



Eye safety

The majority of job-related eye injuries result from small particles or objects striking or abrading¹ the eye. Examples include metal slivers,² wood chips, dust, and cement chips that are ejected³ by tools, or fall from above a worker. Some of these objects, such as nails, staples, or slivers of wood or metal penetrate the eyeball and result in a permanent loss of vision. Large objects may also strike the eye/face, or a worker may run into an object causing blunt⁴ force trauma to the eyeball or eye socket. Chemical burns to one or both eyes from splashes of industrial chemicals or cleaning products are common. Thermal burns to the eye occur as well. Among welders, their assistants, and nearby workers, UV radiation burns (welder's flash) routinely damage workers' eyes and surrounding tissue.

In addition to common eye injuries, health care workers, laboratory staff, janitorial workers,⁵ animal handlers, and other workers may be at risk of acquiring infectious diseases via ocular exposure. Infectious diseases can be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eye as a result of direct exposure (e.g., blood splashes, respiratory droplets generated during coughing or suctioning) or from touching the eyes with contaminated fingers or other objects. The infections may result in relatively minor conjunctivitis or reddening/soreness⁶ of the eye or in a life threatening disease such as HIV, B virus, or possibly even avian influenza.



Engineering controls should be used to reduce eye injuries and to protect against ocular infection exposures. Personal protective eyewear, such as goggles, face shields, safety glasses, or full face respirators must also be used when an eye hazard exists. The eye protection chosen for specific work situations depends upon the nature and extent of the hazard, the circumstances of exposure, other protective equipment used, and personal vision needs.

(Adapted from www.cdc.gov)

GLOSSARY

- 1 making weary through constant irritation
- 2 splinters
- 3 expelled
- 4 abrupt
- 5 people who attend to the maintenance or cleaning of a building
- 6 pain

ACTIVITIES

- 1 Talk about eye safety in working environments and how to prevent eye injuries.
- 2 Read the text again and find the English equivalents of the following Italian words and expressions.
 - 1 Schegge di legno
 - 2 Chiodi
 - 3 Bulbo oculare
 - 4 Saldatori
 - 5 Tessuto
 - 6 Malattie infettive
 - 7 Esposizione diretta
 - 8 Occhiali di protezione