



PRESS RELEASE

TO: Editor in Charge

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

At Home and On the Job, October is Eye Injury Prevention Month

Of 2,000 daily eye injuries, of which 1,000 occur on the job, 90% are preventable

(Honolulu, Hawaii), October 1, 2007 –Across the United States, Americans suffer approximately 2,000 eye injuries every day. The vast majority of these injuries occur on the job and the overwhelming number could be prevented. In October, the American Academy of Ophthalmology will promote Eye Injury Prevention month. From flying wood chips or metal fragments, to splashes from household cleaners, proper eye protection and prompt medical attention can help avoid potentially blinding accidents.

Falling or flying objects, including sparks and metal from grinding, represent 70% of on the job eye injuries. At the time of the injury, 3 out of 5 victims have reported they were wearing either the wrong type of protective eyewear, or none at all. The simplest way to avoid accidents is to always wear approved eye protection. When selecting goggles or similar products, wearers should look for “ANSI Z87.1” marked on the lens to ensure the maximum protection.

“Last year doctors treated one million accidental eye injuries,” said Dr. Christopher Tortora, Medical Director at the Hawaiian Eye Center. “If you are unsure if the current eye protection you are using is sufficiently suited for the job at hand, just bring it in to your eye physician and have him or her review it to be sure your eyes will be safe.”

While the large majority of eye injuries occur at work, a significant percentage of the remaining injuries occur in or around the home. Everyday household and yard tasks pose dangerous hazards to the eyes if not anticipated and preventative measures are taken.

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One quick way to avoid an accident when working around the car is to keep an approved pair of safety glasses in the car. Tucked under a seat or in the trunk, they will be out of the way when driving, but easily accessible should the battery need to be jumped or a tire changed. Flying debris, battery acid or sparks can cause severe damage from an improperly jumped battery.

Other outside activities which require care include lawn and garden work. When operating a lawn mower or edge trimmer be careful of small stones or rocks as they can be turned into dangerous projectiles if put through either of these machines. In addition, when chopping or splitting wood or working with any type of power saw or other power equipment, protective glasses are a must.

Inside the house, everyday household cleaners can also pose risk to eyes. Before using, it is important to review all labels and be sure chemicals with strong fumes are used in a well-ventilated area and are applied away from the body and the eyes. Accidentally spraying toward or in the eyes can destroy the surface of the eye and could even be blinding.

“When possible accident outcomes include permanent eye damage and possible blindness it just makes sense to wear approved eye protection when doing any type of work that might be hazardous,” Dr. Tortora said. “A little bit of prevention can go a long way and benefit you for life.”

Dr. Tortora, a board certified ophthalmologist, is host of “The Hawaiian Eye Show,” a weekly informational radio program about healthy vision. He and his colleagues at Hawaiian Eye Center are committed to educating the public about the importance of preventative eye care. To learn more about a variety of eye health issues, please call the Hawaiian Eye Center at 621-8488 where *“life has never looked better.”*

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