



Eye on Health

Protect Your Eyes When Doing Home Projects [Ⓟ]

(NAPSA)—What do a bungee cord, a pan of frying bacon and lawn-care chemicals have in common? They are just a few of the common items around the house that can cause eye injuries, which are increasingly occurring at home. In fact, nearly half of the 2.5 million eye injuries that Americans suffer annually now happen in and around the home in common places such as the lawn, garden, kitchen or garage.

“People need to be aware of the everyday dangers to their eyesight that lurk in the home,” said Tamara Fountain, M.D., a spokesperson for the American Academy of Ophthalmology (Academy). “It is far easier to prevent an eye injury than to treat it. Ninety percent of all eye injuries can be prevented by simply wearing protective eyewear.”

The Academy and the American Society of Ocular Trauma (ASOT) recommend that every household in America have at least one pair of ANSI-approved protective eyewear to be worn when doing projects and activities at home to safeguard against eye injuries. ANSI-approved protective eyewear is manufactured to meet the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) eye protection standard. ANSI-approved protective eyewear can be easily purchased from most hardware stores nationwide and can be identified by the mark “Z87” placed on the eyewear.

Data from an Academy and ASOT survey of physicians highlight the dangers in the home. The survey looks at eye injuries treated in the United States by ophthalmologists, emergency room physicians and pediatricians during a one-week period. In 2008, there were 775 cases reported from all parts of the country. In addition to finding

that nearly half of injuries are happening at home, the survey found that:

- Men were three times more likely to be injured (74 percent) than women (26 percent);

- The majority (78 percent) of individuals were not wearing protective eyewear during the time of the injury;

- Nearly half of all injuries were to individuals between the ages of 18 and 45; and

- Around the home, the majority of eye injuries occurred in the yard (39.4 percent), garage (11.8 percent) and workshop (8.1 percent). Yet in-home locations such as the kitchen, family room, bedroom and bathroom were also significant areas prone to injury, accounting for more than 34 percent of all eye injuries reported.

A companion public survey conducted for the Academy and designed to measure Americans’ understanding of eye injuries found that most underestimate the risks of home eye injury, believing more eye injuries occur outside the home, such as at a construction site or factory, or at special events such as fireworks. Fewer than one in five Americans believes that he or she is at even a moderate risk for eye injuries.

“Slipping on a pair of safety glasses is quick and easy,” Dr. Fountain said. “People should use protective eyewear during any potentially hazardous tasks around the house, from cleaning your oven with a chemical cleaner to using bungee cords to hold items in place. In the event that you do suffer an eye injury, have an ophthalmologist examine the injury as soon as possible, even if the injury seems minor at first.”

For more information about eye injury prevention at home, at work and at play, go to www.geteyesmart.org.