



# Toolbox Talk

July 2022



## Eye Injuries and Prevention

Our eyes are one of our greatest assets. They give us the ability to see the world around us. If we do not protect our eyes from injuries while at work, we could easily lose that ability. It only takes a small accident to cause irreparable damage to your eyes.

ACC receives more than 9,000 claims for workplace eye injuries each year. Many of those injured are left with longterm impaired vision and some are blinded.

Workplace eye injuries cost New Zealand more than \$3 million every year – a figure which does not take into account lost productivity.

Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, employers are required to provide appropriate personal protective equipment, such as eye protection, where there is a risk of eye injury. They must also ensure workers are trained in when and how to use their eye protection, as well as how to maintain it. Workers must wear eye protection if required to by their employer.

It is important to eliminate hazards that could pose a danger to our eyes at work. It is not possible to avoid all worksite hazards, so proper eye protection is vital.

# Common hazards that cause **eye injuries** on the job

- Flying dust
- Flying debris
- Chemicals
- Blunt trauma to the eye
- Burns due to UV exposure, such as welder's flash



## When to wear **eye protection**

- Always assess the risk of work to determine if eye protection is necessary – can the risk be eliminated using other controls? What is the severity of the risk and the potential eye damage?
- Even if not carrying out a task with an obvious eye hazard, you may be at risk from others nearby. Always have your eye protection with you and if in doubt – wear it.
- Remember to protect others from your welding work and never watch any welding processes unless wearing suitable eye protection. Ensure there is a protective barrier in place to protect other employees in the area from UV exposure.
- Think about whether the work requires high impact protection.
- Some work will require full face shield protection.
- Eliminate or lessen the chance of getting something into your eye by avoiding being in the line of fire. Always upwind of debris and protect yourself from dust blowing around the work area.
- Always wear approved safety glasses, face shield, or goggles when needed. The type of PPE needed will depend on the work task. Three out of every five victims of eye injuries on the job were not wearing any eye protection.
- Always wear eye protection when compressed air, hazardous substances, cartridge fired tools, power tools, power washers, and hand tools such as chisels are in use.
- If you get something in your eye do not rub or scratch it. Rubbing the eye can cause scratching of the cornea resulting in injury. Find an eyewash station or saline bottle and rinse out the foreign matter.
- If you get any chemicals in your eyes, remove contact lenses if you are wearing them, and immediately rinse your eyes out.





## Maintenance and use

- Ensure eye protection provided fits comfortably and is suitable for the job.
- Look after any eye protection provided – keep it clean and store it in a soft case.
- Report and replace any lost, damaged, or unserviceable eye protection.
- Make sure the eye protection fully covers the eyes.
- If needed, invest in prescription eye protection.



## What should you do if you do receive an eye injury?

- Seek medical assistance if you get something in your eye or receive any sort of eye injury. Avoid rubbing the eye, as this can make it worse. Minor irritations can be treated by flushing the eye with sterile water (from a first aid kit).
- Record your injury in Vault and at your host company.
- Ensure your supervisor is aware of the injury.

# Choosing the right eye protection

## Safety Glasses with Side Shields:

Provide protection against airborne particles and flying projectiles. Safety glasses are made of impact resistant material and many are available with UV protection &/or tinted lenses.



## Prescription Safety Glasses:

Standard prescription glasses are not made to protect you from eye hazards. To be protected, wear safety glasses that fit over top of your prescription (left) or have Prescription Safety Glasses made for you (right).



## Weld Masks, Dark Shields, and Torch Glasses:

Protect the eyes and face from flying sparks, flash burns, and the intense light that occur during welding, torching and brazing operations. It is important to match the type and tint of the shade to the welding performed.



## Face Shields:

Protect the face from grinding debris, flying projectiles, radiant heat and chemical splashes. Face shields should be used in conjunction with eye protection to be fully protected.



## Things to consider

- What are some hazards you have onsite that can injure your eyes?
- How can you protect yourself from those hazards?
- What job tasks require you to wear a face shield onsite? What about goggles?
- What behaviours cause a person not to wear required PPE?
- How do you get eye and face protection?
- When is eye and face protection required?



## Remember **STAAR** = Good Work Practices **Stop Think Assess Act Review**

### Health and safety reps

Your Health and Safety (H&S) Reps are here to represent and assist you (apprentices) in all health and safety matters. If you would like to talk to an H&S Rep or have any H&S issues, feel free to contact any one of them. They will be more than happy to help.

