

October 2023

Hello RETRO Members,

This year's International ShakeOut Day occurs on October 19th, when millions worldwide will practice earthquake drills at work, school, and home. Also known as Earthquake Preparedness Day, Washingtonians participate in the [Great Washington ShakeOut](#).

This annual event is an excellent opportunity to practice how to respond and protect ourselves during earthquakes: "[Drop, Cover, and Hold On](#)." ShakeOut also encourages participants to review and update emergency preparedness plans and supplies and prepare our work and home 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.



Carbon Monoxide (CO) Poisoning – As we head into the fall and experience cooler outdoor temperatures, our doors and windows remain closed more often. Using indoor heating brings opportunities for carbon monoxide (CO) to build up. It is an excellent time to inspect any equipment that runs on combustible fuels for proper operation, especially gas-powered machines such as forklifts, heaters, generators, etc.



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. CO poisoning can be difficult to diagnose unless suspected 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 are not intended for ramps or when the operator is downslope from the heavy pallets. Pallet jacks can crush our feet, 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 cannot 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 you use large leg muscles instead of stressing the smaller 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 ordinary household chemical **bleach**, to cause severe or even permanent damage to a worker's eyes and skin. This is why emergency eye-washing facilities are required to supplement the use of [Personal Protective Equipment](#) (PPE) in workplaces where **corrosive, toxic, or strongly irritating chemicals** are present. The best way to determine this is to check the container's label and Safety Data Sheet (SDS) before using any chemical. Do you know where the SDSs are located at your workplace?



Resources:

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

This is a reminder to - Think safe. Act safe. Be safe.

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