

Spring 4-1-2001

# SafetyWorks! Newsletter for a Safer Workplace, Spring 2001

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Labor Standards

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## Recommended Citation

Maine Department of Labor and Maine Bureau of Labor Standards, "SafetyWorks! Newsletter for a Safer Workplace, Spring 2001" (2001). *All Bureau of Labor Standards Documents*. 486.  
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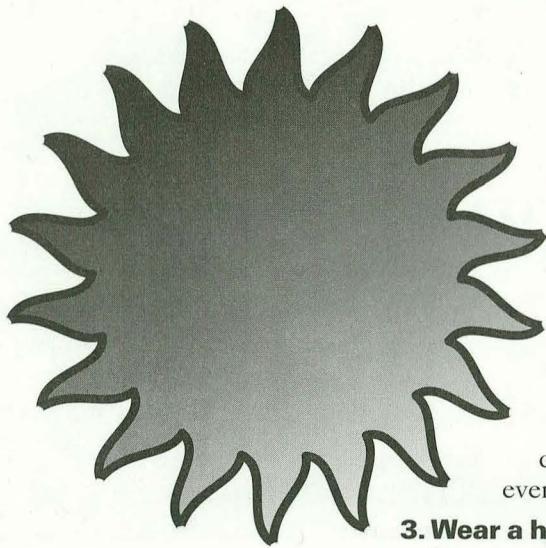
Spring 2001



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# Safety Works!

*Quarterly news for a safer workplace*



## Protect Yourself from Harmful Sunlight

After a long winter warm sunlight may feel good, but too much sun exposure can cause skin cancer. If you work outdoors, you can take steps to protect yourself.

**1. Cover up.** To find out if your clothing will protect you, place your hand between the fabric and a light source. If you can see your hand through the fabric, the clothing won't protect your skin from sun exposure.

**2. Use a sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor, or SPF, of 15 or higher.** Broad-spectrum sunscreens protect against UVA and UVB, both of which contribute to skin cancer. Apply sunscreen 15 minutes before going outside. Reapply every 2 hours; more frequently if you sweat a lot or are swimming.

**3. Wear a hat.** A wide brim hat protects the neck, ears, eyes, forehead, nose and scalp. A baseball cap won't protect the back of the neck or the ears, where skin cancers commonly occur.

**4. Wear sunglasses that block UV rays.** Check the label to make sure sunglasses block 99 to 100 percent of UVA and UVB radiation. UV protection comes from an invisible chemical applied to the lenses, not from the color or darkness of the lenses; darker lenses may not provide greater protection.

**5. Limit direct sun exposure.** UV rays are most intense when the sun is high in the sky, between 10 A.M. and 4 P.M.

**Skin cancers detected early can almost always be cured.** The most important warning sign for skin cancer is a spot on the skin that changes in size, shape or color over a period of one month to two years. The most common skin cancers often look like a pale, wax-like, pearly bump; a red scaly, sharply outlined patch; or a sore that does not heal. Melanoma often starts as a small, mole-like growth. **Examine your body and see a health care provider if you find a skin change.**

The American Cancer Society has good information about preventing, detecting, and treating skin cancer. Website: <http://www.cancer.org> Phone: 1-800-ACS-2345.





## ... And Watch out for Ticks

While the risk of acquiring Lyme disease is very low in Maine, you should take measures to avoid tick bites. Here's what you can do:

1. Tuck your pant legs into your socks and your shirt into your pants when you walk in the woods, brush or tall grass.
2. Wear light-colored clothing so you can see ticks more easily.
3. Use a repellent containing DEET on shoes, socks and pants legs. Avoid using DEET repellents directly on the skin.
4. Inspect for ticks when you get in from the field.

*Based on recommendations from the Maine Bureau of Health.*

## Work Safely with Hand Tools at Home

Do you give hand tool safety a second thought when tackling jobs around the house? The dangers of hand tools aren't limited to the workplace. Each time you use a tool at home, take a few minutes to clean and inspect it.

- 1. Clean Before Use.** An improperly maintained tool won't last as long or work as well, and it may cause injury. Before you use a tool, take a minute to:

- Wipe off any dirt or grease,
- Sharpen blades, cutting edges, and crowbar and pry bar points as needed,
- Tighten loose handles and replace broken ones,
- Lubricate tools as needed,
- Redress chisels with mushroomed heads and punches with slanted or chipped points.

- 2. Carry Carefully.** Carry tools safely, either in a toolbox or tool belt. Always make sure to:

- Cover knives, saws, or any other cutting tools,
- Always secure the tools you are carrying before climbing,
- When handing a tool to someone, always offer the handle.

- 3. Store Properly.** When you're done with a tool, immediately return it to its proper storage place. To avoid problems:

- Clean and inspect all tools before storing them,
- Return all tools to their cabinet, tool chest, or wall space,
- Never store large or heavy tools overhead or where they could fall,
- Cover all blades and sharp edges.

These may seem like obvious points, but they're easily overlooked. Follow them to set a safe example for everyone in your household.

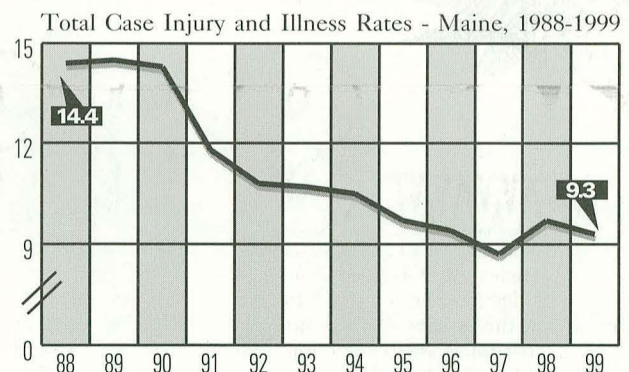
**Remember:** Safety matters at work and at home!



