



SAFETY ADVISOR

OCTOBER 2024

October: Fire Prevention Month

By Keith Myhre

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October is National Fire Prevention Month. At home, there is a push for people to change out batteries on smoke and CO2 alarms and to manually test them as well. However, what about in your workplace? The obvious are fire extinguishers. Verifying you know where they are located, they're properly charged and not obstructed by boxes, clothing, or furniture.

In chapter 10 of the FDOT [Occupational Safety and Health Manual](#), fire prevention also focuses on housekeeping. Inspect offices and shop areas for trash and cardboard buildup, oily cleaning rags, and improper storage of combustible and flammable liquids and cleaning chemicals. Looking outside, inspect overgrown vegetation and excessive storage of pallets and scrap lumber, all of which are fuel for a fire. Can you start a habit of monthly walkthroughs at home and work for fire prevention?



In This Issue:

October: Fire Prevention Month

October: Pedestrian Safety Month

October: National Ergonomics Month

October: Mental Health Month

FDOT Workplace Injuries 2024

Did You Know: Disaster Response Stress

Change Out Batteries in Smoke and CO2 Alarms!

When the smoke alarm sounds, **get outside and stay outside.**
Go to your **outside meeting place.** Call 9-1-1 from a mobile phone or a trusted neighbor's phone.
Stay outside until the fire department tells you it is safe to go back inside.

Smoke Alarms: Make Them Work For You!™



You could have as little as two minutes to get out safely once the smoke alarm sounds. Working smoke alarms give you early warning so you can get outside quickly.

Installation

- Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each separate sleeping area (like a hallway), and on each level (including the basement) of the home.
- When installing, follow the instructions that come with the smoke alarm.
- For the best protection, interconnect all smoke alarms. When one sounds, they all sound. It is important to have interconnected smoke alarms if you sleep with the bedroom doors closed.
- A smoke alarm should be on the ceiling or high on a wall.

How to Choose an Alarm

It is important to purchase a smoke alarm that is listed by a qualified testing laboratory. The two most common types of smoke alarms are ionization and photoelectric alarms.

- For the best protection, or where extra time is needed to wake up or help others, both types of alarms or dual sensor ionization-photoelectric alarms are recommended.
- An ionization smoke alarm is more responsive to flaming fires and a photoelectric smoke alarm is more responsive to smoldering fires.
- Photoelectric smoke alarms are the best type of alarms to be installed near the kitchen and bathrooms to reduce nuisance alarms.

Testing and Maintenance

- Test smoke alarms at least once a month by pushing the test button.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning to keep smoke alarms working.

Replacement

- Smoke alarms with non-replaceable (long-life) batteries are designed to remain effective for up to 10 years. If the alarm chirps, warning that the battery is low, replace the entire smoke alarm right away.
- For smoke alarms that do not have non-replaceable (long-life) batteries, replace batteries at least once a year. If the alarm chirps, replace only the battery.



**NATIONAL FIRE
PROTECTION ASSOCIATION**
The Leading Information and Knowledge Resource on Fire,
Electrical, and Related Hazards

Change Out Batteries in Smoke and CO2 Alarms!



Smoke and CO Alarms for People who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing

Working smoke and carbon monoxide (CO) alarms save lives. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may not be able to depend on typical alarms to let them know there is danger.

There are special alarms and devices to ensure everyone can be alerted in case of fire or high CO levels.

- ▶ When the smoke alarm sounds, strobe lights flash to alert people who are deaf or hard of hearing of a possible fire when they are awake.
- ▶ When they are asleep, a pillow or bed shaker should be used to wake and alert them to fire conditions so they can escape. This device is activated by the sound of a standard smoke alarm. People who are deaf may find that the shaker paired with a high-intensity strobe light is helpful to wake them.
- ▶ Smoke and CO alarms can be installed that use a low-frequency sound. These will work better to wake a sleeping person who has mild to severe hearing loss.
- ▶ These special devices and alarms can also signal when the battery is low.

Research the different products and select the ones that fit the needs of the people in your home. These can be easily installed without a professional. Products can be found in home improvement stores, online, and on manufacturer websites. Pick devices that are listed by a qualified testing laboratory, which is often disclosed on the product's packaging.

Did You Know?

According to the National Institute of Health, one in eight people in the United States (13 percent, or 30 million) aged 12 years or older has hearing loss in both ears, based on standard hearing examinations.

Smoke Alarms

- ▶ Install smoke alarms in every bedroom, outside each sleeping area, and on every level of the home, including the basement.
- ▶ For the best protection, choose interconnected smoke alarms. When one sounds, they all sound.
- ▶ Test alarms at least once a month using the test button.
- ▶ Replace smoke alarms if they are over 10 years old.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) Alarms

- ▶ Install CO alarms outside each separate sleeping area and on every level of the home. This includes the basement and attic. Do not place alarms near fireplaces or fuel-burning appliances. Check to see what the law is in your community for placement.
- ▶ Replace CO alarms between 5-10 years or as stated in the manufacturer's instructions.

