

## Eye Injury Prevention Month

July has been officially recognized as Eye Injury Prevention Month by the US Department of Health and Human Services. For this reason, the DHHS is focusing on using eye protection in various environments, namely the workplace.



### Eye and Face Protection

It is important to wear Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) every time that an exposure to blood or body fluid, chemical, airborne, or radioactive material is possible, **not just when it is expected**. This is a conservative approach (if it sounds like Standard Precautions, you're right), but you can never be sure when accidental exposure will occur. In fact, nearly three out of every five eye injury victims were not wearing eye protection at the time of the accident.

All people who may be in eye/face hazard areas must wear protective gear. This includes employees, visitors, contractors, or those passing through an identified area. Some specifics:

- Goggles and masks are adequate face protection from blood and body fluids, in many cases.
- Goggles and face shields shall be used when there is a hazard from chemical splash.
- Face shields shall only be worn over primary eye protection (safety glasses or goggles).
- Side protectors, on ANSI-approved safety glasses, are required with flying object hazards.



- Contact lenses are **not** adequate eye protection, and may result in additional irritation when worn in contaminated atmospheres.
- For employees who wear glasses, eye protectors shall either incorporate the prescription in the design or fit properly over the glasses.
- Appropriate filter lenses shall be used to protect against light radiation. Tinted/shaded lenses are not filter lenses unless they are marked or identified as such.



Employees must understand how/when to properly use PPE. Those injured while not wearing protective eyewear most often have said they did not know it was required. OHSU provides eye protection at no cost to employees, and we train employees on when and what PPE is required.

Eye and face protection is available in a variety of different sizes and styles. The number one objection to wearing PPE is the issue of comfort and fit, so training employees on how to wear it can increase the protective value of PPE.

Every piece of PPE has limitations as to how effective it is at preventing exposures. For example, eye protection may still allow liquids, aerosols, and gases to pass around the edges. Employees need to understand these limitations.

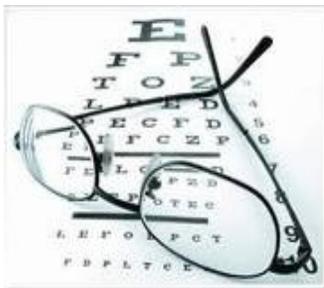
If you have any questions about PPE selection, use, and training, or for information about different product styles, ask your Manager, or call Environmental Health and Safety at 503-494-7795. ■

*Did you know...*  
Your eyes are the most complex organs  
you possess except for your brain?

**Make it Personal:**

# Eye Health at Work

The American Optometric Association notes that up to 75 percent of all computer users have had eye and vision problems related to computer use at work. Eyestrain and resulting headaches have been found to reduce accuracy and productivity.



As OHSU relies more on computers every day, you must remember to take care of your eyes. While everyone is different, the following suggestions can help maximize your comfort at work:

**Prescription lenses** - Even if you don't usually use glasses at home, a pair for computing can reduce vision stress. These can be quite inexpensive, and OHSU benefits include vision services.



**Glasses that work for the job** - Different prescriptions may be needed for specific types of work, even for those who already require and wear prescription lenses. Some people wear bifocal or progressive lenses to address this, but these don't always work well with computer screens due to a lower focal path.

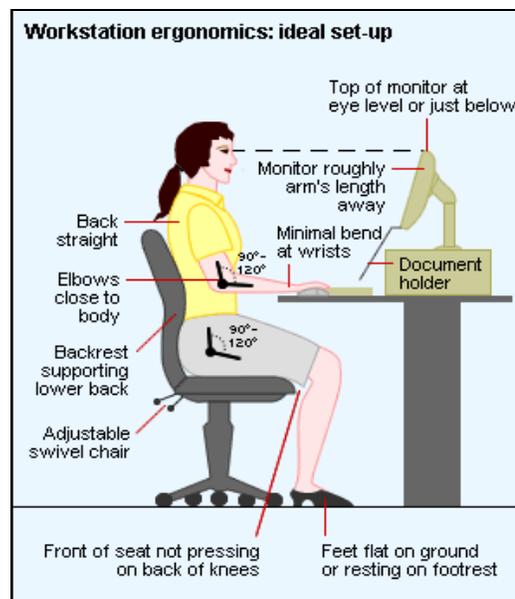
**Take your breaks** - These are provided for you to get up and away from your work. You should at least do something different for a while to allow your eyes to rest.



