



# wellness & safety

Schools Insurance Authority



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## Protect your eyes and sight from hazards on the job

### March is Workplace Eye Health & Safety Month

**M**ore than 700,000 Americans injure their eyes at work each year. Fortunately, 90 percent of all workplace eye injuries can be avoided by using proper safety eyewear and being aware of potential hazards.

Although all employees are vulnerable to eye hazards, some jobs require extra care. Caution is essential when working with chemicals, machinery and landscaping tools.

To help reduce eye injuries on the job, regularly do the following:

- **Know what the potential eye hazards are for your job.** Wear protective eyewear that's designed for the specific duty or hazard.
- **Have your vision tested.** Uncorrected vision problems can cause accidents.



- **Ensure that your work site has first aid procedures for eye injuries.** Have eyewash stations inspected regularly and repair if necessary. Understand basic first aid for eye injuries.
- **Look out for your co-workers.** Be a role model by wearing your eyewear and remind others to wear theirs.
- **Use machine guards, work screens and other engineering controls** to protect against flying particles.
- **When working on computers or other eye-straining work, take regular short breaks.**
  - **Simple one-minute eye exercises** done every 20 minutes also can reduce eye fatigue.
  - **Change focus by glancing across the room** or look out the window and focus on objects at least 20 feet away.
  - **Lightly cup your eyes with your palms and relax** for 60 seconds.
  - **Look away from the screen and roll your eyes up and down, around and side to side.**

For additional information on eye health and injury prevention, visit [www.preventblindness.org](http://www.preventblindness.org).

Source: Prevent Blindness

## Safety steps to keep in mind when using stepladders

- Always select a ladder that's the right weight capacity for the job.
- Make sure the steps are in good condition, have non-slip surfaces, and are free of grease and oil.
- Don't allow more than one person at a time on a stepladder.
- Wear shoes with clean, nonskid soles.
- Face the ladder when climbing up or down.
- Don't move a ladder while you're on it.
- Ensure all ladder feet are firmly on the floor.
- Get help when handling a heavy or awkward object from a ladder.
- *Always take the extra time to use the stepladder in the first place.*





- Curbing the food-labeling confusion
- International Moment of Laughter Day

## New USDA food-labeling guidelines seek to end the confusion

Deborah R. Camacho, MS, SIA Prevention Services

The government is now encouraging food manufacturers and retailers that voluntarily put product dating on items to use a **“Best if used by”** date label. (Currently some items have other terms printed on them, such as **“Use by”** or **“Sell by.”**) Because several different phrases are commonly used, the USDA reports that consumers frequently discard wholesome and perfectly safe food because they find the labeling confusing. For example, many believe the **“Sell by”** dates mean the food has to be eaten by those dates or it’s not good. Not true!

The USDA says the **“Best if used by”** wording is now preferred because it’s direct and not misleading. **“Best if used by/before”** indicates when a product will have the best flavor or be of best quality – and isn’t a purchase or safety date. Research has found that people easily grasp this phrase as an indicator of quality – not safety.

“In an effort to reduce food loss and waste, these changes will give consumers clear and consistent information when it comes to date labeling on the food they buy,” said Al Almanza, USDA Deputy Under-Secretary for Food Safety. “This new guidance can help consumers save money and curb the amount of wholesome food going in the trash.” Although the date label refers to a



product’s quality, it may still be safe to use/eat the food past the **“Best if used by”** date as long as there are no signs of spoilage.

To recap the USDA’s most recent guidelines:

- **“Sell by”** tells the store how long to display a product for sale for inventory management. **It’s not a safety date.**
- **“Best if used by/before”** indicates when a product will be of best flavor or quality. **It’s not a purchase by or safety date.**
- **“Use by”** represents the date recommended for product use while at peak quality. **It’s not a safety date – except when used on infant formula.**

*These changes will give consumers clear and consistent information when it comes to date labeling on the food they buy!*

*Giggle, chuckle, chortle, cackle and guffaw*

## Find and share some ‘funny’ during International Moment of Laughter Day on April 14

The annual, unofficial “laughter” holiday on April 14, created by humorologist and SIA friend Izzy Gesell, encourages people to forget the stresses of daily life and give in to the healing and relaxing power of laughter.

Medical studies have shown that laughing reduces stress, increases blood flow and lowers blood sugar levels. Some studies have found that people who laugh just before going to bed are much more likely to sleep better than those who didn’t.

In addition to health benefits, laughter also has social advantages. People who are jovial tend to be quickly accepted in social groups and have an easier time making friends. Laughter is a way to spread joy and happiness and bring cheer into the lives of other people. It also instills optimism, defuses resistance to change and enhances relationships.

Celebrate the day by doing what makes you laugh:

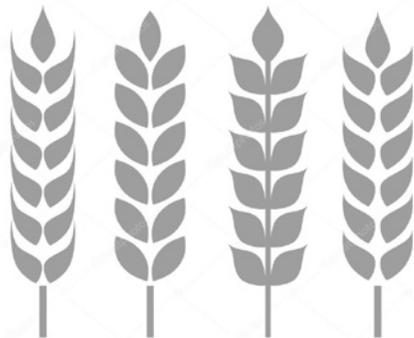
- Take a moment in the day to read or watch something that will make you laugh.
- Go with family and friends to watch a comedy show or funny movie.
- Collect jokes and share them with colleagues, friends and family.
- Laugh out loud at funny cards in the greeting card aisle or shop.
- Call a friend and share a funny story.
- Show your childhood photos to someone who’s never seen them.
- Look for silliness around you.

