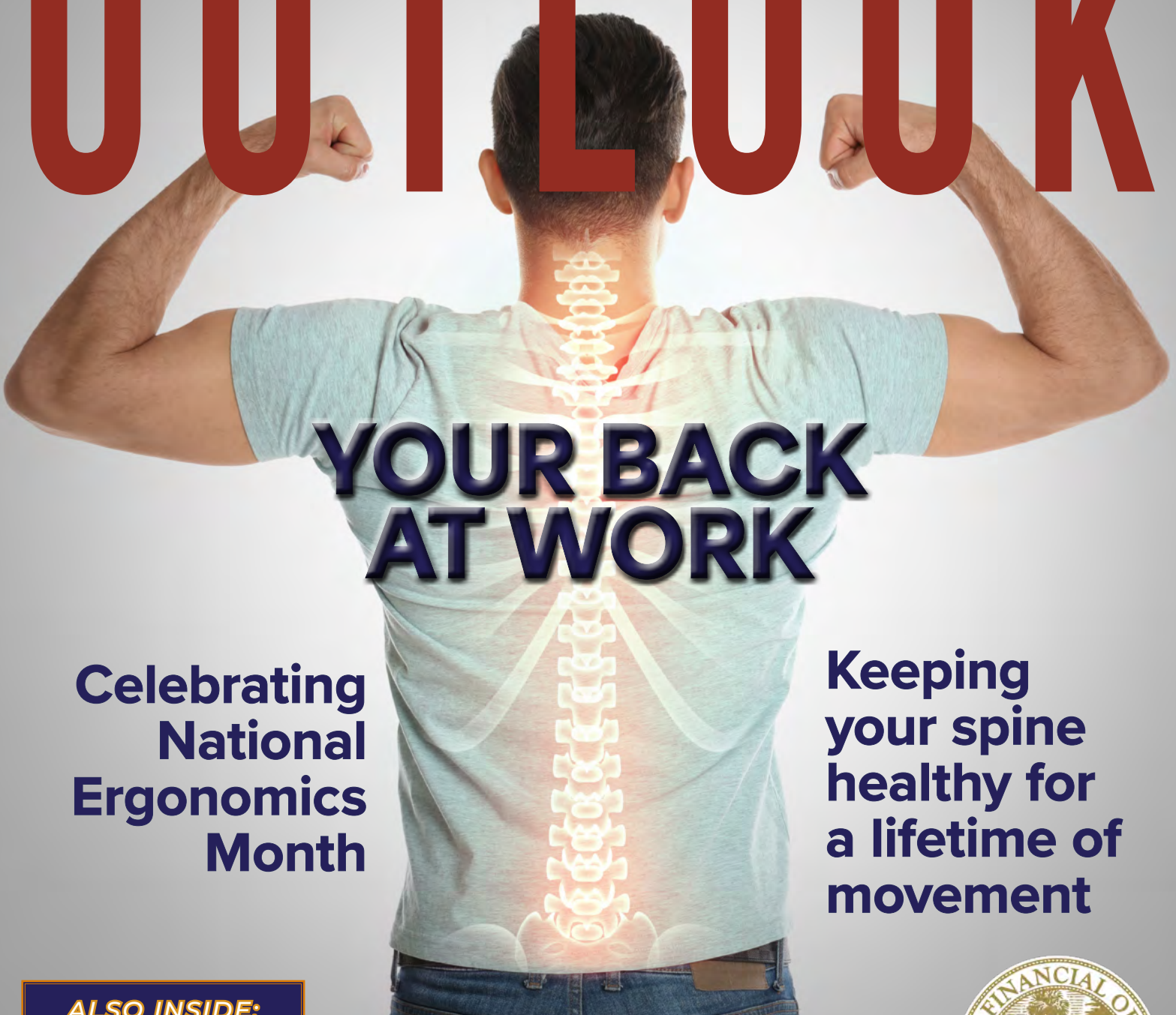


VOLUME 17 | ISSUE 4
OCTOBER - DECEMBER 2026

SAFETY & LOSS PREVENTION

OUTLOOK

A man is shown from the back, wearing a light blue t-shirt and jeans. His arms are raised in a 'strongman' pose. Overlaid on his back is a glowing, semi-transparent illustration of a human spine, showing the vertebrae and intervertebral discs. The spine is highlighted with a warm, orange-yellow glow, particularly in the lower back area.

