



# SAFETY VISIONS



*This issue contains essential safety articles to help you comply with Ohio's workers' compensation regulations to effectively manage your small business this winter.*

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## 2025 Ohio Safety Congress & Expo is Coming!



The annual [Ohio Safety Congress & Expo](#) will once again be held at the **Greater Columbus Convention Center in downtown Columbus, Ohio, April 16th-18th**. This is the largest regional safety exhibition in the United States.

The 2025 Ohio Safety Congress and Expo will include:

- General sessions lead by top-notch, keynote speakers.
- More than 75 educational sessions that allow you to dive into the future with seven educational tracks, each filled with expert-led sessions that will keep you at the forefront of workplace safety.
- Live-streaming options: Select sessions will also be available for live-streaming, so you can join the Congress from anywhere.
- Hybrid flexibility: Enjoy the best of both worlds with the option to attend in person one day and join via live stream the next so you can tailor your experience to fit your schedule.
- An Expo Marketplace, where participants can view and discuss the latest in safety services, industrial supplies, safety equipment and gear with 300+ exhibitors from across the United States.

**While there, be sure to stop by the Sedwick booth in the Expo Marketplace!**

**Learn more about this FREE event.**

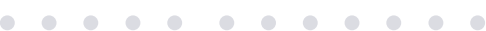
*Education credits may be earned by employers who participate in a group rating or group retrospective rating program and are required to attend two hours of safety training.*

## BASIC LAWCARE SAFETY



Spring rains and sunny days are here once again, meaning the grass is going to be growing and you'll need to be out there to keep it under control. It is important to have appropriate safety guards for yourself and on the equipment to make sure that you are unscathed. There are many types of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that need to be considered when performing lawn care activities:

- **Lower Body Protection** - Wear long pants and sturdy, non-slip boots to protect your legs and feet from objects that are thrown from the motor. Never wear sandals or tennis shoes, which can easily be severed if caught under *(continued on page 3)*





**Below are a few safe work practices to follow handling gasoline at both work and home:**

- **DO NOT** use as a lighter fluid, solvent, or cleaning fluid.
- Turn off all electronic devices when fueling.
- **DO NOT SMOKE WHILE HANDLING GASOLINE.**
- **DO NOT** run motor when fueling.
- Go easy, do not spill the fuel.
- Keep proper fire extinguisher nearby on onboard vehicle.
- When fueling, keep nozzle in contact with container (avoid static spark).
- **DO NOT** fill containers on or in vehicles; place on the ground (avoid static spark).

For more information: Email [Jim Saulters](mailto:Jim.Saulters@cityofspringfield.com) or call (513) 858-5022.

# GASOLINE SAFETY

## Beware of Vapors!

Often one hears about serious incidents resulting in the ignition of gasoline vapors. Many of these incidents occur due to a person's lack of knowledge for recognizing potential hazards in handling gasoline.

Gasoline is a flammable liquid which means it can release vapors at or below average air temperatures. Flash fires can occur when the vapors mix with air in the right proportions and are exposed to an ignition source. These vapors are heavier than air and can become trapped and concentrated in low areas (service pits, open vessels, or sewers, etc.). Often facility audits find fuel containers stored near hot water heaters, other heating sources, welding, cutting operations, or some type of grinding, cutting operation which could generate sparks.

Much discussion exists regarding an acceptable storage container for gasoline as required by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations. The construction rule (29CFR 1926.155 (1) requires an approved (recognized testing laboratory, ie. Underwriters Laboratory, Inc.) closed metal can not to exceed five gallons. The container should have a flash arresting screen, spring closing lid and spout cap, and an internal safety pressure relief valve. They are identified by being red with yellow labeling and should be stamped as UL listed. OSHA recognizes the use of Department of Transportation (DOT) approved containers, mostly plastic, not over five gallons, and lacking the above mentioned safety devices, as acceptable if used properly. From a safety perspective, employers should invest in the OSHA required cans as the most effective method of preventing a flash fire to their arresting design.

In summary, be respectful of the serious and deadly force of explosive gasoline fumes.

