"Thank you for activating your email."** Now, when trainings are assigned to you with reminders set and the due date is approaching or the due date has passed, you will receive email notifications prompting you to complete the trainings.



If you experience issues with Vector Solutions, your department's Vector Solutions Point of Contact (VSPOC) is an excellent resource. Acting as training liaisons, every department has at least one VSPOC. They are equipped with knowledge and resources to:

- **Assign** compliance trainings to staff
- **Track** the status of staff's training compliance
- **Manage** staff's Vector Solutions accounts, including password resets
- **Troubleshoot** common Vector Solutions issues
- **Answer** frequently asked questions

If you have contacted your department's VSPOC and you are continuing to experience **access** difficulties, contact our Vector Solutions Support Team at vectorsolutions@riskm.cccounty.us. If you experience **technical** difficulties (e.g., browser issues), please contact your department's designated IT personnel.



Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is more than just running water over your hands. Washing your hands with soap and water is the best way to prevent the spread of infections. It helps prevent diseases, such as colds, flu, and food poisoning. It's easy, it doesn't cost much, and it works.



Wash your hands frequently throughout the day!

Wash your hands:

- Often, especially during cold and flu season. This can reduce your risk of catching or spreading a cold or the flu.
- Before, during, and after you prepare food. This reduces your risk of catching or spreading bacteria that cause food poisoning. Be especially careful to wash before and after you prepare poultry, raw eggs, meat, or seafood.
- Before and after you care for someone who is sick. It's also important to wash your hands before and after you treat a cut or wound.
- Before you eat.

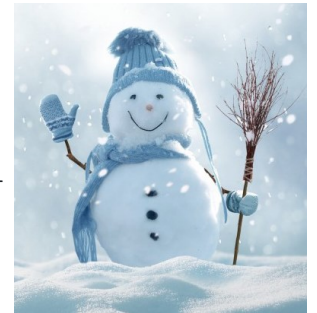
Wash your hands after you:

- Go to the bathroom or change diapers. This reduces your risk of catching or spreading diseases such as salmonella or hepatitis A.
- Cough, sneeze, or blow your nose.
- Handle or prepare foods, especially after you touch raw meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, or eggs.
- Touch an animal, animal waste, pet food, or pet treats.
- Handle garbage, use the phone, or shake hands.

National Stress-Free Family Holidays Month

This year, try de-emphasizing the hustle, bustle and material excesses that can accompany the winter holidays.

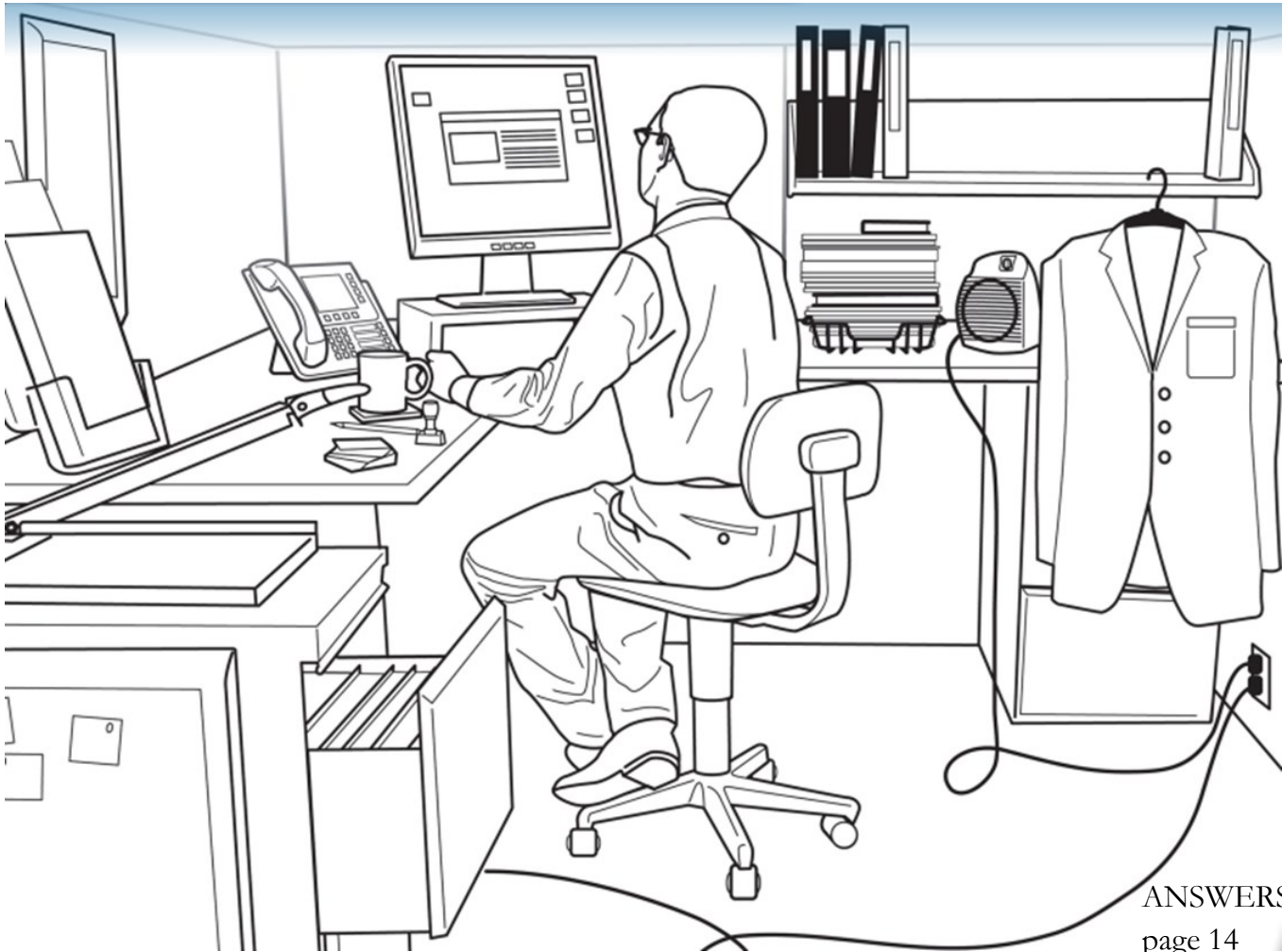
1. Establish a realistic set of expectations and create an achievable set of goals for your holidays.
2. Don't try to recreate hallowed holidays of the past - celebrate in new ways.
3. Make lists and share tasks among friends and family. Ask for lots of help with decorating, gift wrapping and food preparation.
4. Set a holiday budget and stick to it. When 2022 arrives, you'll be glad you spent cautiously.
5. Take care of yourself throughout the holidays. Follow a routine sleeping, eating and exercise schedule. Limit alcohol intake and late hours.
6. If you're feeling lonely or otherwise disconnected, try volunteering some time to help others.. Schedule some stress relief activities just for you. Take a warm bath, listen to music, read a book or take long walks.



