



# SAFETY MATTERS

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HAMILTON COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FACILITIES

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## news & notes

### Problem-Solving Techniques

*Get creative*

- **Brainstorm.** Get a group together and generate as many possible solutions as you can. Then pick the best one.
- **Break big problems down.** Solve each part.
- **Use a visual approach.** Use diagrams, charts, etc.
- **Find analogies.** Make connections to other problems and solutions.
- **Reverse the problem.** By flipping the problem upside down, you may be able to get a different perspective and perhaps come up with some different solutions.
- **Ask “why” five times.** This is a method invented by the Japanese to solve tough problems on the job. Each time you ask why a problem is occurring, you dig deeper and deeper until you get to the root of the problem.
- **Use opposite thinking.** For example, say you lose your keys in the grass outside your house one night. Logic might say to wait for morning to look in daylight. But opposite thinking would tell you to look now, in the dark. Why? Because in the dark you can use a flashlight to spot shiny keys.
- **Start with a solution.** Imagine the problem is solved. How would things work? This technique can sometimes lead you back to the root cause.
- **Sleep on it.** Let your subconscious mind work on the problem before applying logic.

## Avoiding Workplace Violence

*Personal Security Tips to Improve Your Personal Safety*

Workplace violence can unfortunately happen at any time. However, there are some steps you can take to improve your personal security. You should make personal security a habit when you are coming and going from the facility or traveling on business. Follow these precautions:

- Keep vehicle doors locked—both while driving and whenever you leave the vehicle.
- If you are walking, choose busy, well-lit areas.
- Walk like you know where you’re going. Act comfortable with and familiar in your surroundings.
- Make friendly eye contact with people near you.
- Check the personal space around you to be alert for muggers or others who could threaten your safety.
- If you feel that your personal space is being invaded or that you are being followed, go into a well-lit, busy area or location like a store.
- Carry only the amount of money you need.
- Divide any valuables you’re carrying into different pockets, money pouches, etc.
- Carry visible items, such as purses, briefcases, or computers, close to your body to deter robbers from snatching and running.
- Finally, check your vehicle before entering it. Make sure no one is hiding under or inside it.

You also need to be able to protect yourself if you are confronted by a violent person. Remember these simple tips:

- In case of a mugging or theft where personal property is at stake and the assailant does not intend to do physical harm, don’t resist. Give over your valuables and let the person go.
- However, in cases of physical assault or kidnapping, try to fight the assailant off or scream for help.
- Immediately report the incident to the proper authorities. Answer questions from investigators as thoroughly as possible.
- If you’re physically injured, don’t clean up or change clothes until you’ve had a medical examination.
- Finally, deal with your emotional as well as physical well-being after the incident. Don’t ignore or stifle stressful or fearful feelings associated with the event. Avail yourself of professional assistance if you feel the need.

## Training Points to Prevent Falls

### To prevent falls from ladders:

- Choose the right ladder for the job.
- Maintain three points of contact.
- Secure the ladder.
- Always face the ladder.
- Don't stand on top or on the top step of a stepladder.
- Don't overreach.
- Don't place the ladder on an unlevel footing.

### To prevent falls from scaffolds:

- Use fully planked scaffolds.
- Ensure proper access to scaffold.
- Plumb and level.
- Complete ALL guardrails.
- Ensure stable footing.
- Inspect before use (by competent person).
- Don't stand on guardrails.
- Don't use a ladder on top of a scaffold.
- Don't climb on the cross-braces.

### To prevent falls from roofs:

- Use guardrails or lifelines.
- Wear a harness and always stay connected where required.
- Make sure your harness fits.
- Inspect all fall protection equipment before use.
- Guard or cover all holes, openings, and skylights.
- Don't disconnect from lifeline.
- Don't work around unprotected openings or skylights.
- Don't use defective equipment.

## Fall Protection in General Industry

Falls are among the most common causes of serious work-related injuries and deaths. Employers must take measures in their workplaces to prevent employees from falling off overhead platforms, elevated work stations, roofs, or into holes in the floor and walls.

