

## RISK SERVICES

# EMPLOYEE SAFETY UPDATE



## NATIONAL DISTRACTED DRIVING AWARENESS MONTH

April is [National Distracted Driving Awareness Month](#). While distracted driving fatalities have decreased since 2016, distracted driving is still one of the most dangerous habits on the road today, according to [Forbes Advisor](#). Every year, about 3,000 people die in accidents involving distracted driving. In 2020, 3,142 people died and 324,652 people were seriously injured in accidents involving distracted driving.

There are several ways people drive while distracted, but using their cellphones is at the top of the list. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has identified three kinds of distracted driving:

1. **Visual distractions** cause you to take your eyes away from the road. This can include using a GPS, looking at a billboard, trying to get a good look at an accident, focusing on the scenery or even looking at other cars.
2. **Manual distractions** cause you to remove your hand from the wheel. Behaviors such as eating while driving, using your phone, changing the radio station or reaching for something in the car are all examples of manual distractions.
3. **Cognitive distractions** take your mind off driving. Singing, talking, daydreaming or worrying all fall into this category.

Keep in mind these various forms of distracted driving next time you're behind the wheel and avoid them.

# Hand protection:

## Cut-resistant gloves

Gloves come in many materials, each of which has unique, protective qualities. A few common materials include:

- Metal mesh, which is made of stainless-steel rings.
- Steel core, which is a fabric with steel woven into the material.
- Kevlar®, which is the material used in bulletproof vests
- Rubber-coated fabrics.

While glove material plays a key role in the protective qualities of gloves, cut and puncture resistance can depend on several other characteristics, including the thickness and coatings applied to the outside surface. Cut-resistant gloves provide protection from sharp objects like knives and blades, while puncture-resistant gloves protect against pointed items like needles.

On the other hand, abrasion-resistant gloves protect against rough surfaces. Manufacturer ratings will indicate how protective a particular glove is against these hazards.

The material of a glove and the coatings applied to it also affect how well you will be able to grip items while wearing it. Grip can be important for protecting against cuts and punctures, especially if you are working with slippery objects.

It's important to select a glove that will protect your hands from the specific hazards you encounter. Make sure your gloves fit properly and that they are the right length for the job. Inspect your gloves for damage each time you use them. If they have tears, holes or other defects, discard them and get a new pair. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations for cleaning, storing and caring for your gloves.

It's also important to know when not to wear gloves. When you're working with certain types of machinery, gloves can create a greater hazard because they could be caught in the machinery and possibly pull your hands in with them.



# Flammable liquids: Handling them safely

Liquids are rated as flammable when the vapors they emit can catch fire. The term “flammable liquids” refers to any liquid with a flash point at or below 199.4°F (or 93°C).

Large amounts of flammable liquids must be stored in rooms or cabinets specifically designed for flammable liquids and labeled “Flammable: Keep Fire Away.” Keep only a 1-day or one-shift supply of a flammable liquid near any industrial operation. Flammable liquid containers need to:

- **Be clearly identifiable.** This includes marking the container with a proper hazard communication label, as required by 29 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1910.1200, and feature the flame pictogram, which is a diamond with a picture of flames on a white background with a red border.
- **Be stored in a self-closing safety can** with a spark arrestor in the pouring spout. Do not leave flammable liquids in open containers; the liquid can vaporize and cause an ignitable mixture to build up.

When rags or other materials are used with flammable liquids, the liquid-soaked rags must be stored in a metal container with a close-fitting lid. This keeps excess oxygen away from the rags and reduces the possibility of a fire. When exposed to the air, some rags can produce enough heat to cause them to spontaneously ignite.

All ignition sources must be controlled around flammable liquids. No smoking is allowed, and non-sparking tools or special explosion-proof electrical equipment may be required. Never use standard electric power tools around flammable liquids.

All bulk containers must be grounded and bonded during dispensing operations. This means there must be a conductive connection between the receiving container, the dispensing container and a specially installed ground, like a water pipe.

Some materials can be ignited by a static spark; therefore, when liquids are drawn from a bulk tank into a portable use container, the containers should be bonded to the tank. This means there should be a solid connection between the tank or barrel and the container. Self-closing valves must be used with the dispensing containers to limit spills.

Any spilled material must be cleaned up and properly disposed.

Paper and cloth must be kept away from open flames, and matches and cigarettes must be kept away from flammable liquids, such as gasoline, kerosene or other solvents. It’s important to watch for excessive heat, such as that generated by friction on machines.

A basic formula to keep in mind is that fire prevention requires:

- Keeping fuel sources to a minimum
- Limiting the oxygen available to the fuel
- Controlling heat or ignition sources

Being aware of and following these suggestions are essential for saving homes, jobs and lives.

## Forklifts: Operating safely around pedestrians

There are simple, safe practices for forklift operators to follow that will prevent incidents with pedestrians. Operators must always:

- Look in the direction of travel, and make sure the view is unobstructed.
- Stop the forklift when talking or listening to someone on the floor or when using any communication device.
- Yield the right of way to pedestrians.
- Sound the horn or give another appropriate warning and move slowly or stop when workers may not know that a forklift is moving in their direction.
- Drive slowly when going around corners and when your vision is limited by obstructions in areas with regular foot traffic or where people are working.

- Cooperate and plan out communications with pedestrians when sharing the same work area.
- Stay within marked forklift travel lanes and aisles, and slow down and use the horn to alert pedestrians when you travel across any marked pedestrian traffic lanes.
- Be aware of foot traffic during shift changes and at break times.
- Look around whenever raising and lowering the forks.

Other safe practices for operators include:

- When backing up, look in the direction the forklift is moving, constantly scan the area for pedestrians and objects to avoid and proceed very slowly.
- When a forklift is left unattended, make sure to set the forks close to the ground, turn off the power, set the brake and remove the key.
- Never let anyone hitch a ride on a forklift or stand on the forks.

