Beware Burn Hazards

The first step to protection

Because there are so many potential burn hazards on the job, you need to be alert to their presence. Take precautions to prevent fires and contact with heat when you encounter any of the following burn hazards:

- **Flammable liquids**, such as oil, solvents, and many chemicals, often have invisible vapors that move through the air quickly. Put them together with an ignition source—even a spark—and you could have a fire.

- **Smoking** is a hazard because lit cigarettes or matches can be an ignition source for paper, flammable liquids, or almost anything that’s capable of burning.

- **Welding and cutting operations** create flames and sparks, so they’re a potential cause of burns and fires.

- **Hot machines and processes** are another potential burn hazard.

- **Space heaters** can, if not used properly, cause fires—and, therefore, burns.

- **Very hot water** is yet another burn hazard.

Also be aware of electrical hazards that could burn you directly or cause electrical fires. These hazards include:

- **Wiring with frayed or worn insulation**
- **Overloaded circuits, fuses, motors, or outlets**
- **Loose ground connections**
- **Lights or machinery that come in contact with combustible materials**
- **Direct contact with power lines or other live wires**

Know when the chemicals you use are a potential burn hazard by using your basic chemical information tools:

- **Container labels**
- **Material safety data sheets**

If they tell you a substance can catch fire under certain circumstances or that it can burn your skin on contact, you know you have to take precautions. See other stories on preventing fires and burns elsewhere in this issue.
Short Days, Long Month

Let the sun shine in

February may be the shortest month of the year, but short days and lack of light may make it seem endless. If the lack of light has you down, try these tips to brighten your workdays.

❖ Get as much sunlight as you can. Try to get outdoors for an hour a day. If you can, walk before work. At work, use lunch and break times to walk outdoors.

❖ Let the light in. Throw open your curtains and raise your blinds. If you can, work near a window.

❖ Brighten up your cubicle with lamps.

❖ Take your annual vacation during the winter months in a sunny climate, if possible.

❖ Stay away from sugars and starches. Eat a low-fat, well-balanced diet with lots of vegetables and fruits.

❖ Limit caffeine. Take an herbal tea break instead.

❖ Keep active. Exercise releases endorphins, which are natural mood lifters. Join an exercise or yoga class at work.

❖ Stay social. Resist the impulse to hibernate. Take that co-worker up on the offer to eat lunch together.

Keep your spirits—and your productivity—high by letting the sun shine in all month long. Spring will be here soon!

Cold Quiz

Stay safe outside this winter

1. The body parts most at risk for frostbite are:
   a. The nose, ears, cheeks, fingers, and toes   b. The legs   c. The stomach

2. Hypothermia occurs when your body temperature gets dangerously low.
   a. True   b. False

3. The risks of hypothermia increase when it’s windy and you’re:
   a. Exhausted or wearing wet clothes
   b. Dressed too heavily
   c. Drinking warm beverages

4. Clothing will best protect against frostbite and hypothermia if it’s:
   a. Tight   b. Loose and layered   c. Light-colored

5. When you’re going to work in cold conditions, cover your head.
   a. True   b. False

6. If you get wet or feel uncomfortably chilled when working in cold:
   a. Ignore it   b. Take a break in a warm place   c. Drink hot coffee with brandy

7. Symptoms of frostbite include:
   a. Red eyes
   b. Skin that’s pink, then blue
   c. Skin that’s glossy white or grayish yellow

ANSWERS

1. a. 2. a. True. 3. a. 4. b. 5. a. True. 6. b. 7. c.