

# KEEPIN' IT S.A.F.E.

Educating our employees on Safety Awareness and keeping safety our First Engagement on the job



A Safety Awareness/First Engagement  
Newsletter from Northwest Tank



# Keep Your “Eye” On The Prize: Protect Your Vision

## True PPE Stories

### An Eye Saved

When it comes to workplace safety, words of caution from the experienced follow us into adulthood, for good reason. An employee of a contract safety glasses program began warning his 18-year-old son, who installs siding on houses, to wear safety glasses while working. After much discussion, the son finally began wearing safety glasses after he started getting aluminum dust in his eyes. A week later, he began using an air-powered staple gun to apply the siding. During that first week, he fired a staple that hit a metal plate behind the siding, ricocheting back to his face. One leg of the heavy-duty staple hit the son's safety glasses' lens with such force that the frames cracked, and he received bruising on his eyebrow and cheekbone. An eye saved and the willingness to take PPE seriously sets an example for others to follow.

### Permanent Blindness

Edward Bernacki, a professor of medicine and chair of a joint committee on health, safety, and the environment at Johns Hopkins University, tells each trimester's new students a story about eye safety. Bernacki explains that a graduate student working in the lab chose not to wear eye

protection. Following a lab explosion, he suffered permanent blindness and was unable to work in the lab again. "There are only so many things in life you can control, but [wearing eye protection] you can. Just taking that one extra step to wear PPE can make a major difference in your life," Bernacki explains.



## Tragedy Inspires Prevention

Barry Weatherall worked for a plumbing and heating company in Alberta, Canada, more than 15 years ago. Today, he spends his time telling thousands of industrial workers across Canada how he lost his eyesight. In the hopes of inspiring change in the common "it won't happen to me" attitude, he leads 90-minute interactive workshops on eye safety in the workplace.

Weatherall's life-altering story starts when he was on the job and received incorrect information from a chemical company about the risk involved in neutralizing sulfuric acid with another chemical called caustic soda bead. Weatherall was wearing personal protective equipment, including safety glasses, a face mask, and gloves while performing his work. After he finished neutralizing the chemicals and believed that there was no longer a risk of explosion, he left to remove his PPE. His life changed forever when he went back to check on the chemicals without putting his PPE back on. A chemical explosion occurred which left Weatherall permanently blind.

Eye contact with chemicals make up 20 percent of eye injuries. Flying particles, a combination of flying or falling objects or sparks striking the eye, account for 70 percent of total injuries. *"Companies can train people until they're blue in the face, but once the worker is on the job site by himself, it's up to that worker to take the time to be safe,"* Weatherall said. His program's intention is to provide workers with an intense and entirely new perspective on eye safety.

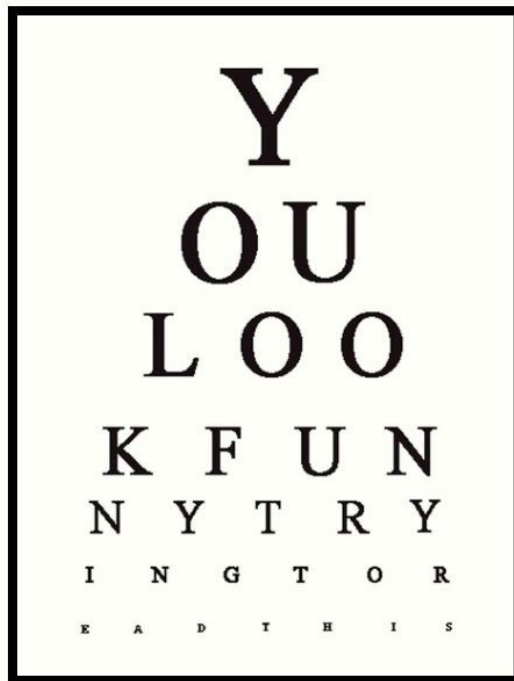


OSHA estimates that **90 percent of eye injuries can be prevented** through the use of proper protective eyewear.

Prevent Blindness America stresses that eye safety doesn't end with PPE. Office workers are not immune to eye problems and injuries. Most office workers' eye issues stem from computer vision syndrome, or dry eye syndrome.

PBA recommends the following for office workers' eye injury prevention:

- Take frequent breaks to readjust your eyes.
- Reposition the computer screen so it's at eye level.
- Drink plenty of water and keep over-the-counter drops on hand for proper hydration.
- Have your eyes examined once a year to evaluate any unforeseen eye injuries or conditions.



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