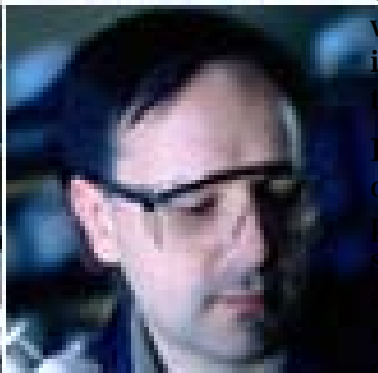


# Safety Meeting Topic

## Eye Protection

May 2011



Each day about 2000 U.S. workers have a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment. About one third of the injuries require emergency treatment and more than 100 of these injuries result in lost work days.

The majority of these injuries result from small particles or objects striking or abrading the eye. Examples include metal slivers, wood chips, dust, and cement chips that are ejected by tools, wind-blown, or fall from above. Some objects, such as nails, staples, or slivers of wood or metal penetrate the eyeball and result in a permanent loss of vision. Chemical and thermal burns are also common.

In 2010, ASU recorded five (5) eye injuries, all of which were preventable with the use of proper eye protection. While this may not seem like a lot, no injury should be considered acceptable, especially those that could have resulted in a permanent disability and are completely preventable.

Engineering controls such as plexi-glass barriers or enclosures around grinders or cutters should be used whenever feasible to prevent or reduce the potential for eye injuries. Where engineering controls are not available or completely effective, personal protective equipment such as goggles, face shields, safety glasses, or full face respirators must also be used when an eye hazard exists. The eye protection chosen for specific work situations depends upon the nature and extent of the hazard, the circumstances of exposure, other protective equipment used, and personal vision needs. Eye protection should be fit to an individual or adjustable to provide appropriate coverage. It should be comfortable and allow for sufficient peripheral vision. Selection of protective eyewear appropriate for a given task should be made based on a hazard assessment of each activity.

Generally speaking, eye protection is to be used at all times while operating machine shop equipment such as saws, lathers, grinders and presses. Eye protection is also required while working with hazardous materials in laboratories. These requirements are addressed in training programs. In other operations where the potential for eye injuries exist, a personal protective equipment (PPE) hazard assessment must be conducted. EHS Policy EHS 105 Personal Protective Equipment (<http://www.asu.edu/aad/manuals/ehs/ehs105.html>) requires that each department conducts a hazard assessment of its work areas and determine if a hazard exists that requires PPE such as eye protection.

Please verify that if eye protection requirements apply within your work areas, that the requirements are clearly communicated and being followed. EH&S is able to assist with the hazard assessments and to provide training for anyone who may need to periodically conduct hazard assessments or monitor PPE use. If you have questions about this safety topic please contact EH&S at (480) 965-1823 or [EHS@asu.edu](mailto:EHS@asu.edu).