

## RISK SERVICES

# EMPLOYEE SAFETY UPDATE

## EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS: SAFE STORM CLEANUP



After a storm, you need to clean up the damage before you can return to work. When you enter a structure for the first time after a storm, be very careful. Parts of the building may be unstable, objects may shift and fall on you, and there may be sharp objects or slip-and-trip hazards in your path. If a building is structurally unsound, do not attempt to enter until it has been restored to a safe condition by a professional.

The following are some other hazards and precautions to take during storm cleanup:

**Debris cleanup:** Watch out for broken glass, nails and other sharp objects. Wear boots and gloves when walking on or near debris and during cleanup. Tree limbs and other objects may be heavier than you expect; if you can't lift an object safely, get help. If you use a power tool to cut branches into more manageable pieces, make sure to use eye protection and follow all manufacturer safety instructions.

**Flooding:** Avoid walking or driving through floodwaters, even if they don't look very deep. They may be contaminated with chemicals, electrically charged or hiding sharp objects that could cause injury. After floodwaters have receded, buildings can develop mold, which can cause respiratory problems and other allergic reactions. Look for areas where moisture lingers and try to dry them out as soon as possible. Make sure you have proper ventilation. When working around mold, use hand, eye and respiratory protection.

## Employee safety update

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**Electrical hazards:** If you see a downed power line, do not touch or approach it. Contact the power company to come and repair it; tell a supervisor and any coworkers who are in the area to stay clear. Always be on the lookout for power lines that may be tangled in downed branches, hidden under floodwaters or buried under debris. Remember that a live electrical line can energize other objects it's in contact with as well as the area around it.

**Hazardous substances:** Be on the lookout for chemical spills. If you see one, do not attempt to clean it up unless you have the proper training; instead, notify a supervisor. If you're working in an area where you could be exposed to chemical hazards, make sure you

wear the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) to keep yourself safe. This could include gloves, respiratory protection, safety goggles and other items, as necessary.

**Fire hazards:** If you have flammable materials at your facility, ensure they haven't been contaminated with gasoline or other substances that could make them more likely to catch fire. Keep in mind that the storm may have damaged your fire protection systems, such as sprinklers and alarms, so take extra precautions to avoid a fire, including avoiding smoking.

**Health hazards:** Depending on the time of year, storm cleanup can expose you to the risk of heat or cold stress. Wear appropriate clothing for the conditions, take breaks as needed and tell a supervisor if you experience symptoms of heat or cold stress.



## Waste reduction in the office

Even in a digitized world, offices still generate a considerable amount of waste. In fact, the average office worker can use thousands of sheets of copy paper per year, and nearly half of the paper printed ends up in the trash by the end of the day.

It's not just paper that ends up in the trash — the average office worker throws out hundreds of single-use coffee cups each year. Unfortunately, these materials and more — such as food waste — end up in landfills. But there are steps you can take as an employee to reduce the amount of waste in the office.

### At your desk:

- Think before printing emails; you can simply read them on the screen, then delete or save them to your inbox.
- If something is important, save that document electronically.
- Post employee notices in a central location in the office or on your company intranet.
- Reuse an old cardboard box by making it your scrap paper bin.
- As with e-mails, review and proofread your documents on the screen before printing.
- Reuse large envelopes, files, folders and boxes.

### At the copier:

- Copy only when necessary.
- Reduce the size of the document to be copied so you can fit more on each page.
- Copy on both sides of the paper.
- If possible, use scrap paper to print on.

These steps will save ink as well as paper.

### At the printer:

- Use two-up and two-sided printing.
- Print only what you need.
- Use print range.
- Make the point size smaller.
- Adjust the margins.
- Unless necessary, keep images and graphics off the printed page to save ink.

Some of these actions can be completed when you send a document to print from the print setup menu, and others must be done when creating the document. Check the instructions for the software and hardware you're using.

Two-up and two-sided printing is cost effective and reduces paper:

- Two-up means printing more than one page on a single sheet.
- Two-sided printing prints on the front and the back of a single sheet.
- You can save even more if you practice duplex printing, which is two-up and two-sided or printing on a single sheet.

### In the break room:

- Bring your lunch and snacks in a lunch box and in reusable containers.
- Keep a reusable coffee cup, water bottle, dishes and utensils at the office.
- Use the recycling bins when you finish eating. Be sure that all recyclable products are clean from any food. It's important to note that certain products can't be recycled, including plastic dishes and utensils. You can visit your state's recycling website to learn more.