These resources and more are from Magellan, the County Employee Assistance Program. Find more at [Magellan Ascend \(https://magellanascend.com\)](https://magellanascend.com)

What is Amiss?

Review the graphic below. Can you find eight safety concerns?



ANSWERS on page 14

Shanon Shares

by Shanon Winston

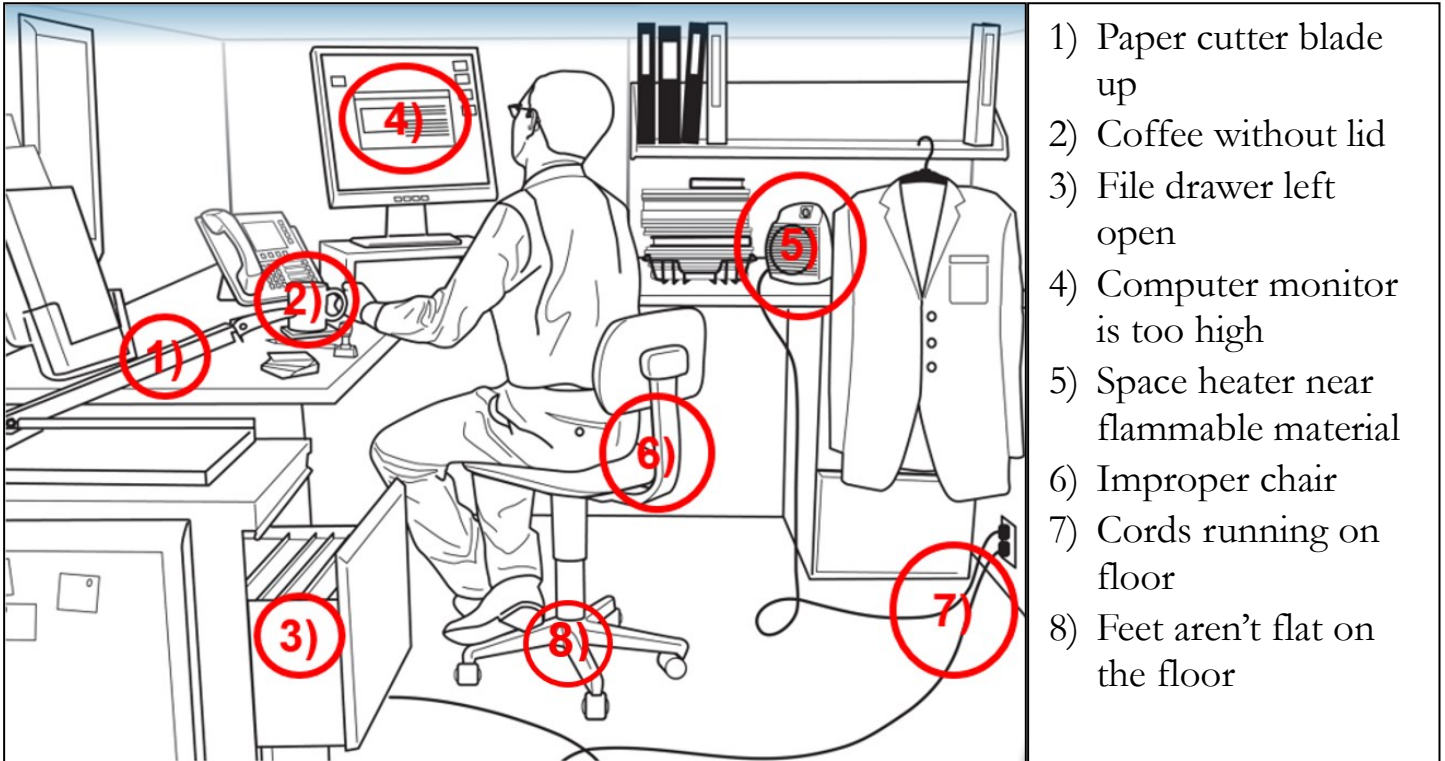
Hello All! In this section of Risky B, I plan to tell some quick and interesting lessons learned of my unique experiences in this Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) field that SHOULD help us all to stay a little safer.