### To prevent employees from being injured from falls, employers must:

- Guard every floor hole into which a worker can accidentally walk by use of a railing and toeboard or a floor hole cover.
- Provide a guardrail and toeboard around every open-sided platform, floor or runway that is 4 feet or higher off the ground or next level.
- Regardless of height, if a worker can fall into or onto dangerous machines or equipment (such as a vat of acid or a conveyor belt), employers must provide guardrails and toeboards to prevent workers from falling and getting injured.
- Other means of fall protection that may be required on certain jobs include safety harness and line, safety nets, stair railings and handrails.



### OSHA requires employers to:

In general, OSHA requires some form of fall protection equipment for any walking or working surface that is elevated 4 feet or more. Such fall protection equipment generally refers to guard rails (including mid-rails and toe boards) or other fixed barriers that physically prevent an employee from falling. Fall protection can also refer to personal fall arrest systems, such as harnesses and lanyard, which will stop an employee from falling more than a specified distance. OSHA also requires employers to:

- Provide working conditions that are free of known dangers.
- Keep floors in work areas in a clean and sanitary condition.
- Select and provide required personal protective equipment at no cost to workers.
- Train workers about job hazards in a language that they can understand.

## news & notes

### Defensive Driving Quiz

*Test what you know*

1. Defensive driving means:
  - a. Not letting other drivers push you around
  - b. Using the driving techniques of race car drivers
  - c. Looking out for yourself and other drivers on the road
2. If it looks like you're going to be in a head-on collision:
  - a. Slow down and swerve to avoid it.
  - b. Turn broadside to the oncoming car.
  - c. Throw your hands up in front of your face to protect your head.
3. When passing on a two-lane road:
  - a. Check to see if any traffic is coming toward you.
  - b. Check to see if anyone behind you is moving out to pass.
  - c. Both "a" and "b"
4. If your car is equipped with air bags, the law says:
  - a. You shouldn't wear a seat belt.
  - b. You must still wear a seat belt.
  - c. Wearing a seat belt is optional.
5. Turn on your headlights:
  - a. At sunset
  - b. At least one-half hour after sunset
  - c. At least one-half hour before sunset

### ANSWERS

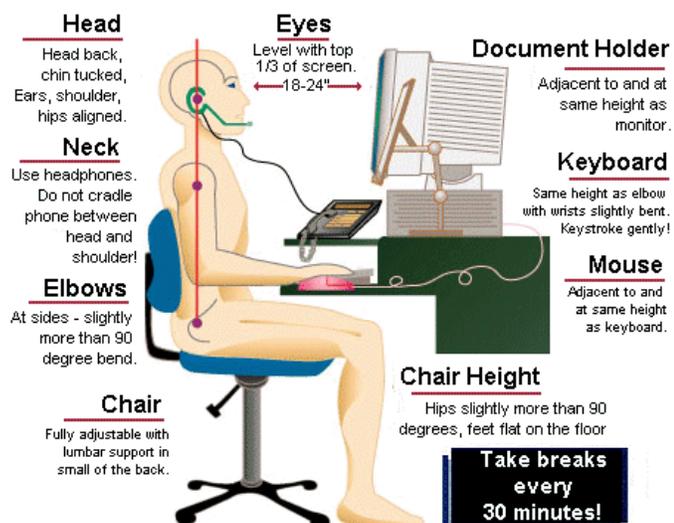
1. c, 2. a, 3. c, 4. b, 5. c

## Computer Workstation Ergonomic Checklist

Have you ever experienced neck, back, shoulder or arm pain and you are not quite sure what caused it? You leave on Friday in pain and return Monday feeling better; but by the middle of the week you are in pain again? Oftentimes we relate these aches and pains to overexertion. But, many times these aches and pains can also be caused by poor posture and poor body mechanics.

