

# Safety NEWSLETTER

Every day, county employees work hard to serve the community - whether maintaining roads, supporting public health, managing facilities, or providing essential services. While these jobs are vital, they also come with certain risks that can impact your health and safety if not properly managed.

On a national basis, the most common hazards faced by county employees include falls, exposure to hazardous materials, vehicle accidents, ergonomic strains, electrical hazards, inadequate safety training, and not wearing appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

By understanding these risks and taking simple steps to prevent them, we can ensure a safer workplace for everyone and help each employee return home safely at the end of the day.



## 1. Falls

Falls are one of the leading causes of workplace injuries, particularly in construction, maintenance, and custodial roles.

### Be Aware:

- Slippery floors, uneven surfaces, loose cords, and cluttered walkways are common hazards.
- Working at heights, such as on ladders or scaffolding, requires extra attention.

### Safety Tips:

- Always wear proper footwear with slip-resistant soles.
- Keep walkways clear of clutter.
- Use ladders safely—ensure they are stable, never overreach, and maintain three points of contact.
- Proper fall protection measures, such as harnesses and guardrails, are essential.



## 2. Hazardous Materials

Exposure to toxic substances, such as cleaning chemicals, pesticides, or medical waste, can occur in many county departments.

### Be Aware:

- Look for hazard labels, warning signs, and Safety Data Sheets (SDS).
- Pay attention to strong odors, spills, or unmarked containers.

### Safety Tips:

- Always follow proper handling and disposal procedures.
- Wear gloves, masks, and eye protection when required.
- Wash hands thoroughly after handling chemicals.



### 3. Vehicle Accidents

County employees often drive or operate vehicles as part of their duties, from patrol cars to maintenance trucks.

#### Be Aware:

- Distractions, fatigue, and rushing are leading causes of accidents.
- Weather and road conditions can quickly change driving risks.

#### Safety Tips:

- Eliminate distractions - never use your phone while driving.
- Perform vehicle safety checks before use.
- Always wear your seatbelt and obey speed limits.
- Regular vehicle maintenance can help reduce accidents as well.



### 4. Ergonomic Hazards

Repetitive tasks, awkward postures, and heavy lifting can lead to long-term injuries like back pain or carpal tunnel syndrome.

#### Be Aware:

- Monitor your posture when sitting, typing, or lifting.
- Watch for early warning signs—aching muscles, tingling, or stiffness.

#### Safety Tips:

- Use proper lifting techniques - lift with your legs, not your back.
- Adjust your workstation for good posture (monitor at eye level, chair supporting your back).
- Take short breaks to stretch and move throughout the day.
- Ergonomic assessments and training on proper lifting techniques are crucial for prevention.



### 5. Electrical Safety

Maintenance and construction tasks often expose workers to electrical hazards.

#### Be Aware:

- Look for frayed cords, overloaded outlets, or equipment with exposed wiring.
- Never assume electrical systems are de-energized.

#### Safety Tips:

- Only trained staff should perform electrical work.
- Use Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCIs) when working near water.
- Report any damaged cords or outlets immediately.
- Adhering to safety standards and using insulated tools can mitigate risks of electrocution.



## 6. Inadequate Safety Training

Without proper training, employees may not know how to recognize hazards or respond to emergencies.

### Be Aware:

- If you feel unsure about a task or equipment, stop and ask for guidance.
- Watch for co-workers taking unsafe shortcuts.

### Safety Tips:

- Attend all scheduled training sessions and refreshers.
- Speak up if you need additional training.
- Encourage a culture of learning and sharing safe practices.



## 7. Not Wearing Appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

PPE—such as gloves, goggles, safety vests, or helmets—is often the last line of defense against hazards.

### Be Aware:

- Identify tasks that require PPE before starting work.
- Inspect PPE for damage before each use.

### Safety Tips:

- Always wear the required PPE for your job.
- Replace worn or damaged PPE immediately.
- Remember: PPE only works if it's used properly and consistently.
- Performing a Job Hazard Analysis or Job Safety Analysis will help identify the safety equipment necessary to perform the work safely.

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