



*"Safety Comes First"*

# Case Western Reserve University Environmental Health and Safety

Mar - Apr  
2025

2220 Circle Drive, Service Building, 1st Floor

Phone: (216) 368-2906/2907

FAX: (216) 368-2236

Website: [case.edu/ehs](http://case.edu/ehs)

*In this issue:*

## *Workplace Eye Wellness Month*

Workplace  
Eye  
Wellness  
Month

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Every March, Prevent Blindness, the oldest eye health and safety group in the United States, promotes **Workplace Eye Wellness Month**. Throughout the month, Prevent Blindness provides employers and employees with free information about how to avoid eye injury and maintain healthy vision at work. The resources cover topics from eyestrain to eye safety in industrial settings.

*Effective  
Stop Work  
Authoriza-  
tion  
Programs*

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According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 2,000 workers require medical treatment for an eye injury every day. Many injuries come from either welding equipment (15,000 injuries annually) or power tools (10,000 injuries annually). For companies, that means paying an estimated \$467 million a year in direct healthcare costs, with indirect legal fees and fines almost doubling that amount.

*First H5 Bird  
Flu Death  
Reported in  
United States*

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In industrial settings, flying debris, tools, chemicals, and harmful radiation are common causes of eye injuries. For workers in an office, the most frequent injury is digital eyestrain from excessive screen use.

*Identifying  
Safety  
Training  
Needs*

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Regardless of the injury, most eye injuries can be prevented by wearing proper eye protection and taking other precautions. For example, employees who work on computers should practice the 20-20-20 rule: Every 20 minutes, look away from the screen and toward an object 20 feet away for 20 seconds.

*Chemical  
Spotlight:  
Hydrogen  
Fluoride*

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To participate in Workplace Eye Wellness Month, your company can:

- Host a meeting or training session on eye safety.
- Post on social media using the hashtag #WorkplaceEyeWellnessMonth.
- Put up eye safety posters around the office or work floor.
- Conduct a review of signs and other precautionary measures around the workplace.

*Fun Page*

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*Staff*

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2025-2

Source: Safety BLR

## Effective Stop Work Authorization Programs



*“(Although not required by OSHA), workers have the right to stop a task that would cause harm to themselves or others in the workplace.”*

In any general industry or construction workplace, a stop work authorization policy allows workers (employees and contractors) to stop work if a task isn't clear or if there are conditions that may cause harm, injury/illness, or damage. A good stop work authorization policy enhances a strong safety culture by allowing workers to raise any concerns for unsafe conditions at their facility without fear of reprisal.

Although stop work authorization programs aren't required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), workers have the right to stop a task that would cause harm to themselves or others in the workplace. It's especially important to have a systematic approach to stop work authorization, such as a written program that defines how the company supports workers from the top down, should they have to initiate a stop work authorization. The program should include the steps involved to resolve any concerns so the workplace is free from unsafe conditions.

One important element of a positive safety culture is clear expectations for all workers, supervisors, and managers when it comes to identifying and correcting hazards. Everyone has a role in a stop work authorization program:

- Workers have the authorization to stop work when they have concerns about unsafe conditions. They should notify their supervisors immediately and share any information necessary to help correct the unsafe conditions.
- Supervisors expect workers to stop work if they have concerns about an unsafe condition. If an unsafe condition concern is valid, a supervisor will ensure everyone is safe and work to resolve the unsafe condition before restarting the task. Workers should be supported and assured they won't be reprimanded for any work stoppage when they have safety or health concerns.
- Safety managers ensure the stop work authorization concerns are discussed and corrected; all documentation, including job hazard analyses, are updated when necessary; and appropriate training is provided as part of any corrective action.

## *Stop Work Authorization Programs, cont.*

*(Continued from page 2)*

Situations that may require a stop work authorization include:

- Lack of training or knowledge
- Unscheduled or unidentified alarms
- Change in the routine or sequence of events
- Change of work plan or scope of work
- Emergency that results in an injury, an illness, or damage
- Equipment malfunctions or equipment used improperly
- Unplanned event that could have caused harm (near miss)
- Other unsafe conditions

If workers feel there's a threat to health or safety, they should stop work immediately and notify their supervisor. After supervisors receive the stop work notification, they should begin an investigation, discussing the concerns and agreeing on the necessary solutions. The stop work authorization paperwork should document the concern(s). If the concerns are resolved, then work can resume. If the concern is an unsafe condition, then work should remain stopped, and the necessary modifications, changes, training, and documentation should be completed before work resumes.



