

### Healthy Vision on the Job is Everyone's Business

*The Wisconsin Optometric Association encourages Americans to prevent workplace eye strain and eye injuries*

**MADISON, WIS.—** Whether using a computer or a sledge hammer to get the job done, the **Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA)** reports that visual discomfort, eye strain and eye injuries in the workplace are not only common, but cost billions in lost productivity each year. Research indicates that 2,000 U.S. workers sustain job-related eye injuries requiring medical treatment each day, 90 percent of which could be prevented with simple safety steps.

"Healthy vision is critical to successfully completing job-related tasks," said Dr. Marcus Neitzke, optometrist and WOA president. "And while most people think of construction or manufacturing as high-risk occupations where eye injuries are prevalent, even jobs requiring "smart phones," laptops and desktop computers can cause vision problems if not used properly. Small steps can make big changes to ease vision strain"

#### Go Easy on the PDA

Nearly half of all Americans spend five or more hours per day using a computer or a PDA (personal digital assistant), according to the **American Optometric Association's (AOA)** American Eye-Q survey (2009). Prolonged use of electronic devices may lead to symptoms of Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS) such as eye strain, dry eyes, headaches, fatigue, blurred vision and loss of focus.

- ✓ The WOA encourages all tech users to follow the below recommends, which will go a long way in keeping productivity up and discomfort down while working on electronic devices: Rest eyes by taking a 20 second break from the screen and looking at something 20 feet away
- ✓ Increase your electronic device's font size so it can be used at a distance more comfortable for your eyes
- ✓ View screens at moderate brightness, not too bright or too dim
- ✓ Reduce glare to ease reading; this can make a bigger difference than increasing the font
- ✓ Position devices slightly below eye level; this makes it easier for eyes to focus on reading material

#### Safer Sight On-Site

Many professions – from auto repair to health care – require protective eyewear to help reduce the risk of eye injuries. Yet the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that in approximately 60 percent of eye injury cases, workers failed to wear proper protective eyewear.

"Eye safety – whether at home or in the work place – is proven to prevent vision loss," said Dr. Neitzke. "The two main reasons workers experience eye injuries are either because they are not wearing eye protection or they are wearing the wrong kind of protection for the job."

The WOA and AOA encourage workers to understand the eye safety dangers of their profession, and to wear proper, fitted eye protection at all times. The associations also urge those who work in dangerous environments to be proactive in replacing eyewear that is old or damaged.

For more information about healthy vision on the job, visit [www.woa-eyes.org](http://www.woa-eyes.org).

#### About the Wisconsin Optometric Association

*The Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA) is a nonprofit affiliation of licensed doctors of optometry and associated businesses dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of the vision welfare of the people of Wisconsin. The WOA accomplishes its goals through: education and dissemination of information, organized governmental activity, legislation and regulation, mediation with consumer and public interest groups, and provision of collective benefits to its members. Approximately 650 doctors of optometry are currently members of the WOA located in nearly every county in the state. All members must be licensed to practice optometry by the State of Wisconsin. For more information, visit WOA's Web site at [www.woa-eyes.org](http://www.woa-eyes.org).*