



DOAS Loss Control Bulletin

April 2015

Topic of the Month...Home/Off the Job Safety

With spring time, everyone wants to get outdoors and do all of the lawn or home maintenance items that have been put off. Each year we have numerous state employees injured off-the-job. Even with the direct costs from those injuries not coming from Risk Management, it does cost the state in other ways. Generally we all feel safest at home, yet off-the-job injuries cost more than \$500 million in lost wages, medical costs, and property damage annually. Nine out of 10 deaths from unintentional injuries occur off-the-job. Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of on-the-job deaths and the second leading cause of off-the-job deaths. In 2012, nearly 60,000 workers lost their lives as a result of unintentional injury either at work or away from work. One in 3 of these deaths were from motor vehicle crashes.

Whether you are injured on-the-job or at home makes no difference as far as your lost productivity. The simplest, but most often overlooked solution, is to ensure that we remember and use the same safety practices and attitudes that we apply on-duty when we're off-the-job. Too often, when we punch out, we leave our safe attitudes and respect for risks at the workplace door. Safety isn't a workplace behavior; it's a life behavior. It's something we must learn to take with us wherever we go. Don't take chances, don't ask family members to take chances, have the proper tools for the job, don't take short-cuts, don't stand on the top of your step ladder, dress properly for the job and use appropriate PPE, get assistance when moving heavy or awkward loads, etc. As a good guide, never do or ask anyone to do anything you would not ask your child to do.

Here are some Home/Off the Job Safety Tips

- Prevent Blindness America tells us that 40 percent of home eye injuries occur in the yard or garden. So when mowing, wear safety glasses with side protection or goggles. Check your yard and remove debris before mowing.
- When using a weed eater, wear safety glasses or goggles under a face shield.
- Wear goggles when working with power saws or trimmers.
- Turn off power tools when near an unprotected bystander, especially when young children approach. Bystanders and helpers need eye protection when around tools that are in use.
- Wear goggles to protect your eyes from fertilizers, pesticides and other yard chemicals, including lime dust.
- Read and follow all product instructions. Obey warnings on yard chemicals and equipment.
- Keep the owner's manuals and instructions for all power tools and equipment in one location such as a file drawer or binder.
- Before you use a piece of equipment, review the instructions and safety precautions, especially if you haven't used the equipment in some time.
- Review and observe the safety labels on ladders.
- Use appropriate personal protective equipment such as gloves, eye and hearing protection and sturdy footwear and clothing.
- Get help lifting heavy items and practice good body mechanics.
- Practice defensive driving and courtesy at all times. Don't react to aggressive drivers, and don't engage in aggressive driving yourself. Wear your safety belt at all times and insist that all passengers do the same.
- Above all, be sure you are physically capable of performing a particular task and be sure to stretch and warm up before doing any strenuous activity.

There is no way to provide all of the safety tips in one bulletin. Always plan safety into Every Task, Every Day; not just at work, but at home/off-the-job as well.

Thanks for your time. Let's work together to make Georgia a safer place to work.

DOAS Risk Management Services Division Loss Control Office

Contact us by email: losscontrol@doas.ga.gov or call (404) 656-6245 for additional information.