#### Auckland

Alan Bates – 022 015 5671

Oliver Hames – 021 254 8224

#### Waikato

Elizabeth Humberstone – 027 806 8879

Kylie Mason – 027 431 5877

### May/June health and safety summary

Remember to keep reporting accidents and incidents so we can all learn from them.

It's great to see near misses being reported and we encourage you to keep reporting these so we can prevent an actual injury happening.

- S** Stop
- T** Think
- A** Assess
- A** Act
- R** Review

Lost time injuries	3
First aid injuries	4
No injury	1
Medical treatment injuries	3
Near miss	1
Non work injuries	5
Restricted work injuries	0
Pain/discomfort	0
<b>Total Incident</b>	<b>17</b>

# Incidents

<b>First aid injury</b>	Bruise to upper leg
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Slip, trip, fall
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice slipped downstairs causing a bruise
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Ensure 3 points of contact when walking up or down stairs

<b>Lost time injury</b>	Internal derangement of knee
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Hitting object with part of the body
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was working on a ladder and hit their knee on a rung. Continued working and aggravated the kneecap
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to all staff to be aware and take time completing tasks

<b>Medical treatment injury</b>	Cut to leg
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Slip, trip, fall (on same level)
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was marking out base plates for a column install on a development site. They went to stand up and slipped on the muddy ground causing them to fall. As they fell their right calf landed on top of an exposed waratah that wasn't capped off causing a deep cut that required stitches
<b>Corrective actions</b>	The construction company immediately assessed all waratahs onsite and capped any that had caps missing. Constantly be aware of surroundings and hazardous/risky areas. Always assume people haven't done what was expected and prepare for the worst. This can limit the risk to yourself and others by taking action before needed.

<b>Lost time injury</b>	Cut to finger
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Manual handling
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was lifting an HVAC unit and cut finger on sharp edge
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Communicated to apprentice to consider wearing gloves when moving and handling HVAC units

<b>Medical treatment injury</b>	Metal in eye
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Foreign body
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was grinding slots with a die grinder. A small piece of steel went under safety glasses and into eye
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to all staff to be aware and take time completing tasks. Communicate to the apprentice the importance of wearing double eye protection and ensuring glasses fit against the face (no gaps).

<b>First aid injury</b>	Burn to finger
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Contact or exposure to heat and cold
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was tig welding and accidentally stabbed themselves in the hand (through gloves) with hot tungsten
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to all staff to be aware and take time completing tasks

# Incidents

<b>Lost time injury</b>	Fracture to finger
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Non-powered hand tools/equipment ( e.g. stanley knife)
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was building shelves to put hardware on to clean up floor space, and while hammering 2 pieces of wood together, they hit their middle finger with the hammer, breaking the bone on the tip of their finger
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to apprentice to be aware of hand position and take time completing tasks. Consider using a tool to hold the nail rather than fingers

<b>Medical treatment injury</b>	Cut to head
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Hitting object with part of the body
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was checking the belts on an AHU which was located inside the unit. Once they had finished their checks and proceeded to leave the AHU through the small door, the apprentice knocked the top of their head on the sharp unprotected edge of the metal door frame which caused a cut to their head and took a big chunk of hair and a layer of skin off.
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. An oversight meant that the edge was not protected. This has now been rectified. The host company has added the wearing of a bump cap to their standard PPE while working on the worksite.

<b>No injury</b>	Property damage
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Vehicle incident
<b>Incident</b>	Account Manager was parking in a carpark and hit the side of a curb which caused the vehicle to straighten up and jump forward into the side of the vehicle parked in the next space. No one was inside the parked vehicle at the time.
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process when parking vehicles. Be more aware of surroundings.

<b>First aid injury</b>	Crush to finger
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Non-powered hand tools/equipment ( e.g. stanley knife)
<b>Incident</b>	Apprentice was helping a co worker line slats up into an end plate for a cutting machine bed, while tapping the plate in with a 4 pound hammer they hit their middle finger. The apprentice was watching the other side of the plate that their finger was on. Handling gloves were being worn at the time of incident.
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to apprentice to be aware of hand position and take time completing tasks.

<b>First aid injury</b>	Burn to finger
<b>Nature of injury</b>	Foreign object
<b>Incident</b>	Hot slag went inside the apprentices welding glove causing a burn to the back of 2 fingers.
<b>Corrective actions</b>	Follow STAAR process. Communication to all staff to be aware and take time completing tasks