

SAFETY FOCUS

Summer is ending. Fall is just around the corner. You can feel change in the air, and see it in the attitude of those around you. Changing seasons present new challenges, at home and at work. Here are three topics to review for a safe and healthy fall.

Articles

- **Fall Focus for JHSC**
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- **Flue Prevention Tip**



Fall Focus For JHSC

As the summer comes to a gradual end, it is time to start thinking about fall things, and high on the list at many workplaces is the fall meeting of the Joint Health and Safety Committee. Most businesses, even if they do not have safety committee meetings every month, try to have one sometime between Labour Day and Thanksgiving. There is something about September – probably a result of all those years in school – that tells us it is time to get down to work again. And workplace health and safety is some of the most important work there is.

Committee members should dig out the minutes of the last meeting, and see what actions were recommended for the summer. When you go to the fall meeting, you want to be able to discuss those recommendations, so take the time to check to see that the proper follow-up actually occurred.

Heading into fall, the committee may want to consider the following:

- There is often some staff turn-over associated with the end of summer – committees need to ask if there are staff who need safety training programs heading into the fall.
- Retail operations usually begin the fall with special promotions, new stock and the introduction of seasonal products – its time to check your storage areas for clutter, proper storage practices, and clear aisles and walkways.
- As the days grow shorter, make sure that any exterior lights, on loading docks, sidewalks and parking areas are all working properly. Soon, staff will be arriving and leaving in the dark, and good lighting prevents slips and falls outside your building, and contributes to staff and building security.

Many committees have a full plate of inspection reports to review, recommendations to follow-up on, and other business arising from previous Minutes. These are important, but try to find the time to be proactive as well. Look ahead at the workplace safety issues that will come to your workplace with the fall, and try to deal with them before they become hazards.

PERSONAL SAFETY CHECKLIST FOR RETAIL STAFF

Before you start, take a minute to make sure that you are up to date with all of the basic safety procedures where you work. Things may have changed over the summer – sometimes staff and facility changes take place then – so check to see if you are up to date with the following policies and procedures. Check yes or no, or n/a if this does not apply to you:

- I know the fire alarm procedure, and where the exits are.
- I know where the fire extinguishers are kept.
- I know the procedure if I discover a fire in the store.
- I know where the First Aid kit is kept.
- I know who is qualified to provide First Aid.
- I know the procedure for calling an ambulance.
- I know what to do if a client or a co-worker requires medical assistance.
- I know what to do if I injure myself while at work.
- I know the process for opening the store at the beginning of the day.
- I know the process for closing the store at the end of the day.
- I know the process for contacting security or the police.
- I know what to do if our store is involved in an attempted robbery.
- I know what to do if there is a power failure.
- I know what to do if a pipe bursts or if there is a flood.
- I know where the MSDSs are kept.
- My WHMIS training is up to date.
- I know where to find all the special equipment I need for my job.
- I have been trained in how to use all the special equipment I need for my job.

FLU PREVENTION TIPS

With the arrival of fall, can flu season be far behind? We remember last year, the sneezing, the coughing, the Kleenexes clenched in fists, the red eyes – and these are just the customers. Our co-workers were also ill. How to stay healthy when everyone around you is infectious is a real concern.

Here are two tips – one you will probably ignore, and one which we hope you remember and use. The first is to get plenty of rest during flu season. When you are well-rested, your body can fight off many of the infections that come your way. Staying rested is a way to stay healthy. But, since you will ignore that one...

Wash your hands.

Wash them often, wash them with hot, soapy water, and, especially, wash them before and after eating, or using the restroom, and wash them several times during the day. While some infections are spread by aerosols, most are spread by contact – someone ill touches something in the store, and then you touch it. It is a matter of time before your fingers transmit those germs to your mouth or your food. So, short-circuit this process – wash your hands. Wash often and wash completely.

Stay clean to stay healthy.