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Springtime marks the start of tornado season. April, May and June are normally the 3 months in the U.S. that sees the most active and dangerous strikes. However, tornadoes can occur at any time throughout the year. So, what can business owners do to weather a tornado? Here are four main areas of preparedness:

- i. Prepare your space. Clear the property of unsecured materials or dead trees or limbs. Identify the safest place in your facility; make sure it will fit your employees and customers that may be on-site. An underground area, such as a basement or storm cellar, provides the best protection. If an underground shelter is unavailable, consider the following:
  - A small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible.
  - Avoid rooms that have flat, wide-span roofs such as auditoriums or cafeterias.
  - Stay away from doors, windows and outside walls.
  - Stay in the center of the room, and avoid corners because they attract debris.
  - Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead. (continued on page 5)



## Basic Lawncare Safety (continued)

- **Face Protection** - Safety glasses should be worn at all times unless operating equipment is in an enclosed cab. In addition, if operating a string or a brush trimmer, a face shield should be used along with safety glasses to protect your face from flying debris.
- **Hearing Protection** - The average lawn mower produces noise of over 100 decibels, well above what the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) considers to be safe for a worker to be exposed to for an 8-hour shift. Even if the work is short in duration, hearing protection should always be used if any of the following applies:
  - You have to raise your voice significantly to be heard by someone three feet away.
  - After finishing the work, your ears feel plugged, or you hear a mild ringing or whooshing noise that goes away after an hour or two. Both earplugs and earmuffs often must be worn at the same time to reduce sound levels to appropriate levels for the operator.

Always be sure to check the operator's manual for the location of guards and safety shields on the equipment you are using. Also do a pre-start inspection to make sure none of them have been removed or inactivated. When using push mowers, there are a few different guards that need to be present:

- **Chute Guard** - In the area where the grass clippings are ejected, there typically is a plastic guard in place. It is there to protect the operator from being able to get too close to the spinning blades underneath and should never be removed.
- **Rear Guard** - This guard, which often drags behind the back of the mower deck, is also in place to prevent exposure of the worker's feet to the spinning blades underneath. Additionally, it is there to protect the worker from rocks, glass, and other sharp debris that can be ejected from the rear of the mower.
- **Safety Shut-Off** - Often, this is a bar that must be held in conjunction with the push bar of the mower to keep it running. If released, the mower will automatically shut off. This shut-off must not be disabled by permanently holding it in place so that the worker does not have to. In the case where the worker slips towards the mower in wet grass, for example, this safety device will be essential in shutting off the equipment before a foot or a hand can come into contact with the moving blade.

Riding mowers and string trimmers also have safety guards of their own. Riding mowers have a discharge chute to protect the worker from getting anywhere near a spinning blade. They also typically come equipped with a seat switch that will shut off the tractor if it senses that the rider has risen from the seat. As a general safety rule, workers should never dismount a tractor that continues to run, whether or not the blades are engaged. Many amputations and fatalities have occurred due to workers getting too close to a spinning blade or, even worse, getting in front of a machine that suddenly kicks into gear.

String trimmers typically will come with a guard just above the string or cutting blade. Since debris can fly in many different directions as this type of device is operated, PPE, as listed above, should be worn by the worker and the necessary guarding must be left in-place on the trimmer itself.

**For more information:** Email [Jim Saulters](#) or call (513) 858-5022.

## Lock Out/Tag Out

### Who's Authorized and Who's Not?

Performing lockout/tagout (LOTO) requires rigorous training and can only be undertaken by an authorized employee. Being "authorized" in LOTO means that an individual has received the necessary training/guidance to perform the LOTO procedures for specific equipment. Affected employees are those who do not have the authorization to perform LOTO on equipment but are working with or around the equipment that is being LOTO.

Both affected and authorized employees need to be provided training, with authorized workers receiving more in-depth instruction. Understanding the roles and responsibilities of authorized and affected employees is essential to maintaining a safe working environment. Clarifying the differences for workers ensures proper safety measures, compliance with regulations, and prevention of workplace accidents.

**For more information:** Email [Kory Bakenhaster](#) or call (614) 932-1516.



# PPE HAZARD ASSESSMENTS

*Have You Done Yours?*

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to reduce employee exposure to hazards when engineering and administrative controls are not feasible or effective in reducing these exposures to acceptable levels. For many employers this means that their employees need some type of PPE.

PPE is addressed in specific standards for the general industry including; 1910.94 Ventilation, 1910.95 Occupational noise exposure, 1910.120 Hazardous waste operations and emergency response, 1910.132 General requirements, 1910.133 Eye and face protection, 1910.134 Respiratory protection, 1910.135 Head protection, 1910.136 Occupational foot protection, 1910.137 Electrical protective devices, 1910.138 Hand protection, 1910.146 Permit-required confined spaces, 1910.252 Welding, cutting, and brazing general requirements and 1910 Subpart Z Toxic and hazardous substances.