YOUR BACK AT WORK

**Celebrating
National
Ergonomics
Month**

**Keeping
your spine
healthy for
a lifetime of
movement**

ALSO INSIDE:

*Disaster Preparedness:
Plan and Prepare to Be
Ready for Anything*

*October is Cybersecurity
Awareness Month: How to
Protect Your Organization
from Current Threats*

*Debunking Myths
About Safe Cellphone
Use While Driving*



OUTLOOK

Issue 4, Volume 17
October - December 2026

A Message from the Editor

"Safety is not the absence of events; safety is the presence of defenses."
-- Todd Conklin, Ph.D.



Most people rarely give much thought to the things that quietly support us every day -- the brakes in our cars, the air conditioning in our homes, even the bones in our bodies -- until they stop working the way they should.

One of the biggest challenges of loss prevention is that success can look almost identical to doing nothing; the lack of serious consequences could mean that the system is working well -- or it could just be dumb luck.

The Heinrich Principle illustrates the idea that major disasters do not exist in isolation and are often preceded by numerous warnings, less serious incidents, or close calls that reveal the same underlying risks. The car brakes that slip but engage just in time to avoid an accident, the tree that wavers in the storm but does not fall, the ache in your back that makes working uncomfortable but is still easily dismissed -- these are signals that tell us something needs some inspection, maintenance, adjustment, or attention.

Success in loss prevention can't be measured solely by how few major incidents have occurred; we must also ask whether we're paying attention to what the smaller incidents are telling us and strengthening our defenses before luck runs out. Are you listening?

Wishing you a safe and healthy new year!

Lori G. Taylor
Managing Editor

INTERAGENCY ADVISORY COUNCIL

MARK YOUR CALENDARS

The next Interagency Advisory Council meeting will take place in person at the Hermitage Centre on:

NOVEMBER 3, 2026
at 2:30 pm
Council Members:
Check your email soon for details & login instructions

Do you know a state employee, agent, or volunteer who has made exceptional contributions to the reduction and control of employment-related accidents?

Ask your agency's safety coordinator to submit a nomination for our:



Safety coordinators should submit nominations to the Division of Risk Management's Loss Prevention section at least two weeks prior to an upcoming quarterly IAC meeting. Nominee approvals will be made by IAC members during the meeting.

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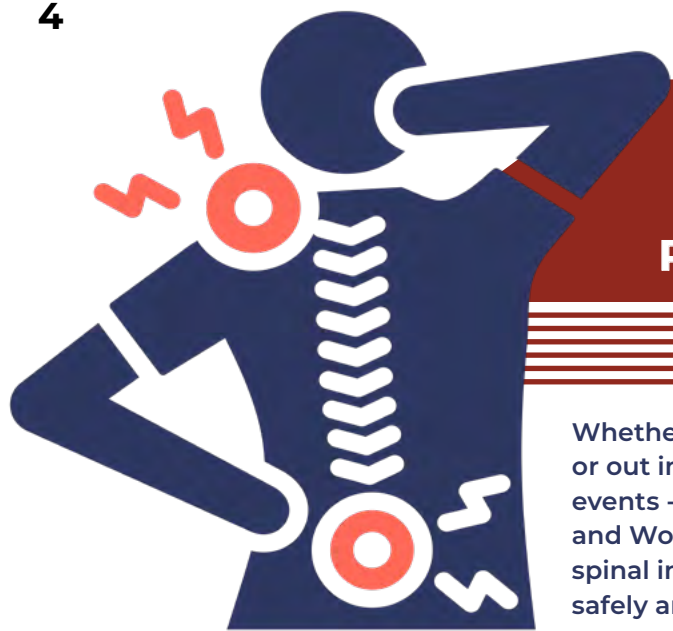
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BACK TO WORK

PROTECTING YOUR SPINE ON THE JOB

Whether your workday is spent behind a desk, behind the wheel, in an office, or out in the field, the way you work can affect your spinal health. October events -- National Ergonomics Month, National Chiropractic Health Month, and World Spine Day (Oct. 16) -- remind us to take a closer look at workplace spinal injury risks and the simple changes we can make to keep us moving safely and comfortably.