So go ahead and giggle, chuckle, chortle, cackle and guffaw. Find what makes you laugh and share a moment of laughter!



## Whole grains – 7 great reasons to stock up

1. They can protect against heart disease by **lowering LDL (“bad”) cholesterol.**
2. **Their high-fiber content** can help prevent constipation.
3. **They may reduce the risk** of diverticulitis, hemorrhoids and other digestive problems.
4. **They keep you feeling full longer** and may aid in weight control.
5. **They’re a good source of vitamins and minerals** and, along with a healthy diet, can help strengthen the immune system.
6. **They contain no cholesterol and are low in fat.**
7. **They add delicious variety** to your diet.



### Three servings daily

Adults should aim for three one-ounce servings of whole grains every day. Typical servings include a slice of whole-grain bread, a half-cup of oatmeal or a half-cup of brown rice.

Read package labels carefully to make sure you’re buying a whole-grain product. Examples of whole grains are brown rice, bulgur, oatmeal, whole oats and whole barley.

Foods labeled with words like multi-grain, 100 percent wheat, stone-ground, seven grain and bran usually contain processed or refined grains or flours rather than whole grains.

### Beyond brown rice

Brown rice, whole-grain bread, shredded wheat cereal and oatmeal are the most well-known whole grains. Here are some ideas for others you may want to try:

- **Amaranth** – sweet, nutty flavor; can be used in soups or instead of rice.
- **Barley** – hearty texture, mild flavor; excellent in soups.
- **Bulgur** – whole wheat cracked into small granules; use for pilafs and salads.
- **Wheat berries** – nutty taste, crunchy texture; use in soups, salads and casseroles.
- **Quinoa** – chewy, nutty flavor; contains complete protein; easy to cook.

Source: *Hope Health and USDA Food Pyramid*

## Plan now for end-of-year celebrations

As staff and students plan year-end celebrations, precautions need to be taken to keep the activities safe for all. If the party is sanctioned, advertised or associated with the school in any way, it’s important to keep the following in mind:

- **Provide enough trustworthy adult supervision for the size of the group.** Adults may need district clearance prior to the event.
- **Ensure all student participants have signed permission forms prior to participating.**
- **If the event is accessible to members of the public, request that supervisors pay extra attention to the location of students in relation to those not associated with the activity.**
- **Absolutely no alcohol on the premises.**
- **If activities are to take place in and around a lake, pond, pool or other water feature, ensure that there’s a lifeguard present or adult with current water rescue and CPR training.**
- **Special events that include a bounce house, obstacle course or other high-risk activity will likely require additional liability coverage.** Check with the district office or SIA for information. Special event coverage requires a two-week notice.





- WeTip equals campus security
- Tactics for bogged-down discussions

## WeTip offers extra eyes on potential campus crime

Property damage and theft at schools cost money. With limited budgets and time, it's even more important to guard campus assets. WeTip is a tool to help protect schools.

By promoting WeTip on campuses and in surrounding neighborhoods, it reminds the community that someone is watching. A potential criminal may think twice about vandalizing if he thinks he may be discovered.

For information, posters, wallet cards, magnets and other promotional WeTip materials, contact Teresa Franco at [tfranco@sia-jpa.org](mailto:tfranco@sia-jpa.org) or 916-364-1281, ext. 1256.



### Sign up for WeTip

For information and materials, contact Teresa Franco at [tfranco@sia-jpa.org](mailto:tfranco@sia-jpa.org).

## Jump-start stalled conversations

Change your approach to frustrating, mired conversations when participants with different convictions fail to see eye to eye. Rather than punching up the volume and repeating key points, switch gears by posing open-ended questions that invite dialogue and allow better understanding of every person's viewpoint. For example:

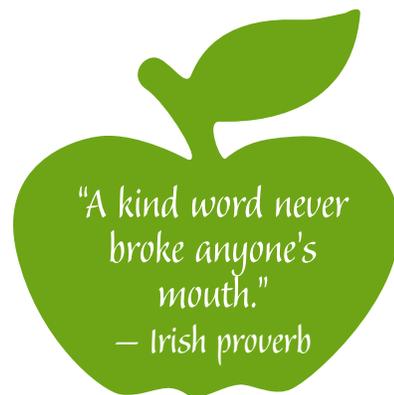


- **“What is your main concern about this?** If we can address that concern, can we move forward?”
- **“In what areas of this discussion do we agree?** Let's break this issue down by making a list of our commonalities and our differences.”
- **“What has to happen in order for you to feel comfortable with what I'm suggesting?”**
- **“What part of my suggestion seems unreasonable?** What modifications do we need to make for this to become more acceptable to you?”

Source: *Communication Briefings*

*The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP).*

*Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder and be sure all employees receive a copy.*



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