For those of you who spend many hours in front of a computer during the course of the workweek, a poorly designed or poorly situated workstation can result in poor posture. Repeated stress from poor posture to your back, shoulders, neck and arms over a period of time can result in a musculoskeletal disorder. Use the attached checklist to evaluate your computer work area to help make positive improvements that can improve your posture when you work:

- ✓ Chair must be comfortable and adjustable
- ✓ Chair should be on rollers to allow for proper positioning, and re-positioning
- ✓ Chair should not have arms, or should have arms that fold down
- ✓ Computer monitor should be right in front of chair, not to the side
- ✓ Keyboard should be positioned so that arms are level when typing
- ✓ Monitor should be large (a flat screen monitor is preferred over a CRT)
- ✓ Monitor should not have glare - install curtains or a glare screen if necessary
- ✓ Arm should not rest on a sharp corner or edge of desk
- ✓ Lighting should be plentiful, sunlight and florescent light is preferred over incandescent
- ✓ Work area should not be cluttered
- ✓ A foot rest should be used by persons whose legs do not adequately reach the ground
- ✓ Noise should be kept to a minimum
- ✓ An ergonomically designed keyboard and mouse should be considered
- ✓ Use a phone headset to free up hands and prevent cradling the phone with the neck



## May Is National Physical Fitness & Sports Month

Here are five exercise excuses along with possible solutions from the Weight-control Information Network (WIN), an information service of the National Institutes of Health:

### **I don't have time.**

- Give exercise the same priority you give brushing your teeth.
- Schedule active chores every day.
- Make family time active with walks, ball games, and bike rides.

### **I'm too tired at the end of the day.**

- Incorporate exercise into your day by taking the stairs.
- Find another time to exercise.

### **It's boring.**

- Find activities you like.
- Make it social. Plan activities with friends.

### **It's expensive.**

- Choose free exercise, such as gardening or walking.
- Look for discounts, such as gym membership specials.

### **No one I know exercises.**

- Lead by example.

Consult with your health professional before beginning an exercise program.

### Contact us:

**Rodney Lofland, CSP**  
Safety & Security Manager  
(513) 946-5059  
rlofland@cms.hamilton-co.org

**Steve Sears**  
Safety & Security Specialist  
(513) 946-5098  
ssears@cms.hamilton-co.org

## LOTO Q&A

*Review lockout/tagout precautions*



### **When should you use lockout/tagout (LOTO)?**

Use LOTO whenever you have to put yourself in a dangerous position involving machinery. Make sure the equipment can't start up, cycle, or move before you:

- Put your hands, arms, or upper body into the point of operation;
- Put your body under an elevated piece of equipment that could fall; *or*
- Put yourself in the path of something that could move unexpectedly.

### **Where are the energy sources?**

Electricity is an obvious energy source. Others include mechanical, hydraulic, pneumatic, chemical, and thermal energy sources. Each potentially hazardous energy source must be identified in the lockout procedure for each piece of equipment.

### **How do I control these energy sources?**

You must neutralize each energy source associated with a process or piece of equipment by shutting the power off and locking the switch. It could also include securing them so they cannot move by blocking, or bleeding off air and/or hydraulic pressure.

### **Who needs to know?**

All persons who operate the equipment, work nearby, or work near the power source for the equipment should be informed of the lockout. That way, they will not interfere by bypassing your lockout, trying to operate the equipment, or doing anything else that could endanger you.

## Commitment to Safe Operations

The Hamilton County Department of Facilities (HCDF) is committed to protecting and promoting the health, safety, and well being of our employees by providing a safe and healthful workplace. We consider health and safety to be of primary importance in all aspects of employment.

HCDF seeks to promote a culture where safety is valued and considered an essential part of our operations. Our commitment to a safety culture seeks the protection of our employees, County property, and the safety of the public. We believe the goal of "Zero Injuries" can be achieved through safety awareness, safe standard operating procedures, employee involvement, and training to develop safety-first attitudes.

Safety is a team effort. All HCDF employees are expected to work safely within our work environment and comply with the requirements of the Safety & Health Program. Employees must take responsibility for safety and must also advise management of hazardous conditions and unsafe work practices so that preventive and corrective actions may be taken.

HCDF relies on the personal commitment of our employees to our Safety & Health Program. If we all work together, we can achieve our collective goal of an accident and injury-free workplace.

**Ralph Linne**  
Director of County Facilities