MORE THAN JUST LIFTING

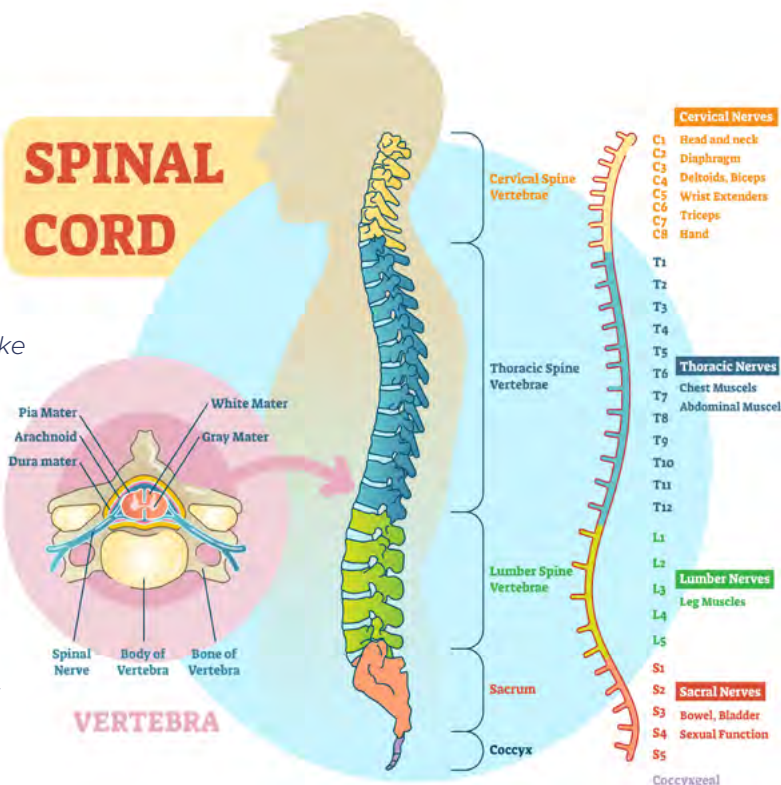
Our spines play a part in supporting our every move -- sitting, standing, lifting, bending, and twisting. Given the cumulative demands we place on our bodies every day, it's not surprising that back issues are extremely common. According to the World Health Organization, lower back pain is the leading cause of disability worldwide; about 90% of cases are classified as "non-specific," meaning the pain cannot be attributed to one particular disease or structural problem.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) estimates around **8.3 million adults** in the U.S. experience lower back pain attributed to work. They identify several key workplace conditions associated with lower back musculoskeletal disorders:

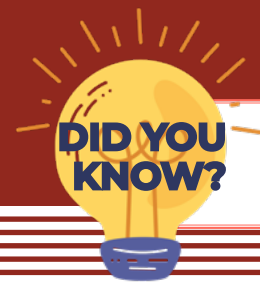
- heavy physical labor
- lifting or forceful movements
- bending or twisting
- awkward postures
- whole body vibration
- static work postures

These risk factors can appear in very different types of jobs: a maintenance worker may repeatedly bend and twist while cleaning or moving equipment; a grounds worker may lift bags of soil or operate vibrating machinery; a healthcare worker may lift and move patients; a law enforcement officer may spend long shifts on their feet or sitting in a vehicle.

Office workers are not immune from demands on the spine -- the National Institutes of Health (NIH) notes that sitting for prolonged periods at a desk with poor posture or inadequate seating often contributes to back problems. Many of these types of exposures can be reduced through better workstation design, but that is only one part of the equation -- even an ergonomically-designed workspace can lead to muscle fatigue, reduced blood flow, and spinal stress, if a position is maintained for too long (referred to as a "static work posture"). Regularly changing positions by standing up, walking down the hall, and taking small breaks to stretch when alternating tasks can help workers prevent back pain.



It's easy to take for granted just how much work our spines take on all day every day -- stabilizing, supporting, and helping us to move. The vertebrae provide structure to protect the spinal cord; discs cushion the bones of the spine; and muscles, ligaments, and tendons provide support during movement.



