



Safety+Health

Newsletter

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EYE
WELLNESS
MONTH

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DANGERS**
USING BRAKE CLEANER

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NATIONAL
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MONTH

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March 2025

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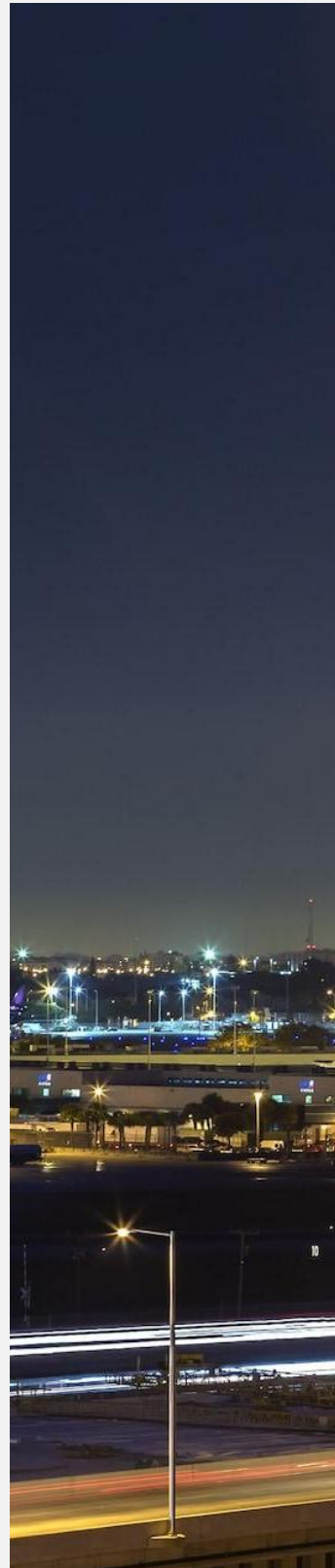
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March





NATIONAL LADDER SAFETY MONTH



National Ladder Safety Month is observed in March and is organized by the American Ladder Institute (ALI). This initiative focuses exclusively on promoting ladder safety at home and in the workplace. Each year, tens of thousands of injuries and hundreds of deaths occur due to ladder misuse. By providing essential guidelines and raising awareness about safe ladder use, we can help reduce the number of ladder-related injuries and fatalities.

ALI is the only approved developer of safety standards for the U.S. ladder industry. The organization believes ladder accidents can be prevented through thorough safety planning, proper training, and ongoing innovation in product design.

Whether you're at home or at work, every step

matters.

From step stools to extension ladders, it's crucial to use the appropriate ladder for each task. In the workplace, using a maintenance stand is often much safer when working on an aircraft. The more individuals, organizations, and businesses get involved, the more the message spreads, and the more people learn about proper ladder safety practices. □

For ladder safety resources and free ladder safety training please visit: <https://laddersafetytraining.org>

OSHA PORTABLE LADDER SAFETY QUICKCARD™

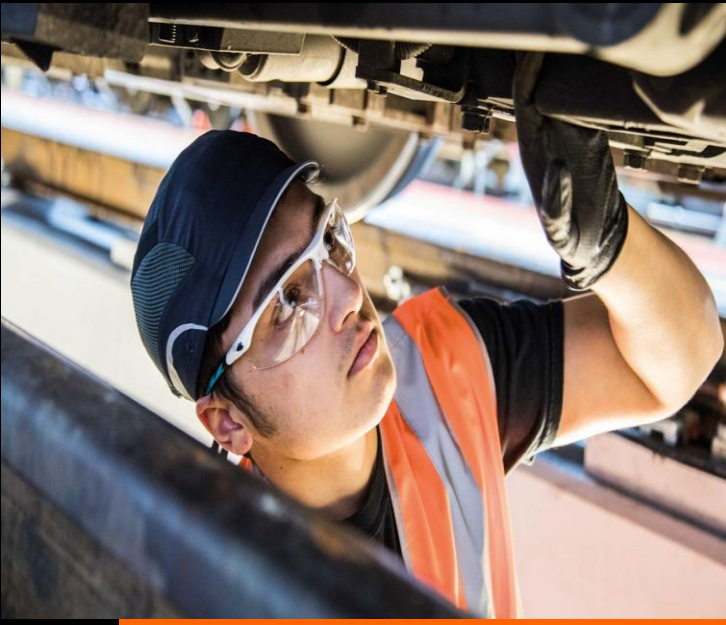


Things to Remember:

