

# Safety Tips from Express



## Safety Tips

Express Personnel Services wants to help your organization be aware of common human resource issues and educate you on how to institute and follow safety procedures at work. For more information on safety issues or to find out how Express can help solve your human resource challenges, contact Express Personnel today.

## Heat Exhaustion

In warmer temperatures, it is important that employers be aware that extreme heat can be dangerous for employees working both inside and outside. Heat exhaustion and stroke can be fatal, so it is imperative to recognize the warning signs and take immediate action. Signs of heat exhaustion or stroke include dizziness, weakness and nausea; dry, pale skin (no perspiration); hot, red skin; and mood changes.

To protect your employees this summer, OSHA suggests that employers do the following:

- Train workers to recognize and treat the signs of heat stress
- Have employees work in pairs
- Help workers adjust to the heat by assigning lighter workloads and longer rest periods for the first five to seven days of intense heat
- Encourage workers to drink plenty of water
- Encourage workers to wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing
- Alternate work and rest periods, with rest periods in a cooler area
- Monitor indoor/outdoor temperatures, humidity, and workers' responses to heat at least hourly

## Driver Safety

Motor vehicle accidents are a major cause of on-the-job employee deaths and injuries, and can create huge liability and workers' comp costs for employers. The first step in controlling the risks associated with on-the-job traffic accidents is to create policies requiring employees to observe safe driving practices and set minimum qualifications for employees who will be operating motor vehicles. Employers should never allow an employee to drive a vehicle if they do not have the appropriate license, and it is always a good idea to verify an employee's driving record to protect yourself from liability. If you utilize commercial drivers (anyone who drives a vehicle with a weight rating of at least 26,001 pounds, a vehicle designed to transport at least 16 passengers or is transporting hazardous materials), make sure you comply with applicable governmental requirements.



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## Chemical Safety and Hazard Communication

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) hazard communication policy requires employers to inform employees of the potential hazards associated with exposure to chemicals used or stored in the workplace. For employers to ensure they have taken the basic steps necessary to comply with these OSHA requirements, they should obtain a copy of the OSHA requirements so they have an understanding of their obligations, prepare an inventory of hazardous chemicals present in the workplace, make certain that the chemical containers are properly labeled, obtain a material safety data sheet for each chemical, and prepare a written hazard communication program. By taking these basic steps, employers will better protect their employees and will ensure compliance with OSHA regulations.

U.S. - Contact [www.OSHA.gov](http://www.OSHA.gov) for more information.

Canada - Contact [www.CCOHS.ca](http://www.CCOHS.ca) for more information.

## Repetitive Stress Injuries

Many workers' compensation claims are a result of repetitive stress injuries. These types of injuries can be minimized or avoided by simply making minor changes to the workplace such as adjusting the height of a workstation or making adjustments to chairs, providing headsets, installing footrests, provide padding for hard floors, allowing employees to change tasks every so often, or simply having employees use different tools.

You can certainly hire outside consultants to provide ergonomic solutions for a fee, but we recommend you start by talking to your employees and asking them what activities, if any, cause problems. They will most likely have simple and inexpensive suggestions for improvement. By engaging your employees in this manner, you can minimize your exposure to costly workers' compensation claims.



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