NIOSH has found no evidence that industrial back belts intended for use in heavy physical labor reduce back injuries or lower back pain; they recommend redesigning jobs and reducing lift hazards instead.

ACUTE VS. CHRONIC PAIN

Acute back pain is often caused by trauma, such as muscle or ligament strains or tears; stress caused by poor posture, awkward angles, or lack of movement; or overuse (lifting or carrying). Back pain can also be caused by other issues, such as illnesses or infections (intestinal or kidney pain), constipation, or menstruation. Acute back pain usually resolves with rest and basic care such as applying ice or heat or taking over-the-counter pain medications.

Chronic pain persists for 12 weeks or more and may be the result of a previous injury or an underlying condition, such as spondylosis (spinal arthritis), bone spurs, herniated discs (aka slipped or bulging discs), compression fractures, degenerative disc disease (age-related loss of disc tissue cushioning), spinal stenosis (narrowing of spinal canal), or scoliosis.

VARYING SYMPTOMS

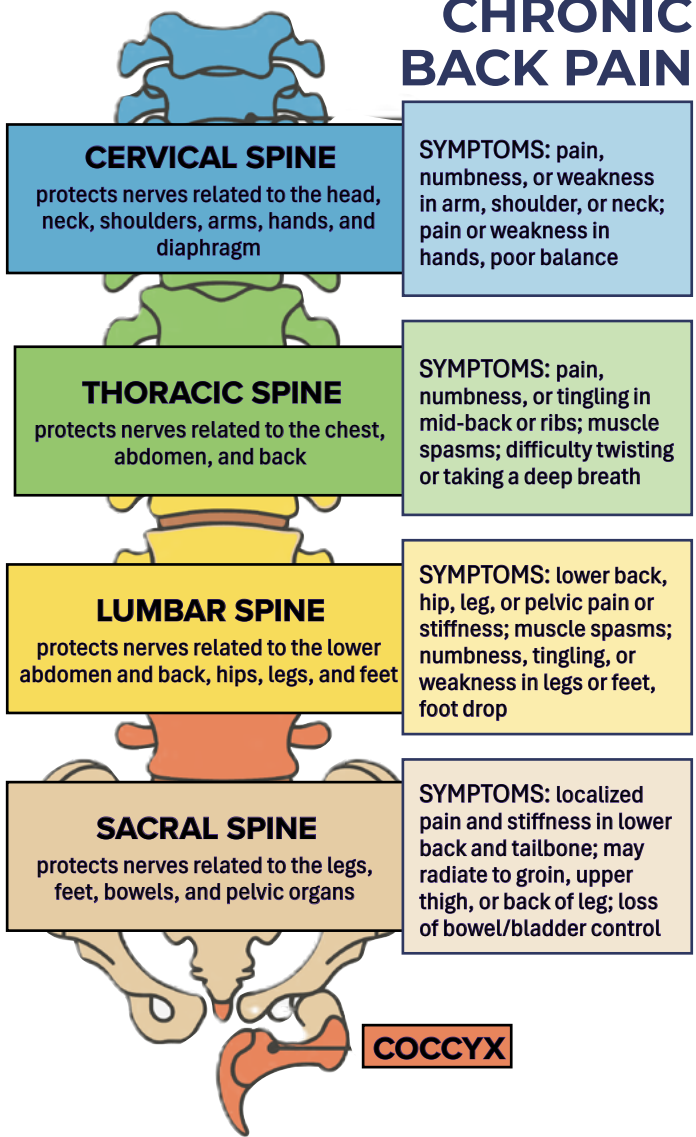
The bones of the spine protect the spinal cord, which acts as the primary conduit for all sensations and movement, with nerves that branch throughout the body. As a result, spinal problems don't always announce themselves as back pain; they may instead present as tingling fingers, numbness in a hand, weakness in an arm, or an aching shoulder or hip.

Pain originating from the spine can come on suddenly or gradually over time, and it can feel different depending on the location. Back pain can range from a dull ache to a sudden, stabbing feeling; it can come and go, feel worse in certain positions (like bending or crouching), or radiate across the body (such as down the back of the leg, known as sciatica). You may notice stiffness, trouble standing up straight, or muscle spasms.

