

Most frequent injuries

Data from the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has found that the most common claims in the vehicle collision repair industry are for injuries to the eyes, cuts and lacerations, back and other musculoskeletal injuries and respiratory (lung) diseases like work-related asthma.

What is causing these injuries? According to the DOL:

- Eye injuries – Frequently caused by particles that impact unprotected eyes, especially when prepping vehicles with grinders and sanders.
- Cuts and lacerations to fingers – Commonly result from using knives and other blades while prepping vehicles for painting.
- Back and other musculoskeletal injuries – Caused by lifting heavy objects and working in awkward postures when disassembling and prepping vehicles. Back injuries are the most costly, notes the DOL, because of the time loss associated with these serious and debilitating injuries.
- Respiratory diseases – Result from exposure to the isocyanates present in polyurethane.

To prevent these injuries from occurring, the DOL offers this advice: “Talk to your employees about the most frequent and costly injuries. Get their input on what they think might hurt them on the job, then ask them what could be changed to prevent those injuries.

“When employees participate in ways to prevent injuries, they are much more likely to comply with changes you might make. For example, when employees chose their own protective eyewear from a catalog, they are more likely to wear it.”



Cuts and lacerations to fingers, along with injuries to the eyes, are among the most common injuries to workers in the vehicle collision repair industry.

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3M Center for Respiratory Protection

Whenever activities like dry sanding, paint mixing and spray painting are present in a vehicle shop, respiratory protection must be provided and the requirements of an OSHA respiratory protection program have to be met.

Creating and implementing a written respiratory protection program that meets the OSHA requirements “can be a complex and challenging task,” says Scott Larson, respiratory protection technical services manager of the 3M Personal Safety Division. To help health and safety managers find the resources they need to develop and implement a successful OSHA-compliant respiratory protection program, the division has launched the 3M Center for Respiratory Protection (www.3m.com/respiratorycenter).

3M (www.3m.com) is a company that applies science in collaborative ways to improve lives daily.

TAILORED PROGRAM

“When respirators are used in a workplace, OSHA requires companies to establish and maintain a written respiratory protection plan,” Larson explains. “A comprehensive and effective plan isn’t something that can be downloaded from the Internet. An effective program needs to be tailored to the individual needs of the users at each worksite.”

With the online resource, 3M’s technical service specialists summarize key points that those responsible for worker health and safety need to know to help establish and maintain a successful respiratory protection program, he says.

It provides the tools to help employers as they put a program in place.

The 3M Center for Respiratory Protection outlines eight general steps to help guide users as they work to create and maintain a respiratory protection program:

- Exposure assessment.
- Respiratory selection.
- Medical evaluations.
- Fit testing.
- Respirator training.
- Respirator maintenance.
- Program evaluation.
- Recordkeeping.

The website also provides articles, videos, toolkits, fast facts and more.

Information on selecting the right respirators for a workplace can be found at: http://www.3m.com/3M/en_US/safety-centers-of-expertise-us/respiratory-protection/respirator-selection.

An example of a hazards/risk assessment form

WHAT ARE THE HAZARDS?	WHO MIGHT BE HARMED AND HOW?	WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE?	DOES ANYTHING ELSE NEED TO BE DONE TO CONTROL THIS RISK?	ACTION TO BE TAKEN BY?	ACTION TO BE DONE BY?	DATE ACTION IS COMPLETED	DATE OF NEXT ASSESSMENT