While all these standards are important, 1910.132 has two sections that impact all employers and are often overlooked:

1. 1910.132(d)(1) states: "The employer shall assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present, or are likely to be present, which necessitate the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)." This means that employers are required to determine if PPE should be used to protect their workers by doing a PPE hazard assessment. The other section
2. 1910.132(d) states: "The employer shall verify that the required workplace hazard assessment has been performed through a written certification that identifies the workplace evaluated; the person certifying that the evaluation has been performed; the date(s) of the hazard assessment; and which identifies the document as a certification of hazard assessment." I.e.: The hazard assessment must be in writing.



To assist employers in performing this hazard assessment OSHA in Appendix B of 1910 Subpart I offers a non-mandatory compliance guideline. The guideline starts the employer off with doing a walk-through survey of the areas where PPE may be necessary looking for the basic hazard categories such as impact, penetration, chemical, heat and so forth. Along with the sources of hazards like sources of motion, chemical exposures, falling objects, sharp objects, etc. Then it discusses how to use this information to determine which types of PPE may be needed and gives information on how to select PPE for eye and face protection, head protection, foot protection and hand protection.

Your Safety and Risk Consultants with the Sedgwick dedicated NFIB unit can also supply you with a PPE Hazard Assessment form to use in performing your assessments.

For more information, email [Jim Saulters](mailto:Jim.Saulters@sedgwick.com) or call (513) 858-5022.

## UPDATE

### Arch Flash Guidance

OSHA

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released its first update on arc flash hazard guidance in almost two decades. The update aims to improve safety for over 600,000 workers at risk of arc flash incidents. The new guidance features comprehensive instructions for employers and more precise guidance for workers, strongly emphasizing preventing arc flash injuries through enhanced training, proper equipment, and increased hazard awareness. Employers with employees working in an environment with arc flash risks should [review OSHA's new guidance](#).

Hazard assessments are essential to identify workers who may be exposed to arc flashes and to determine countermeasures to mitigate the hazard. Employees should implement (continued on page 5)

## OSHA's Updated Arc Flash Guidance (continued)

safety protocols such as written work practices and provide employee training if there is known potential for exposure. Training should cover at least the nature of arc flash hazards, company-specific protocols, Personal Protective Equipment, and emergency procedures. Finally, regular electrical equipment inspections and maintenance must be ensured to mitigate risks.

For more information: Email [Kory Bakenhaster](mailto:kory.bakenhaster@nifib.com) or call (614) 932-1516.

## IS YOUR BUSINESS PREPARED FOR A TORNADO? (CONTINUED)

2. Prepare your people. Develop a system for knowing who is in the building in the event of an emergency. Have every employee's contact information and make a phone or text tree to account for everybody whether they are on-site or off-site. Use a prepared roster or checklist to account for workers, visitors and customers as they arrive in the storm shelter. Assign specific duties to workers in advance: create checklists for each specific responsibility. Designate and train workers and their alternates in case the assigned person is not there or injured.

3. Prepare your stuff. Back up important information such as; equipment inventory, customer information, ledgers, tax and payroll information, and contracts. Keep a current catalog of inventory and assets to help with insurance estimates after a disaster. Also, prepare emergency supply kits and keep them in shelter locations. A basic disaster supply kit can be found at [Federal Emergency Management Agency \(FEMA\)](https://www.fema.gov).

4. Train, train, and train again. Ensure that all workers know their roles and what to do in case of an emergency. Practice shelter-in-place plans on a regular basis and update plans and procedures based on lessons learned from your exercises. Then retrain on the updated plans and procedures.

For more information: Email [Jim Saulters](mailto:jim.saulters@nifib.com) or call (513) 858-5022.



## OSHA's Penalty Levels

It is more important than ever to make sure that you are meeting the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requirements that apply to your business. Each year these penalties can increase based on the percentage change in the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers from one year to the next.

According to OSHA, the current adjusted penalty structure is as follows:

- ❗ **WILLFUL VIOLATIONS** - not less than \$11,823 per violation and shall not exceed \$165,514 per violation.
- ❗ **REPEATED VIOLATIONS** not less than \$11,823\* per violation and shall not exceed \$165,514 per violation.
- ❗ **SERIOUS VIOLATIONS** - not less than \$1,221 per violation and shall not exceed \$16,550 per violation.
- ❗ **OTHER-THAN SERIOUS VIOLATIONS** - not less than \$0 per violation and shall not exceed \$16,550 per violation.
- ❗ **FAILURE TO ABATE VIOLATIONS** not less than \$11,823 per violation and shall not exceed \$165,514 per violation.
- ❗ **POSTING REQUIREMENTS VIOLATIONS** not less than \$11,823 per violation and shall not exceed \$165,514 per violation.

For more information: Email [Jim Saulters](mailto:jim.saulters@nifib.com) or call (866) 780-NFIB (6342), option 6.