

Narcolepsy and Heavy Equipment Operators!



Narcolepsy is a sleep disorder that can cause a person to feel an uncontrollable urge to sleep. A person with narcolepsy may fall asleep anywhere, often without warning. These sleep attacks are uncontrollable and usually last a few seconds to several minutes. A person with narcolepsy may also have frequent sleep disruptions, contributing to tiredness throughout the day.

Identified as a leading neurological cause of chronic sleepiness, narcolepsy affects around 1 in 2,000 people. Some experts believe that more people are affected because the condition often goes undiagnosed. Narcolepsy is a lifelong condition and, if left untreated, can significantly affect a person's quality of life.

Learning about narcolepsy can (**continued page 2**)

OSHA Staff Switches to Safety Helmets from Hard Hats



Washington — OSHA personnel will now wear safety helmets instead of traditional hard hats to “protect them better when they are on inspection sites.”

The agency notes that traditional hard hats have “minimal” side-impact protection and lack chin straps. “Without the straps,” an OSHA press release states, “traditional hard hats can fall off a worker’s head if they slip or trip, leaving them unprotected. In addition, traditional hard hats lacked vents and trapped heat inside.”

A recent safety and health information bulletin provides an overview of other key differences between the two forms of head protection. “Safety helmets incorporate a combination of materials, including lightweight composites, fiberglass and advanced thermoplastics,” it states. The helmets also have the potential to incorporate face shields or goggles to protect the eyes and face, as well as built-in hearing protection/communication systems for noisy environments.

The agency recommends safety helmets be used by workers:

- In the construction and oil and gas industries.
- In high-temperature, specialized-work and low-risk environments.
- Involved in electrical work or when at height.
- Who are required to do so by regulations or industry standards.

“OSHA wants employers to make safety and health a core value in their workplaces and is committed to doing the same by leading by example and embracing the evolution of head protection,”

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(continued from page 1) help people understand this sleep disorder and better manage their symptoms with lifestyle changes, support, and medication.

Excessive Daytime Sleepiness

Excessive daytime sleepiness is the primary symptom of narcolepsy. People with narcolepsy often begin experiencing excessive tiredness in their 20s or 30s with symptoms often getting worse over time.

The timing and severity of excessive daytime sleepiness varies. Some people experience a mild drowsiness that comes and goes throughout the day, while others have sudden and uncontrollable sleep attacks in which they cannot resist the urge to sleep. They just fall asleep without warning. This would be extremely dangerous with heavy equipment operators as well as other construction workers as well.

When they occur, sleep attacks can last from a few seconds to several hours. After waking, a person with narcolepsy may feel rested and refreshed for a short time.

Work Safely in Winter Weather



Even without snow or sleet, cold weather is a hazard. Without the right preparations, working in the cold can be dangerous and even deadly. Whether you're snow blowing or working as part of an outdoor crew, take precautions to prevent injury from frostbite and hypothermia.

Before going outside, a few simple steps can keep you safe:

- Check the temperature and limit outdoor time if the weather is very cold, wet or windy.
- Bundle up in several layers of loose clothing.
- Wear synthetic fabrics close to the skin. If it's wet out, wear waterproof or water-repellant clothing.
- Protect your ears, face, hands, and feet.
- Wear boots that are waterproof and insulated.
- Include chemical hot packs in your first aid kit.

It's important to also know the signs of cold-weather

injuries and illnesses. Spotting the symptoms early can help you keep yourself, your loved ones, and your coworkers healthy in cold weather.

Frostbite is the most common injury related to cold weather exposure, and it can happen even to skin that is protected by clothing. When left untreated, it can lead to permanent tissue damage and amputation.

Frostbite is most common in the fingers, toes, nose, ears, cheeks, and chin. Early signs include skin redness that becomes white or grey in color, and that feels waxy, firm, or numb to the touch.

Hypothermia occurs when the body's temperature dips below 95 degrees, either due to exposure to cold temperatures or cold water. Severe shivering is the first sign, followed by exhaustion, drowsiness, confusion, and slurred speech.

Once you've been out in the cold, it's important to listen to your body. Work in pairs with a buddy to ensure each other's safety and take frequent breaks to warm up. You should also drink warm, non-alcoholic, caffeine-free liquids and eat warm foods to keep your body warm and fluid levels up. Be sure to tell your supervisor if you need something.

Reminder!!!!

Don't forget the OSHA Form 300A (Annual Summary) is required to be posted from February 1 to April 30, 2024. You must post a copy of the annual summary in each establishment in a conspicuous place or places where notices to employees are customarily posted. You must ensure that the posted annual summary is not altered, defaced, or covered by other material.

Did You Know?

Falls are the number one cause of death in construction. Protect yourself from falls by using the appropriate fall protection. Know what's required – Personal fall arrest system (PFAS), guardrails or both.

Safety Tip of the Month

Remember the right way is the safe way. Keep Safety First!

Notes From the Editor

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