*“After supervisors receive the stop work notification, they should begin an investigation.”*

## *First H5 Bird Flu Death Reported in United States*



*“...no person-to-person transmission spread has been identified.”*

**January 6, 2025** -- CDC is saddened by Louisiana's report that a person previously hospitalized with severe avian influenza A(H5N1) illness ("H5N1 bird flu") has passed away. While tragic, a death from H5N1 bird flu in the United States is not unexpected because of the known potential for infection with these viruses to cause severe illness and death. As of January 6, 2025, there have been 66 confirmed human cases of H5N1 bird flu in the United States since 2024 and 67 since 2022. This is the first person in the United States who has died as a result of an H5 infection. Outside the United States, more than 950 cases of H5N1 bird flu have been reported to the World Health Organization; about half of those have resulted in death.

CDC has carefully studied the available information about the person who died in Louisiana and continues to assess that the risk to the general public remains low. Most importantly, no person-to-person transmission spread has been identified. As with the case in Louisiana, most H5 bird flu infections are related to animal-to-human exposures. Additionally, there are no concerning virologic changes actively spreading in wild birds, poultry, or cows that would raise the risk to human health. (CDC reported previously on its analysis of the viruses isolated from the patient in Louisiana.) However, people with job-related or recreational exposures to infected birds or other animals are at greater risk of infection. For these and others, CDC has developed prevention resources about how to protect yourself.

CDC is continually:

- Supporting critical epidemiologic investigations with state and local partners to assess the public health impact of each H5 case.
- Working closely with state and local partners to conduct active surveillance for H5 cases.
- Monitoring for changes that might suggest H5 viruses are becoming better adapted to mammals and therefore might spread more easily from animals-to-humans or human-to-human or cause more severe disease.
- Monitoring for any viral changes that could make these viruses less responsive to flu antiviral medications or the available candidate vaccine viruses.

Additional information about H5 bird flu is available on the CDC website.

## *Identifying Safety Training Needs*

Ensuring the well-being of employees is paramount in an ever-evolving workplace. As companies strive to maintain a secure work environment, identifying areas that require enhanced safety training becomes critical.

The information below offers some effective strategies for pinpointing safety training needs, highlights key areas often overlooked in corporate training programs, and provides a concise guide for complying with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) training requirements.

The cornerstone of a robust safety program is the continuous identification and assessment of potential hazards. This process involves several key steps:

**Risk assessment.** Conducting regular risk assessments helps identify potential hazards that employees may encounter in their daily tasks. This proactive approach aids in pinpointing specific areas where safety training is necessary.

**Incident analysis.** Analyzing past incidents and near misses can reveal patterns or areas of weakness in safety protocols. This information is invaluable for tailoring training programs to prevent future occurrences.

**Employee feedback.** Engaging with employees can uncover insights into perceived risks and areas where they feel they need to prepare better. Such feedback is crucial for developing relevant and impactful training modules.

**Regulatory review.** Staying abreast of changes in safety regulations ensures training programs remain compliant and address current safety standards.

While safety training needs vary across industries, several areas often require employers' additional focus:

**Emergency preparedness.** Training employees in emergency response procedures, including evacuation plans, fire safety, and first aid, is essential for ensuring a swift and effective response to unforeseen incidents.



*“The cornerstone of a robust safety program is the continuous identification and assessment of potential hazards.”*

(Continued on page 6)

## Identifying Safety Training Needs, cont.

**“OSHA requires documentation of all safety training sessions.”**

*(Continued from page 5)*

**Hazardous materials handling.** For workplaces dealing with hazardous substances, specialized training on proper handling, storage, and disposal techniques is crucial to prevent accidents and health risks.

**Mental health awareness.** Offering training in stress management, recognizing signs of mental health issues, and fostering a supportive environment can enhance workplace safety.

**If you see something, say something.** Continually coach your team to stay aware of hazards and communicate those concerns as they see them.

Compliance with OSHA training requirements is not just a legal obligation but also a foundation for creating a safe and healthy work environment. Here are the essential steps to comply with OSHA standards:

**Understand applicable standards.** OSHA’s requirements vary by industry and job function. Companies must first identify which specific standards apply to their operations.

**Develop a comprehensive training program.** Based on OSHA guidelines, develop a training program that covers all necessary areas, including hazard recognition, equipment operation, and emergency procedures.

**Ensure recordkeeping and documentation.** OSHA requires documentation of all safety training sessions. Maintaining accurate records is crucial for compliance and for tracking employee training histories.

**Regular updates and refresher courses.** OSHA standards and workplace technologies evolve. Regularly updating training programs and providing refresher courses ensures employees’ knowledge remains current and comprehensive.

The key to enhancing workplace safety is identifying specific training needs, focusing on often neglected areas, and ensuring compliance with regulatory requirements. By adopting a proactive and comprehensive approach to safety training, companies can foster a culture of safety that protects their most valuable asset: their employees.