- Always inspect ladders before use
- Properly dispose of old or damaged ones
- Maintain three points of contact while using a ladder
- Keep your center of gravity inside the side rails

Workplace EYE WELLNESS MONTH

Eye and face PPE is essential for preventing workplace eye injuries. Knowing which personal protective equipment to wear for the job, such as goggles, safety glasses, and face shields, and how to wear them properly is key to preventing accidents and injuries.



Common causes of workplace eye injuries include flying debris such as metal fragments or glass, tools, chemicals, harmful radiation, and eye strain from digital devices. Most injuries happen when eye protection is improperly fitted, ill-suited for the task, or not worn.

Always wear the appropriate safety eyewear for your job site or task, even if you are just passing through a hazardous area.



Every day, more than 2,000 eye injuries occur on job sites, and about one in ten of these injuries require employees to take time off work for recovery. Between 10 to 20 percent of work-related eye injuries can result in temporary or permanent vision loss. Most of these injuries could be prevented if employees consistently wore appropriate eye protection.

Wearing safety glasses can effectively prevent painful eye injuries, which may result in lost workdays or permanent vision loss. Remember to wear eye protection throughout March and all year long!

Now, let's not forget our office environment; computer screen time can cause discomfort and



fatigue. To alleviate digital eye strain, try the "20-20-20" rule. Every 20 minutes, take a moment to look away from the screen and focus on something 20 feet away for just 20 seconds. This technique can refresh your eyes and offer that much-needed relief! □

“We must make our eyes a priority today to help maintain healthy eyesight throughout our lives.”



Brake Cleaner is toxic and should not be taken lightly!

When it comes to working with Ground Support Equipment (GSE), brake cleaners are commonly used for various tasks. They are sprayed liberally during brake jobs to clean parts and to manage oil spills. There are numerous applications for brake cleaners, making it a highly effective cleaning agent.

However, it is essential to note that brake cleaners contain

Tetrachloroethylene, also known as PERC or *perchloroethylene*. This industrial solvent is frequently used for degreasing metals and in dry-cleaning fabrics. You can also find it in various products such as printing inks, adhesives, sealants, wood cleaners, shoe polish, leather treatments, lubricants, and silicone.

Because *tetrachloroethylene* is non-flammable and evaporates



Brake dust and brake cleaner both pose significant health hazards.



Brake cleaning products contain hydrocarbons like benzene and toluene, a benzene derivative known to cause blood and bone marrow cancer.

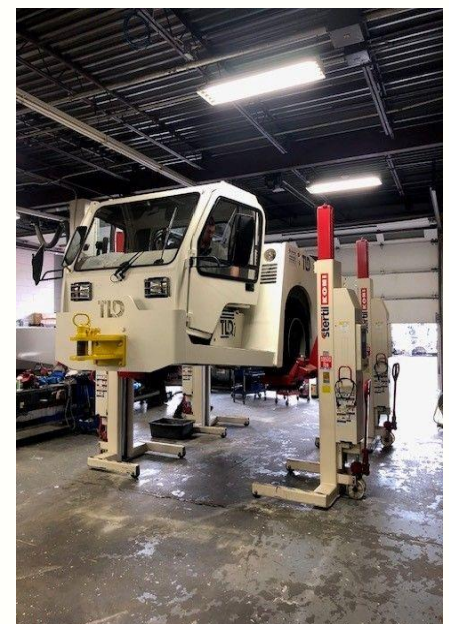
The International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified *tetrachloroethylene* as a Group 2A carcinogen, meaning it probably causes cancer in humans. The chemical has been linked to various cancers, including esophageal and cervical cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, as well as an increased risk of developing Parkinson's disease.

Additionally, *tetrachloroethylene* can be transformed into a highly toxic gas known as phosgene when subjected to temperatures above 315 degrees Celsius. This suggests that workplaces using brake cleaners in conjunction with high-heat processes, such as welding, can be highly hazardous.