Reduce Your Risk!

Installing both smoke alarms and fire sprinklers reduces the risk of death in a home fire by 82 percent, compared to having neither installed.

Make a Plan

Everyone in the home should know the sounds and signals of the smoke and CO alarms. When the alarm sounds, get outside and stay outside. Have an outside meeting place to make sure that everyone gets out safely. Call 9-1-1 from outside your home from a mobile phone or a trusted neighbor's phone.



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on fire, electrical and related hazards

October is National PEDESTRIAN SAFETY MONTH



Share kind courtesy on the roadway and
Let's Get Everyone Home *Safely*



TargetZeroFL.com



October is National Ergonomics Month

Put a Halt to Hip Pain

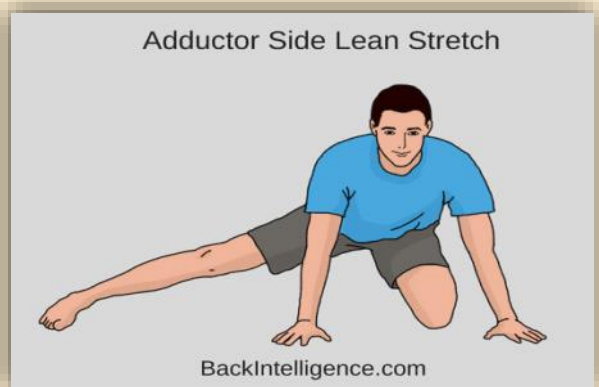
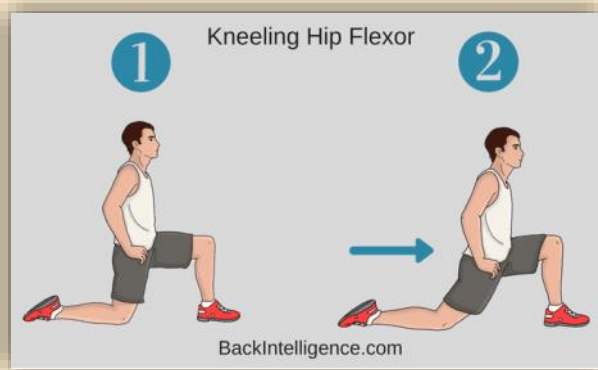
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Do you spend a considerable amount of your workday sitting? If so, you may experience hip pain throughout your day. “All that sitting can cause tight hip flexors – the muscles at the front of your hips that help you lift your legs,” UCLA staff says.

Movement is key to warding off the pain. Stretch your hip flexors in the morning before work and again at the end of your workday. When working, the National Safety Council says to make sure you’re sitting with your feet flat on the ground (or use a footrest) and your knees bent at a 90-degree angle. Your back should be straight, your shoulders relaxed and your head in a neutral position.

Stand up and move around during the day as often as you can. You can set a reminder on your calendar or your cellphone so you remember to step away from your workstation every 30-60 minutes. Or try standing during meetings instead of staying seated at your desk. Also, consider wearing supportive footwear when walking. Below are examples of hip flexor stretches. See more hip flexor stretches and details at: BackIntelligence.com.



FDOT Statewide Workplace Injuries 2024

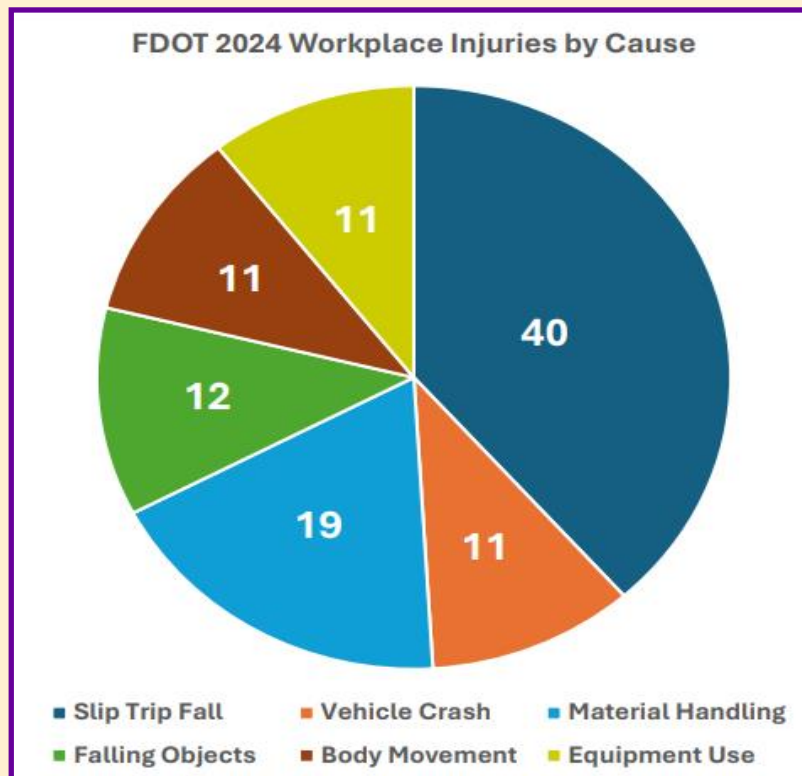
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First quarter, FY 2024-2025 workers' compensation claims were recently reported by the Florida Department of Financial Services, Office of Risk Management (DFS). Statewide, "struck and injured by," "strain injuries," and "slip-trip-fall" injuries were the highest reported workers' compensation claims.