## Chemical Spotlight: Hydrogen Fluoride

Hydrogen fluoride is a colorless gas or liquid that can cause severe damage to the body. It is a chemical compound that has the element fluorine. It can be a colorless gas or a fuming liquid, which means it creates gas vapors. It can also be dissolved in water. When hydrogen fluoride is dissolved in water, it may be called hydrofluoric acid.

Hydrogen fluoride is used to make refrigerants (liquid used in refrigerators), herbicides, pharmaceuticals, high-octane gasoline, and fluorescent light bulbs. It is also used to make materials like aluminum, metals, plastics, etching glass, and electrical components. 60% of the hydrogen fluoride used in manufacturing is to make refrigerants.

If splashed, remove the clothing as quickly as possible and safely discard. Cut clothes off instead of pulling it over the head. If you are helping others, do not touch unsafe areas and take off the clothes quickly. As quickly as possible, wash any hydrogen fluoride from your skin with a lot of water. If your eyes are burning or your vision is blurred, rinse your eyes with plain water. If you wear contacts, remove them and put them with the dirty clothing. Do not put the contacts back in your eyes (even if they are not disposable contacts). If you wear eyeglasses, wash them with soap and water. You can put your eyeglasses back on after you wash them.

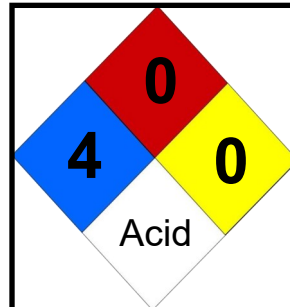
Hydrogen fluoride goes easily and quickly through the skin and into the tissues in the body. When it touches tissues in the body, it damages the cells and causes them to not work properly. Skin contact with hydrogen fluoride may not cause immediate pain or visible skin damage. Severe pain may be the only symptom for a few hours. Visible damage may not appear until 12 to 24 hours after the exposure.

Hydrogen fluoride gas, even at low levels, can irritate the eyes and respiratory tract (mouth, throat, lungs, nose). Breathing in hydrogen fluoride at high levels can cause death from an irregular heartbeat or from fluid buildup in the lungs. Even small splashes of high levels of hydrogen fluoride in it can lead to death.

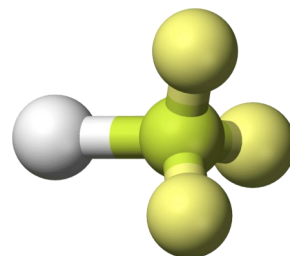
Swallowing only a small amount of hydrogen fluoride will affect major internal organs and may lead to death. Hydrogen fluoride exposure can also lead to severe electrolyte problems. If swallowed, **Do not** force vomiting. **Do not** take activated charcoal. **Do not** try CPR unless you can protect yourself from exposure.

If exposed, immediately seek medical attention. Dial 911 and explain what has happened.

**ALWAYS, THOROUGHLY UNDERSTAND THE CHEMICALS YOU'RE WORKING WITH BEFORE USING! YOUR LIFE MAY DEPEND ON IT!**



*“Hydrogen fluoride goes easily and quickly through the skin and into the tissues in the body.”*

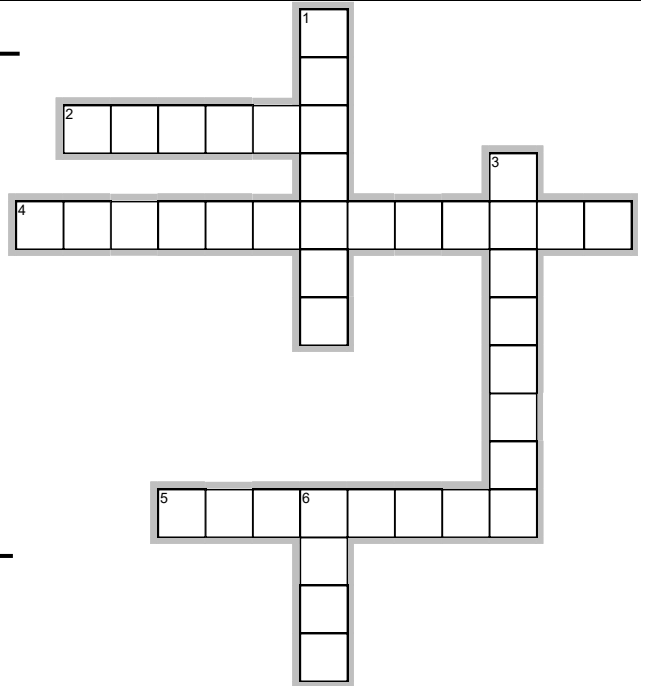


# Fun Page

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## Across

- Most H5 bird flu infections are related to \_\_\_\_\_-to-human exposures.
- Workers have the \_\_\_\_\_ to stop work when they have concerns about unsafe conditions
- If swallowed, Do not force vomiting. Do not take activated \_\_\_\_\_.