Phosgene gas is a pulmonary (choking) agent that was used as a chemical weapon during World War I. It can be fatal at exposure levels as low as four parts per million.

quickly, it is often included in aerosol solvents, particularly brake cleaners.

Exposure to this chemical can occur through skin contact and inhalation of evaporated fumes, both of which are almost inevitable when brake cleaner is sprayed. *Tetrachloroethylene* has a high vapor pressure, allowing it to readily evaporate at room temperature, which poses a hazard wherever it is used.





Brake cleaner instructions recommend usage outside or in well-ventilated areas.

For mechanics who experience prolonged exposure, ventilation does little to prevent inhalation and skin contact.

Once exposed, there is no antidote for phosgene poisoning. However, individuals exposed to phosgene may experience ongoing chronic bronchitis and emphysema.

Brake cleaners are generally classified into two main categories: chlorinated and non-chlorinated. Each type has its advantages, but these benefits are primarily outweighed by their drawbacks. Essentially, you're choosing between one toxic option and an even more toxic alternative.

Chlorinated brake cleaners have been used for many years and are still available despite their main ingredients banned in

other applications. The term "chlorinated" indicates the presence of chlorine atoms, which enhance its solvent properties. It includes (PERC) *Tetrachloroethylene*, a non-flammable industrial solvent used for degreasing. While effective and fast drying, it is highly toxic and a known carcinogen.

Methylene chloride (dichloromethane) is often mixed with (PERC) to enhance performance, is potentially carcinogenic, and is linked to cancers of the lung, liver, and pancreas in animals.

Exposure may also pose heart risks to those with pre-existing conditions.

Non-chlorinated brake cleaner is a type of brake cleaner that does not contain chlorinated solvents. However, it is not necessarily safe, as many chemicals in these products can be harmful. It includes *Heptane*, an oil-derived substance that is highly flammable and toxic.

Short-term exposure to its vapors can cause dizziness, nausea, dermatitis, and chemical pneumonitis, and is harmful to aquatic life. However, it has not been linked to cancer in humans or lab animals.

n-Hexane, commonly found in brake cleaners are even more flammable than heptane. They can create explosive vapor

mixtures in workspaces. The primary concern is their neurotoxicity, which can cause nerve damage, particularly in vehicle mechanics. Long-term exposure may lead to permanent numbness, tingling, and weakness.

Fortunately, many toxic chemicals are now listed on product labels. However, there are still loopholes in the law regarding warning labels. The exact chemical composition may be concealed to protect “trade secrets.” Additionally, since it’s nearly impossible to use brake cleaner from a safe distance, inhalation is often unavoidable. Even when using a mask, you are not completely protected.

The choice between non-chlorinated and chlorinated brake cleaners might initially seem like a decision between bad and worse.

While these chemicals are the most common ingredients in brake cleaners you’ll find on store shelves, they are not the only options available. Today, there are low-toxicity brake cleaners on the market that often outperform traditional toxic brake cleaners.

Finding them in the shops or in your average supply catalog can be difficult, however, so you need to do your research.

So, next time you have a messy brake job or need to clean oily parts, consider putting down the brake cleaner.

If you do choose to use it, at least make sure to wear a mask and gloves for some protection. □





The Future of OSHA...

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Workers' protection rights to a safe and healthy workplace are under attack once again.

Efforts to undermine or dismantle the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has resurfaced, posing a serious threat to workplace safety. Representative Andy Biggs (R-AZ) has introduced H.R. 86, the "Nullify Occupational Safety and Health Administration Act," which seeks to repeal the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and eliminate OSHA altogether.

While this bill is unlikely to be passed, it highlights a persistent agenda to reduce federal oversight of workplace safety. Further attempts to defund OSHA, such as Representative Mary Miller's (R-IL) failed proposal to eliminate the agency's budget, reinforce the ongoing contention about OSHA's critical role in protecting workers.

Supporters of minimal government intervention argue for limiting OSHA's authority as part of broader deregulation efforts, insisting that businesses should be solely responsible for maintaining safe workplaces without federal interference. However, one compelling argument against dismantling OSHA is that workplace safety should remain under federal regulation rather than being handed over to individual states.

