

news & notes

ASSE ADDS NEW BRANCH

The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) has created a new Health and Wellness Branch to raise awareness about the benefits of integrating occupational safety and health with health promotion programs.

The ASSE says the branch will provide professional networking and development opportunities as well as a forum for discussion and action on health and wellness.

The importance of work-life balance, health, and wellness are generally not addressed by safety professionals, says the ASSE.

The organization cites a recent study of programs at Navistar that showed a strong link between safety and health results when health protection and promotion activities were combined. The research pointed to a decline in injury frequency rates and a 48 percent decrease in injuries and illness when health and safety promotion activities were introduced.

The ASSE defines the term "health and wellness" as "the active, lifelong process of becoming aware of choices and making decisions toward a more balanced, healthful and fulfilling life."



"As your doctor, I strongly advise you to stop smoking."

EMPLOYEE SAFETY NEWSLETTER

November 2012

Great American Smokeout *Third Thursday in November*

You may think this is a well-worn subject, but let's lay the facts out once again. There are **over 4,000 chemicals in cigarette smoke**. Hazardous ingredients in tobacco include: 250 chemicals that are known to cause cancer; numerous poisons; ash and tar; and, of course, nicotine.

Health hazards of smoking include:

- **Increased risk of serious diseases** such as cancer, heart disease, and stroke
- **Increased risk of heart attack**
- **Increased risk of premature death** from smoking-related disease
- **Emphysema and other respiratory problems** as well as a higher risk of pneumonia
- **Damage to a fetus**
- **Health risks to others who breathe secondhand smoke**, especially infants and children
- **Lower bone density** in women who smoke (osteoporosis)

It's hard to quit because smoking is addictive; it's both a habit and a comfort; and it's associated with other things called "triggers" that make you want to smoke—for example, drinking a cup of coffee, talking on the phone, driving, or taking a work break. But even though it's hard, the benefits are well worth it.

The **health benefits of quitting** include:

- Heart rate and blood pressure begin to return to normal
- Carbon monoxide levels in blood decline
- Circulation improves
- Less coughing
- Improved lung function
- Reduced risk of dying from smoking-related disease
- Freedom from addiction
- Setting a good example for children
- Saving a lot of money

The **financial benefits of quitting** are also substantial. For example:

- If you smoke a pack of cigarettes a day at a cost of \$5 per pack, each week you will save \$35 by not smoking.
- In a month you'll save about \$150.
- In a year you'll save over \$1,800.
- In 10 years you'll save more than \$18,000.
- In 20 years the savings will add up to over \$35,000. Imagine all the other ways you could spend that money!

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THE SKINNY ON SKIN CARE

November is **National Healthy Skin Month**. Weighing in at between 6 and 9 pounds and with a surface area of about 2 square yards, the skin is the body's largest organ. As such, it is your body's first line of defense against the outside world and helps you fight infections and injuries as well as helping to maintain your body's temperature.

Your skin also makes vitamin D, which is crucial to calcium absorption and strong bones. Keeping your skin healthy is crucial to your overall health and safety. Here's how to take care of your skin so it can take care of you:

- **Drink plenty of water** to keep your skin hydrated.
- **Eat well-balanced meals** and snacks that avoid fatty and greasy foods.
- **Get plenty of vitamins A, C, and E.**
- **Get plenty of minerals** selenium and zinc.
- **Limit sun exposure to 15 minutes or fewer from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.** Your skin needs some sun, because the sun is the best source of vitamin D.
- **Use sunscreen with a special protection factor (SPF) of 15 or higher** for longer sun exposures.



ABCs about MSDs

How to avoid these injuries

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Association (OSHA), nearly 2 million U.S. workers report work-related musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) every year. At least 375,000 of these injuries require workers to take time off from work to recover.

Here's what you can do to avoid becoming one of these statistics:

- **Adjust your workspace** to fit your body. Follow our company's ergonomics guidelines for your workstation.
- **Use a neutral position** to maintain your body's natural position. Keep your head straight and facing forward. Keep your shoulders neutral by holding your upper arms close to your body and not hunching or slumping. Keep your wrists in a straight line when working with hand tools or typing. Maintain your back's natural curves by standing with feet shoulder-width apart or sitting with your thighs parallel to the floor and your feet flat on the floor.
- **Take breaks** to rest muscles and change position.
- **Do stretching and flexing exercises** to keep muscles limber and prevent injury.
- **Keep physically fit.** Maintaining a wellness lifestyle by eating right, sleeping well, and exercising can reduce stress, tightened muscles, and the risk of MSDs.

Stand your ground

Spot slipping hazards

The slippery season is fast upon us—and may already be in force in some areas of the country. So take time to reexamine your workplace—inside and out—for slipping hazards.

Stand your ground by spotting these possible **fall hazards in your work area and in other places around the workplace**, such as break rooms and rest rooms:

- Failure to keep work areas clean and neat
- Inadequate lighting
- Not watching where you're going
- Running or walking too fast
- Spills and wet floors
- Clutter
- Open drawers
- Flooring problems
- Failure to use handrails on stairs
- Lack of caution on stairs and ladders
- Wearing inappropriate shoes

Also be aware of slip hazards **outside the workplace** such as:

- Wet or icy surfaces
- Uneven pavement
- Lack of adequate visibility in the dark
- Glare, which can interfere with seeing where you're going