

# Don't Run With Scissors!



September 2010 Safety Communiqué from the Technical Division Head

**By: Giorgio Apollinari, Technical Division Head**

I am concerned about the continuous rate of cuts and lacerations that we experience here in the Technical Division. This demonstrates the importance of all employees wearing proper PPE, including protective gloves, when handling sharp objects. While we have been fortunate in that the injuries we have received thus far have not kept people out of work, any incident could easily have become an even more serious injury. Taking the time to ensure that you are wearing the appropriate gear takes a matter of seconds which can save hours of pain later. Please **Take Five** on a regular basis for safety. You will be seeing a separate memo issued shortly regarding this subject.

INCIDENT BACKGROUND	HOW IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED
<p>An employee was preparing to carry a shelving unit that had been stored outside into a building. The employee noticed a wasp nest attached to the unit. The nest appeared to be abandoned, so the employee began to scrape the nest off. Wasps began to exit the nest, and the employee turned and began to run away. The employee lost his balance as he was running on the asphalt driveway and fell to the ground. Most of the impact of the fall was absorbed by his hands, but his lower lip also contacted the ground resulting in a laceration of the lip. The employee received 3 sutures in his lip. Sutures make the case recordable, but with there were no restrictions, so case is not a DART.</p>	<p>This injury could have been prevented if the employee had examined the nest more closely, or better yet, sprayed the nest with insecticide as a precaution.</p>
<p>A technician was carrying a portable air compressor with the assistance of a co-worker. The portable compressor weighed 70 lbs. As he was walking up 3 steps, he was holding the frame of the compressor while the co-worker was behind him holding on to the compressor handle. At the landing at the top of the steps, he reached with one hand and turned slightly to open the door and felt a sharp pain in his right knee and lower back. He initially did not consider the pain to be significant. The incident occurred at the end of the day. The technician experienced more pain while at home, so he reported to the Medical Office the next morning. He was diagnosed with lower lumbar strain. He returned to work with limitations which prevent him from performing some of his routine functions.</p>	<p>The technician stated that he normally uses a dolly to move the compressor, but it was late in the day (at the end of his shift) and he just wanted to finish and go home. There are six dollies available for the workers to use. The technicians were not using the dolly to move the compressor because it was a much shorter distance to carry the compressor than to push it on a dolly the long way around.</p> <p>Simply utilizing safer methods of moving the equipment would have prevented this injury.</p>
<p>A technician and a co-worker were taking a Fluorinert pump cart (which includes a steel reservoir tank) from the Transfer Gallery to another location. The technician was rolling the cart out the roll-up door and onto the driveway to load it into a pickup truck when one of the wheels struck an obstruction and abruptly stopped, resulting in the individual's arm contacting one of the steel angle pieces mounted to the tank as a guard for a sight glass. The guard had a sharp corner which caused a laceration of the arm. The employee received sutures and medical limitations which prevent him from performing some of his routine functions, so the case is a DART.</p>	<p>The cart has 3-inch diameter hard rubber wheels which were intended for use on smooth concrete floors but are not well-suited for use on rough surfaces such as driveways. The corners of the sight glass guards had not been rounded when the cart was constructed and therefore posed a hazard. Shortly after the incident, the corners of the guards on that cart and two similar carts were filed down. The wheels on the carts are being evaluated for replacement with a type more suited for use on pavement.</p>

**Most safety experts believe that all accidents can be prevented. As you can see by the prevention column, a little extra care and attention on the part of the individuals might have avoided these accidents from occurring.**