

October 2021

Hello RETRO Members,

Earthquake Preparedness Day, October 21, is when we get to participate in The Great Washington ShakeOut. The third Thursday of each October is International ShakeOut Day, where millions of people from countries around the globe take part in earthquake preparedness drills.

This annual event is a great opportunity to practice the basics on how respond and protect ourselves during earthquakes, which is to “[Drop, Cover, and Hold On.](#)” The ShakeOut also encourages participants to review and update emergency preparedness plans and supplies, as well as preparing our dwelling spaces securely to minimize damage and injuries. If you don’t have a plan in place, it is never too late to start. Check out our information on business preparedness in the [RS Safety Library](#) under *Emergency Prep* to help you plan ahead.



Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning – As we head into the fall and experience cooler outdoor temperatures, our doors and windows remain closed more often than in the summer months. The use of indoor heating brings opportunity for carbon monoxide (CO) to build-up. This is a good time to inspect any equipment that runs on combustible fuels for proper operation, especially gas-powered machines such as forklifts, heaters, generators, and the like.



CO is odorless, colorless, and otherwise undetectable to the human senses, which means exposure is undetectable to people. The most common symptoms of CO poisoning are headache, dizziness, weakness, nausea, vomiting, chest pain, and confusion. High levels of CO inhalation can cause loss of consciousness, or even death. Unless suspected, CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose because the symptoms mimic other illnesses, such as the flu.

Resources:

- [RS SafetyTV](#) has several videos on this topic.
- The [RS Safety Library](#) has a Carbon Monoxide section for handouts.

Pallet Jacks – Pallet Jacks, both motorized and manually operated, are commonly used in shipping and warehousing operations. Two risks are associated with the use of pallet jacks, which are our backs and our feet.

Most pallet jacks truly aren’t intended for use on ramps and definitely not when the operator is downslope from the heavy pallets. Our feet can be crushed by pallet jacks, even when operating on flat surfaces. Most



manual pallet jack's back wheels are exposed. If attention isn't paid to foot placement, or the operator is unable to stop the inertia of a heavy load, their feet become the target.

Pulling heavy loads with a pallet jack can also cause back injuries when attempting to initiate forward movement. **Pushing is the preferred method** to get the load moving because we use our leg muscles instead of stressing the lower back muscles. Pushing also provides control of the pallet jack operation, including steering and stopping.



Resources:

- See the [RS Safety Library](#) for *Forklift and Machine Safety* handouts, videos, and other related information.
- [SAFEME](#) also features a lesson on material handling safely.

Eye Wash Stations – It takes just one accidental splash of a corrosive substance, like common household bleach, to cause serious or even permanent damage to a worker's eyes and skin. This is the



reason emergency eye washing facilities are required to supplement use of [Personal Protective Equipment](#) (PPE) in workplaces where **corrosive, toxic, or strongly irritating chemicals** are present.

The best way to determine if a chemical is corrosive, toxic, or strongly irritating, is to check the container's label and Safety Data Sheet (SDS) for before using any chemical. Do you know where the SDS are located at your workplace?

Resources:

- Additional information can be found at; [DOSH Directive link](#), [WAC link](#), or the *PPE* section in [RS Safety Library](#).
- [SAFEME](#) also has a lesson on how to use eyewash stations.

Reminding you to - Think safe. Act safe. Be safe.

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