# FALL PROTECTION CONSTRUCTION: RAMPS AND RUNWAYS

Ramps and runways are common and important features of almost every job site. Ramps are inclined surfaces that connect different elevations and are used for workers, vehicles or both. Runways are passageways for workers that are elevated above the surrounding floor or ground level, such as catwalks, foot-walks along shafting or walkways between buildings. A guardrail system will typically be installed on each unprotected side of a ramp or runway.

Ramps and runways can frequently become fall hazards, especially when they aren't properly constructed. There are a number of best practices you should keep in mind to protect yourself above and beyond a guardrail system while working on one of these areas.

## Do:

- Keep an eye out for ramps and runways that are too narrow, improperly supported, too steep or uneven.
- Keep ramps and runways free from debris and other slip, trip and fall hazards.
- Make sure the surfaces have suitable traction.
- Install cleats on walkways that are used in place of stairs.
- Give plenty of clearance when workers are carrying or pushing materials.
- Make sure ramp and runway areas have enough lighting.
- Securely fasten fixed ramps to prevent shifting and brace them to prevent bouncing.
- Use toe boards to prevent materials from falling from the ramp or runway.

## Don't:

- Overload ramps or runways with people or materials.
- Stop on a ramp or runway with a load or work under a ramp or runway.
- Install a ramp or runway longer than 12 feet without bracing.

## FALL PROTECTION CONSTRUCTION: USING GUARDRAILS

If you work in construction, you should be aware there is a risk of falling from exposed sides or edges and of objects falling from work areas 6 feet above lower levels. Proper protection from this risk can be in the form of guardrails, personal fall arrest systems or safety nets.

Almost all construction sites have unprotected wall openings, exposed sides and exposed edges at some point during development. For these openings, guardrails are the preferred method because they protect workers below from falling objects and workers on the elevated work area from falling off. Guardrails must be used when the wall openings are larger than 18 inches wide and 30 inches tall.

Most guardrails are built of strong materials and are usually solid when first put up. As time goes on, guardrails often are weakened, broken or moved and not replaced. This can lead to accidents and injuries. To help avoid guardrail accidents:

- Do not lean against the guardrails or hang tools on them.
- If you find a weakened or missing section, correct the situation. If you cannot, report it immediately to eliminate the hazard.
- If you bump into a guardrail with material or equipment, check it immediately to see if you have damaged or weakened it.

Different types of construction require different types of guardrails, but the steps above apply to all guardrails and can help you avoid guardrail accidents.

## Eye and face protection from chemical splashes

When working with hazardous chemicals, it's important to use the right eye protection to prevent injuries caused by splashes or irritating mists. The following are protection devices to be used while working with hazardous chemicals:

- Goggles with indirect ventilation
- A face shield to be worn over spectacles or goggles
- A full-facepiece respirator

Your supervisor will provide the appropriate protection for the job you will be doing. When you receive your protective device, check it to make certain it has a "D3" marking along with the manufacturer mark. It may also have a "+" sign to indicate it's impact-rated, which protects you in the event of an accidental chemical explosion.

If a hazardous chemical splashes into your eyes, flush them with water immediately while forcing the eyelids open. Continue flushing for at least 15 minutes. If you're wearing contact lenses, gently take them out while you're flushing. Seek emergency medical help quickly.

If a chemical explosion sends glass flying into your eye, **do not rub your eye**. Carefully try to flush out the debris with a gentle stream of clean, warm water. Use an eyecup positioned with its rim resting on the bone at the base of your eye socket. If you're wearing contact lenses, remove the lens before or while you're flushing the surface of the eye with water. Seek medical attention immediately.





# Chemical spotlight

## *Idene*

Idene is a colorless liquid used as an intermediate in making varnishes and plastics. Idene isn't compatible with oxidizing agents and strong acids. Store idene in tightly closed containers and place in a cool, well-ventilated area away from sunlight and air. Sources of ignition are prohibited where the chemical is used, handled or stored.

If idene is spilled or leaked, avoid breathing vapors, mist or gas, and ensure adequate ventilation. Remove all sources of ignition and evacuate personnel to safe areas. When working with idene, use personal protective equipment (PPE), including goggles or safety glasses, gloves, flame-retardant protective clothing and respiratory protection.

Prevent further leakage or spillage if safe to do so, and do not let the product enter drains, sewers, underground, confined spaces, groundwater or waterways; do not allow idene to discharge into the environment. Absorb liquids in vermiculite, dry sand, earth or a similar material; ensure to deposit absorbed idene in sealed containers. Ventilate and wash the area after cleanup is complete.

It may be necessary to contain and dispose of idene as a hazardous waste. Contact the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and local environmental regulatory agency for specific recommendations.