DIY Tips On Eye Safety

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DIY causes more than 30,000 eye injuries every year. So it's crucial to know how to stop accidents and what to do when one happens.

Here are the Trust's top tips...

- Check that you know how to tackle the job before you start - If in doubt, call out an expert.

- Eye protection is essential for many DIY jobs. Always wear safety goggles / spectacles that reflect what you want to do - consult your optometrist if necessary. If the job requires a dust mask - wear it.

- When you buy eye protection, check it conforms to European Standard BSEN 166 it is essential when welding to wear a proper mask which covers the whole face as well as goggles with British Standard number BS1542.

- Many accidents occur when goggles are lifted to get a closer look. Make sure that goggles stay on throughout the job. Take a break if you have to alter them.

- Wearing normal spectacles or contact lenses on their own does not offer sufficient protection. Prescription goggles are available for people who need vision correction - ask your optometrist for advice on what's best for you. He or She will stock a wide range of safety spectacles. You can wear goggles over spectacles and contact lenses. Goggles with polycarbonate lenses or side shields are best, because they are more durable.

- The most common eye injuries among adults are caused by flying chips of wood or metal. It is therefore essential that appropriate eye protection is worn. Be careful when chiselling or hammering and when drilling into masonry, sanding wood, removing plaster, splitting tiles or concrete slabs, stripping paint, sawing, welding, laying insulation and painting ceilings. Take special care when grinding, hammering and polishing. These generate small, high velocity particles which can penetrate an unprotected eye.

- Different accidents need to be tackled in different ways. For instance, what you do if a foreign body enters the eye depends on its size. Any

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foreign body needs medical assistance. However, a small splinter or liquid, such as a chemical, can usually be removed by flooding it with water. Larger objects, like pieces of wood require urgent medical attention. Tackling an injury by rubbing the eye often makes it worse.

- Most eye problems are not- a hindrance for DIY, provided spectacles or contact lenses and eye protection is worn. However, people with colour vision deficiency should ask a person with normal colour vision for assistance if necessary.

Protecting Your Protection

Check your protection before and after every job. Clean lenses and frames and replace scratched or cracked ones immediately. You should store all eye protection in a protective container when not in use. Make sure your protection fits. Eye protection should fit firmly but not tightly, sitting close to your eyes without the eyelashes touching the lens. Never use friends' equipment - it fits them not you.

What To Do If Something Goes Wrong

1. Before you start, make sure you have first aid equipment and eyewash, you know where it is stored and it is easily to hand in case of an accident.

2. Do not rub the eye. This will make matters worse, increasing the chance of blindness or the loss of an eye. Get medical attention as quickly as possible. Getting to a hospital may save your sight. Call an ambulance or get someone to drive you there.

3. Never wash a cut or punctured eye. Cuts should be bandaged lightly if possible. Abrasions will need hospital treatment with drops, ointments and a sterile pad over the eye for at least 24 hours. Lacerations are far more painful and may require drug therapy and eye ointment and stitching of any torn tissue.