

May 2023

Dear RETRO Members;

May is National Electrical Safety Month.

In the past decade, over **20,000 workers have been injured in the workplace due to electrical accidents**. While electrical hazards are not the leading cause of on-the-job injuries and accidents, they are disproportionately fatal and costly.

These injuries disrupt the lives of the workers and their families and impact organizational productivity.

The good news is that most on-the-job electrocutions and electrical injuries can be prevented by following a few basic steps below in the first article.



Electrical Safety — Improper use of electrical equipment can create extremely serious hazards for workers. Unique safety features are commonly built into equipment but often rendered ineffective if the equipment has been modified or misused. This can result in harm to the workers and equipment damage.



Please review the following tips on common errors related to handling electricals:

- Do not fabricate extension cords with Romex wire.
- Replace all cords or tools with worn insulation or exposed wires.
- Never modify cords or tools by removing ground prongs, face plates, or insulation.
- Ensure equipment labeled for dry, indoor use is never used outside or in damp conditions.
- Do not attach an ungrounded, two-prong adaptor plug to three-prong cords and tools.
- To ensure worker safety, only use equipment approved to meet all OSHA standards and use it per the manufacturer's instructions.
- Limit the use of extension cords when possible.

Additional electric safety content:

- Electrical safety videos on [RS SafetyTV](#)
- A short video on [extension cord use](#).
- [SAFEME Automotive](#) basic electrical lesson
- An excellent [resource library](#) regarding electrical safety from the Electrical Safety Foundation International (ESFI)

Overexertion — Overexertion injuries generally fall into two categories: *sprains* (stretching or tearing ligaments) and *strains* (stretching or tearing tendons or muscles). These types of injuries typically result from:

- Improper lifting
- Repeated bending at the waist with twisting
- Long-term bending at the waist
- Pushing/pulling, carrying
- Overreaching
- Long term poor posture (either sitting or standing)
- Sitting while absorbing vibration through the body (example, while driving a truck)



Proper posture, body mechanics and ergonomics help to decrease the likelihood overexertion injuries.

It is important that the demands of the job match the capabilities of the worker, meaning extra training may be required to perform a job safely. Look for additional prevention resources in the [RS SafetyTV](#). **SAFEME** has some lessons on [Material Handling](#) and [Lifting](#). If you have additional questions or need help, please contact us.

Hazard Chemical Communications Review — Hazard Chemical Communication (HazCom) rules were developed to ensure employers and employees are educated about inherently hazardous chemicals found in the workplace. These rules apply if a business:

- Has employees with potential for exposure to hazardous chemicals at work
- Distributes hazardous chemicals to employers
- Manufactures (produces) or import hazardous chemicals



A HazCom plan is a company-specific workplace safety policy and process of how employees should handle the chemicals they work with each day. Take some time this week to review your current HazCom plan and make necessary updates. Verify if the current plan delineates changes and if all chemicals continue to be relevant to your operation. The HazCom plan should be a subset of your [Accident Prevention Program](#).

Manufacturer Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for hazardous chemicals contain information for management and employees to review. If Safety Data Sheets pertaining to chemicals in your business are not available, contact the chemical supplier or chemical manufacturer. This information is often available on the manufacturer's website. Specifically, employees should carefully review the following sections of each chemical's Safety Data Sheet:

- Section 4 – First Aid
- Section 7 – Handling and Storage
- Section 8 - PPE

L&I states that electronic versions of SDS's are acceptable in lieu of paper copies in binders. SDS sheets must be readily accessible to all employees, regardless of format. Check with your suppliers to ensure you have the latest versions and weblinks.

- A generic HazCom template can be found [here](#) and can be modified to fit your company's needs and processes.
- [SAFEME Automotive](#) has a basic chemical safety lesson.
- RS SafetyTV provides a selection of videos [here](#).

Helping you with safety,

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