



Common Injury Types: Awareness and Prevention

A continual training effort of TAP Automotive's IIPP

In TAP and 4Wheel Parts facilities we are faced with a number of hazards on a daily basis. From sales people who commonly have to stock heavy items and unload freight, to the technician in the shop working with sharp objects, or a cutting torch, we face many work injury risks on a daily basis. This training is intended to heighten awareness of common injury types, and to remind employees that safety in the workplace is paramount.

❖ Eye injuries

Company policy clearly states that eye protection is required in all 4 Wheel Parts service departments at all times. This includes all employees, visitors, and vendors.

There are too many daily eye injury risks to list, but technicians are often faced with flying or ejected particles, chemical splash, airborne dust and debris, and harmful rays from welding.

Your eyesight is very important to your future, and of course to the company. Protect yourself. Use common sense.

- ❖ Where grinding operations are occurring, safety glasses AND a face shield are required.
- ❖ Where welding operations are occurring, an appropriate welding hood is required to shield the users eyes and face against harmful rays and molten spatter.
- ❖ Where chemical sprays are being applied, safety glasses can protect against chemical splatter or splash-back, overspray, or airborne particles that could cause eye injury.
- ❖ Where drilling operations are occurring, safety glasses will protect against flying or ejected particles.

No PPE (personal protective equipment) can prevent all injuries, but proper use at the appropriate times can and will save employees from costly injury. TAP/ 4WP will gladly provide employees with safety glasses on a reasonable basis as needed. See your management team if you need new safety glasses. As the end user, YOU are responsible to care for company provided PPE and make it last.

❖ Back Injuries

When employees use proper body mechanics during a lift, the risk of injury is low. No lifting that you will do in the workplace is 100% resistant to injury, but planning your lift before you do it can be a huge part of reducing your personal injury risk.

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Almost all 4 Wheel Parts employees are required to lift at times, and some jobs require lifting heavy or bulky items on a daily basis multiple times. In the interest of protecting yourself when lifting there are some things you should be doing in advance:

- ❖ Assess the lift. If it is too bulky or too heavy to safely lift yourself, consider a team lift. Lifting with another person will considerably reduce injury risk.
- ❖ Keep your back straight! Wearing a back brace can help maintain a straight back during a lift. Too many back injuries occur while people lift with their back curved.
- ❖ Placement of your feet in line with your shoulders and square to the lift can prevent back injuries due to poor posture.
- ❖ Never twist at the torso during a lift. To turn with the load, use your feet.
- ❖ If you are planning a lift to carry over a distance, ensuring your path is clear of trip hazards is a priority.
- ❖ Even if your lift is light, a bulky lift can block your view of your path. Again, ensuring you have a clear path can be big in preventing injury.

TAP employees will be provided back braces (Grainger part number 3RVA5 for 32-42 waist sizes and 1EC66 for waist sizes 42-46).

❖ Hand Injuries

Another very common injury suffered by TAP employees are cuts, burns, stabs, and crush injuries to their hands. Our hands do so many things for us on a daily basis that we often take them for granted. We use them to turn, pinch, bend, hammer, twist, grasp, push, pull, and manipulate objects constantly. This also places our hands at risk because they are in direct contact with all the stuff we touch at work. Thinking about the motion you intend with objects you are moving can help you plan the motion and protect your hands from injury. Consider the “what if” scenario with your movements.

- ❖ When using a box knife or cutting tool, think about “What if this knife slips or the blade breaks”? If you plan this motion in advance, you are far less likely to have your hand or body part in a risk zone.
- ❖ When working with heavy objects, consider what could happen if the load were to suddenly shift. Would your hand be crushed? Is there a tool instead of your hand that can be used to accomplish the task? cont’d
- ❖ If you are working with hot objects, could gloves prevent you from a burn? Think ahead and recognize the hazards BEFORE you make your move.
- ❖ If a wrench slips will you “bust your knuckles”?
- ❖ When working with an air ratchet, will your hand become pinned when the fastener gets tight and the torque from the air ratchet forces your hand into a spot?



❖ Facial Injuries

Oddly, facial injuries in the workplace have become common as well. There have been a number of incidents where people have needed stitches, have knocked out teeth, and had some pretty severe bruising (contusions) from facial strikes. As technicians are often confronted with the need to perform prying motions, there is more “what if” scenarios to consider. Body posture and positioning can make a huge difference with some scenarios you deal with in the shops.

- ❖ Consider the risk of a prybar slipping. Ask yourself, “If this prybar slips, am I braced so as not to fall”? If prying the other direction, ask yourself “If this prybar slips, am I going to hit my face with it”?
- ❖ Same scenario goes for wrenches. Are you using the right size for the fastener? If not, you should certainly get the right size for the job, not one that fits “close enough”. Ask yourself the following. “If the wrench slips, am I about to knock out my own teeth with it”?
- ❖ Common sense should dictate your posture, your stance, and your readiness if something doesn’t go as planned.
- ❖ Face shields cannot prevent all facial injuries, but can protect from high-speed debris, sparks, or metal chips.
- ❖ If a cutoff wheel were to shatter during use, would you be wearing a face shield to protect yourself from all the flying debris coming from the cut off tool?
- ❖ If you’re trying to get something off a high shelf and it falls on you, you’re likely to get a facial injury, eye injury, or a broken nose. Grab a ladder and be safe.
- ❖ If you are rolling tires from a high tire rack, and you intend for the tire to come down slow, will you be capable of slowing the motion without being pulled off balance and striking your face against something?

We should all strive for zero injuries in the workplace, but accidents do happen. Think as you go. Use the “what if” strategy to plan your motions and work injuries will happen far less.

As always, if you have safety suggestions or concerns, consult your RSM or Mark Allen.