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MARCH IS SAVE YOUR VISION MONTH: KEEP EYE SAFETY IN YOUR SIGHTS

The Wisconsin Optometric Association urges all workers to protect themselves from job-related eye injuries

MADISON, WI — Save Your Vision Month has consistently played a critical role in educating the public on the importance of proper vision and eye health care. Championing this cause are the member doctors of the **Wisconsin Optometric Association (WOA)**, who wish to remind all citizens to protect their eyes in school, at home, while playing sports, and, of course, at work. Regardless of whether you are using a computer or sledge hammer to get the job done, the [WOA](#) reports visual discomfort, eye strain and eye injuries in the workplace are not only common, but also cost organizations billions of dollars in lost productivity each year. According to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), about 2,000 U.S. workers sustain job-related eye injuries requiring medical treatment each day, many of which could have been prevented by taking simple safety precautions.

“Healthy vision is critical to successfully completing job-related tasks,” advises Dr. Jeff Sarazen, Wausau, WI optometrist and current WOA President. “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 Digital Devices

Results from the **American Optometric Association’s (AOA)** sixth annual American Eye-Q® survey show that more than half of all respondents reported experiencing eye strain or vision problems as a result of using electronic devices. Members of Generation Y report seeing the greatest impact, with 68 percent reporting technology-related vision and eye health problems. Prolonged use of digital devices can lead to Computer Vision Syndrome (CVS), which induces eye strain, dry eyes, headaches, fatigue, blurred vision and loss of focus.

The WOA encourages all users of this type of technology to follow the 20-20-20 rule, which will go a long way in keeping productivity up and discomfort down while working on digital devices. This rule is simple: every 20 minutes, rest your eyes by taking a 20 second break from the screen and looking at something 20 feet away.

Be Safer Sight On-Site

Many professions from auto repair to health care require protective eyewear to help reduce the risk of eye injuries. Yet in many eye injury cases, workers failed to wear proper protective eyewear. According to the CDC, the most common answer given by construction workers with eye injuries when asked why they weren’t wearing a pair of eye safety glasses or goggles was “I didn’t think that I needed it.”

“Eye safety, whether at home or in the work place, is proven to help prevent vision loss,” acknowledges Dr. Sarazen. “The two main reasons workers experience eye injuries are either they don’t wear eye protection, or they are wearing the wrong kind of protection for the job.”

Both the WOA and AOA encourage workers to understand the vision and eye health safety dangers of their profession and wear proper, fitted eye protection at all times. Those who work in dangerous environments also need to be proactive in replacing eyewear that is old or damaged. The Wisconsin Optometric Association proudly recognizes March as Save Your Vision Month.

For more information about healthy vision on the job, visit 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 website at www.woa-eyes.org.