As I have recently looked back on when I first started my career in OSH over 10 Christmases ago, I remembered how concerned I was with what kind of impact I would ever make. My start in this field was unique I must say, at least in comparison to many I know, including the more seasoned professionals and my peers. With experience in theme park and entertainment safety, hospital safety, and public sector, I have realized that I can make some of my impact through sharing my unique experiences. After all, by asking, listening, and applying what I learned, it helped me to improve as a person as well as an OSH professional. It is only fair that I share the wealth...



(SEE SHANON SHARES PAGE 14)

What is Amiss - Answers



- 1) Paper cutter blade up
- 2) Coffee without lid
- 3) File drawer left open
- 4) Computer monitor is too high
- 5) Space heater near flammable material
- 6) Improper chair
- 7) Cords running on floor
- 8) Feet aren't flat on the floor

Shanon Shares (continued)

Something I learned in the beginning of my career was the importance of hearing others' experiences in Safety. I am not just talking about the wealth of technical knowledge and skill my colleagues have, but the way in which they have learned to apply such skill to make the most meaningful and effective change. My network---made up of peers, co-workers, clients, leaders, and mentors---have expressed the importance of learning through listening. In Safety and Loss Control, we always encourage teams to work together to help prevent injuries and illnesses in the workplace. That is because each of you, in whatever position you are in, have something to contribute to improving the safety culture that you share. All of us have lives outside of our jobs that we want to get back to at minimum as safely as we came into our jobs. I think it is safe to say, we would like to enjoy the holidays in the same way.



Whether you are part of a safety committee, performing an incident investigation, or providing feedback on a safety training, it requires a team effort to address the issue for each of you individually. Take advantage of the experience around you, do not be afraid to ask for support, and listen to what advice or recommendation is shared. While the recommendation may not always be feasible, varied input helps to create a better solution. Have a safe and happy holiday season!

Seasonal Safety: Winter

It's that time of year again! The days are shortening, temperatures are dropping, and rain is starting to fall in the Bay Area. Winter is a time many of us look forward to, filled with the holidays, family gatherings, and great food. But a change in the season also means a change in the hazards present, not only at work, but also at home. Outdoor workers can be exposed to cold stress, drivers may encounter slick roadways and fog, and wet walking surfaces can lead to increases in slips, trips, and falls. Here are some winter safety tips to help everyone enjoy this season safely.



RISK MANAGEMENT
SAFETY AND
LOSS CONTROL

Dedicated to
preventing
injuries and
illnesses.
CONTACT
US!

2530 Arnold Drive, Suite 140, Martinez

925-335-1400

Safety Newsletter E-mail:

Norman.Wright@riskm.cccounty.us

Safety and Loss Control Intranet Site:

<https://www.insidecontracosta.org/469/Safety-and-Loss-Control>

Parking Lot Safety

With the sun setting earlier and wet conditions, parking lots can become more dangerous. In addition to slippery ground surfaces which can lead to slips, trips, and falls, be aware of your personal safety. Park as close to the building as possible, in well-lit areas. Try to walk with a co-worker to your vehicle after work, have your keys out and ready as you approach your vehicle, and lock your doors and keep the windows closed once you are in your vehicle.

Space Heater Safety

With colder temperatures, space heaters can increase hazards. The National Fire Protection Association reports that space heaters factor into approximately 43% of indoor heating-related fires annually. Wear layers in the office and outdoors. Follow County policy on the use of space heaters in the office. If you have an ADA-approved space heater, keep it at least three feet from combustible materials, plug it directly into the outlet (not into an extension cord), and always turn it off when not in use.

Preventing Hypothermia

Hypothermia is a medical emergency that occurs when the body loses heat faster than it can produce it, causing a dangerously low body temperature. It can occur at temperatures of 50°F or higher in wet and windy weather. To help prevent hypothermia:

- Wear multiple, loose layers of clothing and a hat
- Try to avoid intense work activities which can cause the body to sweat. The combination of wet clothing and cold weather can cause the body to lose heat more quickly
- Stay as dry as possible and change out of wet clothing as soon as possible
 - Mobilize with cold packs and warm liquids
- Take warm up breaks to allow the core body temperature to increase