At FDOT for 2024, slip-trip-falls, material handling, and falling objects are the three most common injuries, followed by injuries from equipment use, body movement, and vehicle crashes. At least 135 injuries have occurred thus far in 2024. Those in the chart below represent the most prevalent injuries. They comprise of injuries requiring medical attention and those that were reported only.

Our Industrial Safety and Information Management System (ISIMS) provides this information and more. This system allows supervisors and management to follow injury and illness trends in various workplace areas and conditions. Please make every effort to enter all vehicle and injury reports into ISIMS as soon as they are completed. Information trends are available by district or statewide.





NATIONAL DEPRESSION & HEALTH SCREENING MONTH

OCTOBER 7: NATIONAL DEPRESSION SCREENING DAY

FIRST WEEK OF OCTOBER: MENTAL ILLNESS AWARENESS WEEK

OCTOBER 10, 2024: NATIONAL DEPRESSION SCREENING DAY

OCTOBER 10 (YEARLY): WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

Mental health conditions, such as depression and anxiety, are real, common, and treatable. These observances hope to bring awareness to the need for accessible and affordable mental health screenings and care, and to destigmatize mental illness and improve knowledge and support.

An estimated 25% of adults in the U.S. are affected by diagnosable mental health disorders, nearly half of whom may suffer from two or more disorders.

How is employees' mental health relevant to managers & safety professionals?

The role of safety professionals should include training workers to identify and respond to all potential hazards. A worker's physical ailments can present challenges for certain tasks — someone with vertigo is advised to avoid using ladders, for example. Likewise, mental illnesses can cause safety hazards at work.

Risk management relies heavily on data, and the data on mental health supports the idea that both the physical AND mental health status of employees impacts safety on the job, and that providing support for mental health challenges can decrease the risk of injuries and illnesses, both on the job and away from work.

Recent research has found that mental health issues can be exacerbated by, or even stem from, the workplace itself. The World Health Organization describes burnout as "a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed," suggesting the

STAGES OF BURNOUT



problem lies deeper than the employees themselves. Workplace expert Jennifer Moss lists six main causes of burnout: unsustainable workloads, perceived lack of control, insufficient rewards for effort, lack of a supportive community, lack of fairness, and mismatched values and skills.

What can safety professionals & managers do to help support mental health & prevent burnout in the workplace?

Stress causes the most damage when it is allowed to accumulate — studies have shown regular pauses are the key to breaking the cycle. Employees who take opportunities to "unplug" are more likely to remain effective and focused. In fact, a 2019 NIH study found that short breaks help the brain learn new skills and remember new information. Managers "on the front lines" in the workplace can step in and offer a break to an employee they sense might need it.

Employees need to feel comfortable sharing their struggles with their mental health in the same way they would with their physical health — open communication gives employers a better idea of how to support an employee who might be struggling, and it normalizes the experience for others. Lead by example, and make sure your employees feel they have a safe space to discuss their mental health. Provide employees with information on how to utilize mental health support resources, including EAP services, local services, and national programs specializing in mental health issues. Use multiple means of communication, such as emails, posters, infographics, social media, etc. to educate workers on how to better protect themselves from the impacts of stress. Focus on developing a workplace culture focused on the wellbeing of its workers.

Did You Know?

It is common to feel stress symptoms before and after a crisis. Natural and human-caused disasters can devastate people's lives because they can cause physical injury, damage to property, or the loss of a home or place of employment. Anyone who sees or experiences this can be affected in some way.

Most stress symptoms are temporary and will resolve on their own in a fairly short amount of time. For some people, these symptoms may last for weeks or even months, influencing their relationships with families and friends.

The Disaster Distress Helpline is open to anyone experiencing disaster-related emotional distress. This includes survivors of disasters; loved ones of victims; first responders; rescue, recovery, and relief workers; clergy; and parents and caregivers. You may call for yourself or on behalf of someone else.

Disaster Distress Helpline:

(800) 985-5990



Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is available to all employees 24/7 through **Acentra Health**. See below.



Call Toll-Free: 1 (833) 746-8337

TTY: 1 (877) 334-0499

www.MyLifeExpert.com

Company Code: FLORIDA

The Safety Advisor is distributed electronically to all FDOT staff monthly to promote indoor and outdoor workplace safety and generate an overall awareness of safety in our lives. It is produced monthly by the State Safety Office in Tallahassee, Florida.

For content information or ideas, please email Keith Myhre

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See Department safety information at: <https://www.fdot.gov/safety>

Anonymously report hazards in your workplace: (850) 414-5255