**Reduce room lighting** - Glare from even normal office light levels and windows can contribute to eye strain. Consider turning on only half the lights in an area to see what a difference this can make. Never turn on under-

cabinet lighting behind your computer monitor. Reposition computer monitors at right angles to light sources to minimize glare.

**Use your document holder** - Adjustable document holders should ideally hold reference materials between the monitor and the keyboard, in line with both. Positions to the side can sometimes cause neck pain. Materials should be at the same distance from the eyes as the screen.



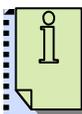
**Adjust your work area** - Maximize your comfort and productivity by ensuring the right adjustments of your chair, desk height, keyboard, mouse, telephone, and other frequently-used items. If you have adjustable office equipment, give yourself permission to adjust it! If you need help, talk with your supervisor or seek ergonomic advice that is available here: <http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/index.cfm>.

**Clean your screen -**

Computer screens can get smudged and dirty, and eyes sometimes get distracted by this dirt. Wipe your screen clean by using window cleaner or special alcohol-based screen wipes to keep your view clear.



**Protection** - Wear eye protection when your job exposes you to things that might damage your eyes (particles, chemicals, body fluids, etc.) ■



For a current issue of SafetyNews online, and for archives, visit:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetynews.cfm>

The SafetyTeam page is available at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetyteam.cfm>

These pages are updated regularly. If there are OHSU resources you'd like to see linked, please send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at: [safeteam@ohsu.edu](mailto:safeteam@ohsu.edu)

### May we introduce you to...

#### Yet Another New Face on the Safety Committee

#### Kim Gibson

As OHSU's new Emergency Management Administrator, Kim has accumulated over 13 years of experience in Emergency Management, encompassing, Law Enforcement, Fire and HealthCare. He holds numerous Emergency Management certifications and is applying for the "Certified Emergency Management" certification. He has taught at both the under graduate and graduate levels in both the on-line and traditional class room environment for criminal justice, accounting and emergency management programs and has been an advisor to several universities, creating emergency management policies and procedures.



He is a 27-year veteran of law enforcement, having retired from the Reno Police Department as a Commander, as well, as a former Chief of Police for a small town in Southern Oregon. He spent six years as the Director of Security & Parking Services and Emergency Management for Peace Health Oregon Region.

Kim holds a Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice with a concentration in Community Policing and Problem

Questions? Ask Environmental Health & Radiation Safety:

**503-494-7795**



Solving, and Ethics in Policing from the University of Nevada, Reno, as well as a Master's Degree in Criminal Justice from Boston University, Boston, Massachusetts. He is currently working towards the completion of his second Masters degree.

Kim has been married to his wife Suzie for 23 years and they have twin 12 yr old sons Kobe and Chase. Kim is an avid Falconer and martial artist, and he and his family are hoping to complete his move to OHSU with their move from Salem to the Portland Metro area by the end of the year.

Welcome Kim. ■



### Construction Safety Tips for Drivers

- The **number one, most important action** drivers can take is to pay complete attention to the driving task, especially in the transition zone before the work area. An inattentive driver is the most common cause for work zone crashes.
- Orange is Your Clue! Pay attention when you see orange signs, barrels, cones, and barricades. Obey all speed signs, because some may be reduced for your safety to avoid a serious crash.
- Double your following distance. Don't tailgate.
- Get in the correct lane *well in advance*.
- Be aware and don't follow construction vehicles as they travel into and out of the work areas.
- Expect delays — Plan for them and leave early so you can drive safely through the work zone.
- Patience is vital! Be as courteous to other drivers as you'd like them to be to you.
- Avoid work zones when you can by using an alternate route.