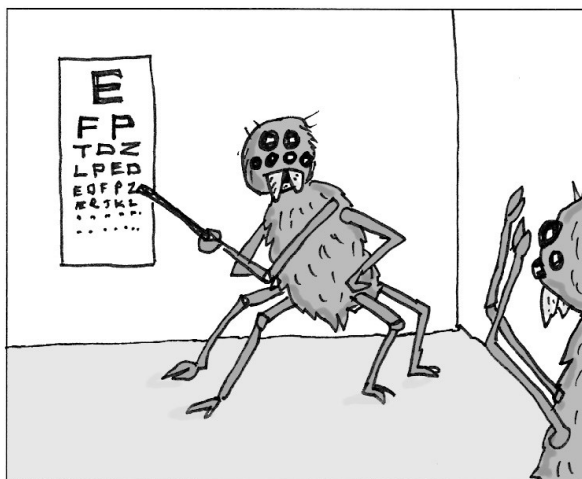


## Down

- Many (eye) injuries come from either \_\_\_\_\_ equipment or power tools.
- For workplaces dealing with hazardous substances, specialized training on proper handling, storage, and \_\_\_\_\_ techniques is crucial to prevent accidents and health risks.
- Conducting regular \_\_\_\_\_ assessments helps identify potential hazards that employees may encounter in their daily tasks.

EclipseCrossword.com

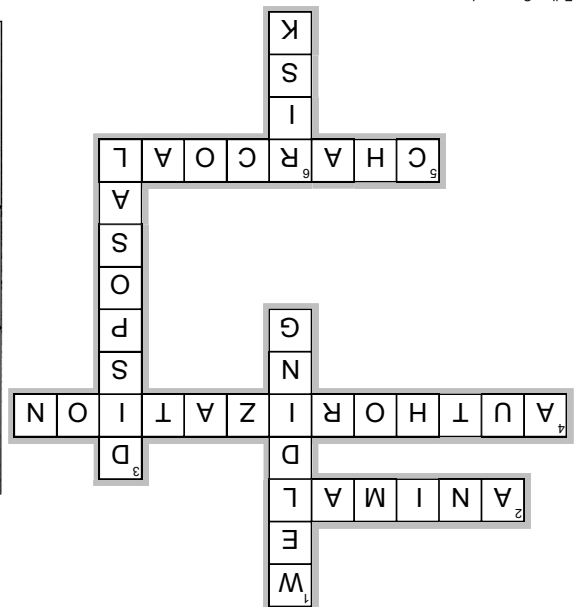
## Funny Corner



“Now cover your first, second, third, fifth and sixth eyes and tell me if you can read this line.”

## Puzzle Answers

EclipseCrossword.com





## *Environmental Health and Safety Staff*

**Naomi BOLES** (neb51), Department Assistant II  
**Howard CASH, PhD** (hac70), Safety Services Specialist I  
**Brad FYE** (jxf308), Asbestos and Lead Specialist I  
**Brandon KIRK** (bxk230), Assistant Director of Campus & Facilities Compliance  
**Todd KOLVA** (txk603), Facilities Safety Specialist II  
**Kumudu KULASEKERE** (kck40), Health Physics Specialist II  
**Andrew MALAK** (apm95), Safety Services Specialist I  
**Tom L. MERK** (tlm8), EHS Assistant Director of Safety Services, CSO  
**Bhagya NALLAPERUMA** (bxn178), Safety Services Specialist I  
**Jeffrey NEISTADT** (jxn393), Health Physics Specialist II  
**Yelena NEYMAN** (yxt13), Health Physics Specialist II  
**Joe NIKSTENAS** (jen), EHS Assistant Director of Radiation Safety, ARSO  
**Daniel O'CONNELL** (dxo128), Fire Safety Specialist I  
**Marc RUBIN** (mdr6), EHS Executive Director  
**Mary Ellen SCOTT, PhD** (mas35), Safety Services Specialist II  
**Joshua SMITH**, (mas35), Construction, Mechanical, & Theater Safety Specialist II  
**Gayle STARLING-MELVIN** (ges83), Clerk III  
**Felice THORNTON-PORTER** (fst2), EHS Associate Director, CWRU RSO  
**Andrew YOUNG** (aby3), CWRU Biosafety Officer



### *Safety Quotes*

*Better  
dead sure  
than sure  
dead.*

*~Author  
Unknown*

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Environmental Health and Safety  
Case Western Reserve University  
(216) 368-2906/2907 \_\_\_\_\_ FAX: (216) 368-2236  
(email) [cwruehs@gmail.com](mailto:cwruehs@gmail.com)  
(website) [case.edu/ehs](http://case.edu/ehs)