While states like California and Washington have established robust safety programs, many others





lack the essential resources and commitment to implement meaningful protections. This could lead to a chaotic patchwork of safety standards, exposing workers in some states to significantly higher risks due to inadequate enforcement.

If OSHA were to be abolished or its funding drastically reduced, the consequences would be severe. We would likely see a decline in workplace safety oversight, leading to increased injury and fatality rates. Employers would feel less compelled to adhere to safety regulations, and with fewer inspections and enforcement actions, hazardous conditions might be overlooked or ignored, leaving workers in potentially life-threatening environments. Recognizing OSHA's vital importance in safeguarding the health and safety of American workers is imperative.

Currently, OSHA is already stretched thin with a limited number of inspectors, and any further budget cuts will cripple the agency's ability to enforce crucial safety laws. Diminished resources will result in longer response times, fewer inspections, and substantially reduced penalties for unsafe employers. This scenario could embolden companies to prioritize profits over employee well-being, leading to unnecessary accidents and illnesses.

If federal enforcement is not strengthened, the responsibility for maintaining workplace safety will increasingly shift to workers, unions, and advocacy groups. Employees will have to take the initiative to report hazards and demand safer working conditions. However, weakened protection for whistleblowers may discourage employees from voicing concerns about unsafe practices, ultimately putting their safety at greater risk.

If attempts to weaken OSHA gain traction, labor organizations, and worker advocacy groups

will undoubtedly challenge these moves in court.

The outcomes of these legal battles will be pivotal in determining whether federal oversight remains an essential element of worker protection or whether we allow the responsibility to shift entirely to employers and state governments. This is a fight that must be waged for the safety and rights of all workers.

Reduced regulations may promise cost savings and flexibility for businesses, but the alarming potential for increased workplace injuries and fatalities underscores the critical need to uphold strong safety regulations. Historically, robust safety regulations have been essential in preventing workplace deaths and injuries. The establishment of OSHA in 1970 was a game-changer, leading to significant improvements in worker safety, particularly in high-risk industries like construction, manufacturing, and mining. Weakening or eliminating OSHA would jeopardize these hard-earned gains and expose workers to unnecessary hazards.

While H.R. 86 and similar defunding efforts may not succeed in 2025, they signify a troubling trend toward deregulation in workplace safety that cannot be ignored. Safety practitioners, workers, unions, and advocates must remain vigilant and proactive in opposing these initiatives. The future of workplace safety hinges on the strength of our protections, regardless of whether they come from federal, state, or employer-led actions.

We must confront a critical question: Can we truly rely on voluntary compliance and state regulations to ensure worker safety, or is federal oversight an absolute necessity to protect lives? The answer to this question will determine the effectiveness of our safety approach for years to come, and we must take a stand to ensure that worker safety remains a top priority. □

Workplace Pressure

It's easy to feel rushed into making decisions, especially when faced with tight schedules or unexpected aircraft delays. As a committed mechanic, your responsibility is to ensure everything is functioning flawlessly. It may be tempting to overlook a small issue, like a leak when time is short, but remember that this approach can lead to more significant problems down the road.

Instead, focus on the solution: identify the leak, repair it thoroughly, and complete the necessary paperwork. This proactive mindset not only ensures safety but also bolsters your confidence in your work.

Imagine the relief you'll feel when families are flying safely, thanks to your thoroughness. Navigating workplace pressure is part of our journey, but let's transform that pressure into a motivator for excellence. Remember, safety is paramount, and by upholding higher standards, we contribute to a culture of accountability and trust. Let's approach our tasks with optimism and pride in our work!



UPCOMING EVENTS

MARCH
01-31

National Nutrition Month

Observed annually, this event invites everyone to learn about making informed food choices and developing healthy eating and physical activity habits. Visit eatright.org

MARCH
17-23

National Poison Prevention Week

Aims to spread awareness about the dangers of poison. This is especially relevant in the workplace, where substances can easily be misidentified. Become familiar with SDSs.

MARCH
01-31

Brain Injury Awareness Month

Raises awareness about what is a significant cause of death and impairment. At least 2.8 million Americans sustain traumatic brain injuries in the U.S. every year.

MARCH

PPE ROADSHOW

TBD



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Matters!**

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