

Don't Run With Scissors!



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Safety Communiqué from the Technical Division Head

By: Giorgio Apollinari, Technical Division Head

One of the incidents highlighted this month illustrates the importance of ergonomics in preventing injuries. Ergonomics is the science that focuses on how the design of devices, systems, and physical working conditions meshes with the needs and abilities of employees. Studying our daily workflow allows us to identify patterns of repetitive motion that could lead to injury. In addition, we may also learn of more efficient and effective ways to complete our tasks. Our ES&H group is available to provide an ergonomics review of your workspace. If you would like to have your area evaluated, please contact Bridget Scerini at x3382 to discuss your concerns. We want to ensure that every employee works in the safest possible manner.

Another area of ongoing safety concern is the construction of the IB3 addition. Please ensure that if you need to pass through the area where construction is taking place that you take extra precautions to watch for equipment, workmen, debris, and changes in traffic patterns. We appreciate your attention to the overall safety in our division as we complete this project.

INCIDENT BACKGROUND	HOW IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED
An employee was moving files to his desk from a storage box sitting on his desk chair. He was positioned between the box and desk, picking up a handful of files from the storage box, and twisting at the waist to place them on the desk. When the employee turned back to the box, they felt a sudden pain in their lower back. The employee went to Medical and received first aid treatment, but was placed on no work limitations.	This injury could have been prevented if the employee had practiced good ergonomics by moving their feet rather than twisting at the waist as they moved files from the box to the desk. This subject is covered during the back safety class, where all employees are taught how to properly lift boxes.
A technician was in the process of drying stainless steel parts which had just been removed from an ultrasonic cleaning tank. To keep the parts clean during the drying process, technicians wear disposable nitrile gloves. The parts were thin (0.0150") and as the technician was wiping a cloth along the edge of one piece, the metal cut through the drying cloth and the nitrile gloves, resulting in small lacerations on the thumb and forefinger of the right hand. The technician received first aid treatment and returned to work with no limitations.	Compressed nitrogen is now being used in place of wiping cloths for the drying of the edges of the thin parts. Different types of gloves are being evaluated that will provide both cut protection and cleanliness. Wearing nitrile gloves inside cut resistant gloves is also being considered.
While attempting to step around behind a computer bank, an employee stepped off the edge of an elevated floor, fell and landed on their right shoulder. The computer bank was very near the edge of the raised floor, and the employee did not notice the uneven surface. The employee had not previously been in this area. The employee received first aid treatment only. The uneven surface was marked with black and yellow striping tape, but as the employee approached the edge of the raised floor, their attention was diverted back to the front of the computer bank.	This incident could have been avoided if the employee had inspected the area and familiarized himself with the surroundings before concentrating on the job at hand.

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.