



# Saving S-eye-ght

Quarter III  
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Accidents happen. Accidents aren't biased or discriminatory in terms of who and how many are victims, when they happen, or where they happen. Every part of the body is prone to being hurt, but the eyes are what allow us to see to be able to do, making them one of the parts we should be most proactive about keeping safe. But "should" and "do" are totally different things. Eye injuries are more common than we realize. Common causes for eye injuries include, but are not limited to, flying objects or particles (bits of metal, glass, dust), tools, and chemicals to name a few. According to Prevent Blindness America, 125,000 eye injuries involving common household products occur each year and more than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work each day. Their studies show that about 1 in 10 injuries require one or more missed workdays for recovery and that of the total amount of work-related injuries, 10-20% will cause temporary or permanent vision loss. **These injuries can be prevented.**



## DID YOU KNOW?

Oven and drain cleaners, detergents, ammonia, bleaches, polishes, and other **common household cleaning products** were involved in nearly **17,000 eye injuries** last year that were severe enough to require **emergency room treatment**.

Studies done by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) report that in the workplace alone nearly three out of every five workers who had eye injuries were not wearing eye protection when an accident occurred. Wearing some eye protection isn't enough. About 40% of the injured workers were wearing some form of eye protection when the accident occurred, but research found that they were most likely not wearing proper protective eyewear. Most of the injuries to workers wearing eye protection resulted from objects or chemicals going around or under the eyewear. Proper eye protection for the hazards could have lessened the severity or even prevented 90% of the eye injuries. So why don't people wear protective eyewear? It could be that the safety glasses don't fit right, aren't attractive or safety policies aren't enforced. Most often, people just aren't aware of the importance, thinking...

***"I'm safe. It'll never happen to me."***

Protective eyewear is crucial to ensuring eye safety. To be effective, the **eyewear must be appropriate for the type of hazard** that you work with, properly fitted and comfortable, and meet all current OSHA safety standards. For example, if you work in an area that has particles, such as dust or flying objects, you should at least wear safety glasses with side shields. It is important that safety eyewear fit your face and be comfortable. Remember, **if the eyewear isn't comfortable, you're less likely to wear it**. So to **ensure a proper fit**, make sure you're fitted by an expert.

Be proactive – **Know the potential hazards** you work with and **try to eliminate them** before starting your task. Safety training is also extremely valuable. **Learn and apply all safety topics both at work and at home**. In order for safety topics to stick, they have to be reinforced with follow-up training and safety enforcement programs. So establish a mandatory safety program that requires all employees to **wear eye protection in all hazardous areas at all times**. Also have emergency safety procedures in place and make safety stations, such as eye wash stations, available especially when chemicals are being used, in case an injury happens. An injury at home can affect your ability to work. So be sure to apply the same safety attitudes at home to ensure safety at all times!

**Most eye injuries can be prevented through the use of proper eye protection, raising awareness and understanding, and enforcing and utilizing good safety practices at all times.** Programs sponsored by Prevent Blindness America report that over 80,000 people have avoided losing their sight in a workplace accident because they were wearing proper eye protection. As Tony Crow (INJAM)\*, a man whose life was changed when he was blinded in a hunting accident, taught us at this past RMC, these injuries can be prevented and they also effect more people than just yourself. So protect yourself. Wear your safety glasses and set a good example. Do it for yourself. Do it for your co-workers, family, and friends.



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## Eye Injury Prevention:

- **ALWAYS wear proper and effective eye protection.** Regular eyeglasses don't always provide enough protection.
- **Know your eye-info!** Some employers provide eye protection at no cost to their employees, but 40% of employees never received further information on what kind of eyewear should be used, when, and where.
- **Keep them clean!** Safety glasses, or goggles must be properly maintained. Scratched and dirty safety glasses have reduced visibility, cause glare, and may contribute to accidents.

\*Tony Crow—INJAM—It's Not Just About Me  
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