"You have a perfect shop safety record. Now, if you'll just be more careful driving to and from..."

## Rate of Injuries and Illnesses Declined in 1999

The rate of occupational injuries and illnesses in Maine decreased in 1999 to 9.3 cases per 100 full-time workers, according to the newly-released *Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in Maine 1999*. Despite the decrease, the Maine rate remains higher than the national rate.



For a free copy of the publication, call the Maine Department of Labor at 207-624-6400, (TTY: 1-800-794-1110) or go to: <http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/occupinj.htm>.

Visit our website at <http://janus@state.me.us/labor/blsmain.htm>



## Notes from the Field

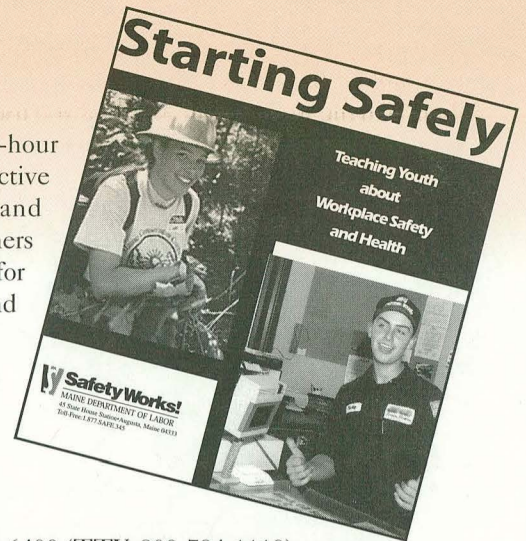
- Grants rescinded. The U.S. Labor Department announced it will rescind previously approved grants to 19 organizations for worker safety programs. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) awarded the grants to labor unions, universities, businesses and nonprofit organizations. The average grant was \$250,000.
- Ergonomics standard overturned. President Bush signed the congressional resolution killing the ergonomic standard. Although he pledged to pursue a "comprehensive approach to ergonomics that addresses the concerns surrounding the ergonomic rule that was overturned," the Congressional Review Act prevents the Secretary of Labor from promulgating a new ergonomics rule.
- New needlestick requirements take effect. Changes in OSHA's bloodborne pathogens standard went into effect April 18, 2001. The revised standard requires employers to consider safer needle devices when they conduct their annual review of their exposure control plans. Safer devices are considered appropriate engineering controls, the best strategy for worker protection. For more information, go to the OSHA web page: <http://www.osha.gov>.

## New Materials from SafetyWorks! Promote Teen Worker Safety

Starting Safely: Teaching Youth about Workplace Safety and Health is a 3-hour curriculum for middle and high school age youth. It includes a video and interactive materials complete with teacher instructions, background information, and reproducible handouts and overheads. Highly recommended for educators and others who teach or talk with youth about work or careers. Available from SafetyWorks! for \$30.00 plus \$5.00 shipping. Can also be borrowed from the video library or found on the internet at <http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/startingsafely.htm>.

If your business employs teens you need the Safeteen Kit. The free kit includes a Safeteen poster, *A Guide for Maine Employers of Teens, Respect Yourself. Protect Yourself: A Guide for Working Teens*, wallet cards, and *Safetools: Training Exercises for Teens in the Workplace*. This invaluable resource covers teen and employer rights and responsibilities, laws, and safety training.

For more information or to order Starting Safely or the Safeteen Kit, call 207-624-6400 (TTY: 800-794-1110).



**Web site for teen workers, their employers,  
parents and teachers**

**NEW**  
**www.safeteen.org**

Newsletter articles are written by individual authors and are not necessarily products of the Maine Department of Labor or its staff. Information in the articles is not a substitute for official policy or regulations. The editors are Lynne Lamstein, director of outreach and education, and Jonathan Lepoff, staff development coordinator. Tel: 207-624-6400, TTY (for deaf and hard of hearing): 800-794-1110, e-mail: [webmaster\\_bls@state.me.us](mailto:webmaster_bls@state.me.us)

The Maine Department of Labor provides equal opportunity employment and programs. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

### Teen Workers Needed!!! for Public Service Announcements

SafetyWorks! is looking for working teens and their parents to appear on public service announcements to promote teen worker safety. Please call Lynne Lamstein at 207-624-6465.

Visit our website at <http://janus@state.me.us/labor/blsmain.htm>





*Quarterly news for  
a safer workplace*

**FROM THE DIRECTOR**

**Y**es, the overall rate of workplace injuries in Maine is lower than 10 years ago. But too many workers still get hurt or become ill at work. We believe that if we educate our young people about why and how to work safely before they start to work, they'll practice safety in their first job and in every job they hold. This will help ensure the injury rate will continue to decline.

SafetyWorks! can't do this alone. Employers, educators, parents and teens themselves each have a role. That's why we have created a variety of materials and services to get the word out about safety for our working youth. In these pages we have shown you a curriculum for teachers, a kit for

*Inside* **SafetyWorks!**

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employers, and a website for everyone. We also have a pamphlet for parents of working teens and can provide employers with jobsite training and/or consultations. Very shortly, we will begin airing public service announcements promoting teen worker safety.

Work with us to make sure our young people have valuable work experiences and don't get hurt. Tell us about youth who practice safety and those who have been injured. We want to hear about exemplary workplaces for teenagers, and your ideas for teaching youth about safety. Take every opportunity to model safety—at home and at work. Teach safety in everything you do.

Together we can make sure our teenagers are safe at work and learn skills that will serve them throughout their working lives.

*Michael V. Frett*  
Michael V. Frett, Director  
Bureau of Labor Standards