WHEN TO SEEK TREATMENT

Chronic pain can worsen if left untreated. Typical treatment for back pain may include: physical therapy to increase flexibility and strengthen muscles; prescription pain relievers or muscle relaxers; topical pain relief patches or gels; cortisone injections; implanted nerve stimulators; or radiofrequency ablation. Very rarely is surgery necessary.

CHRONIC BACK PAIN

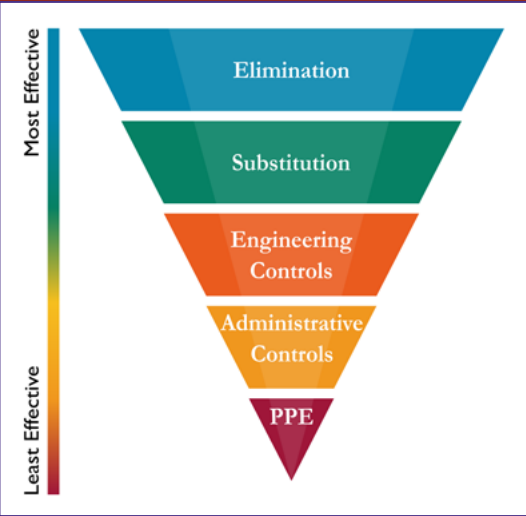


See a doctor immediately if your back pain:

- was caused by a fall or other injury
- is extreme, sudden, or severe
- does not improve after two to three weeks
- is accompanied by fever, numbness or weakness in the legs
- is accompanied by difficulty urinating or a loss of bowel or bladder control

ERGONOMICS

MAKE THE WORK FIT THE WORKER



USE THE PYRAMID

NIOSH recommends using the Hierarchy of Controls to identify, analyze, and control workplace factors that contribute to musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs); this means designing the work to fit the worker rather than expecting the worker's body to adapt to unsuitable work. For example, if an employee is regularly expected to move heavy objects, the hazard cannot be mitigated effectively by simply reminding him to "use proper lifting techniques." Ask whether the load can be made lighter, stored at a better height, transported with a cart, or moved with assistance from another person or machine.

The same principles apply whether in an office or on a warehouse floor. Start by aiming to eliminate or mitigate the hazard, then apply engineering or administrative controls, and add personal protective equipment last, if needed.

ERGONOMIC HAZARDS:	WHAT IT DOES	EXAMPLES
ELIMINATION	Removes hazardous task or exposure entirely	- Eliminate manual lifting by having supplies delivered directly to the point of use. - Eliminate repeated movement of heavy paper files by converting them to electronic records. - Redesign workflow to eliminate the need for bending or reaching.
SUBSTITUTION	Replaces the task, object, tool, or process with one that places less stress on the body	- Replace a 50-lb bulk container with smaller, lighter containers. - Replace a heavy hand tool with a lighter model. - Replace a high-vibration tool with a low-vibration model. - Replace a manually-operated tool requiring high grip force with a powered version. - Purchase supplies in packaging that is easier to handle.
ENGINEERING CONTROLS	Physically redesigns the workplace, equipment, or process to limit the worker's exposure to a hazard (force, repetition, posture, etc.)	- Use carts, dollies, hoists, lift tables, or other lifting equipment. - Install adjustable-height work surfaces and reposition materials to allow employees to work between knee and shoulder height. - Provide adjustable chairs and monitor arms. - Add handles to awkward loads. - Redesign tools to enable neutral positions.
ADMINISTRATIVE CONTROLS	Changes how, how often, or how long workers perform the hazardous task	- Rotate employees among tasks that use different muscle groups. - Limit duration of highly repetitive work & schedule recovery breaks. - Require team lifting for heavy loads. - Provide training on safe material handling and equipment use. - Vary sitting and standing tasks. - Keep machines, vehicles, and tools properly maintained to limit force and vibration.
PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT	Use physical equipment to reduce the worker's exposure or contact stress	- Provide knee pads for prolonged kneeling. - Provide padding where the body contacts hard, sharp, or vibrating surfaces. - Use well-fitting gloves that allow an effective grip.

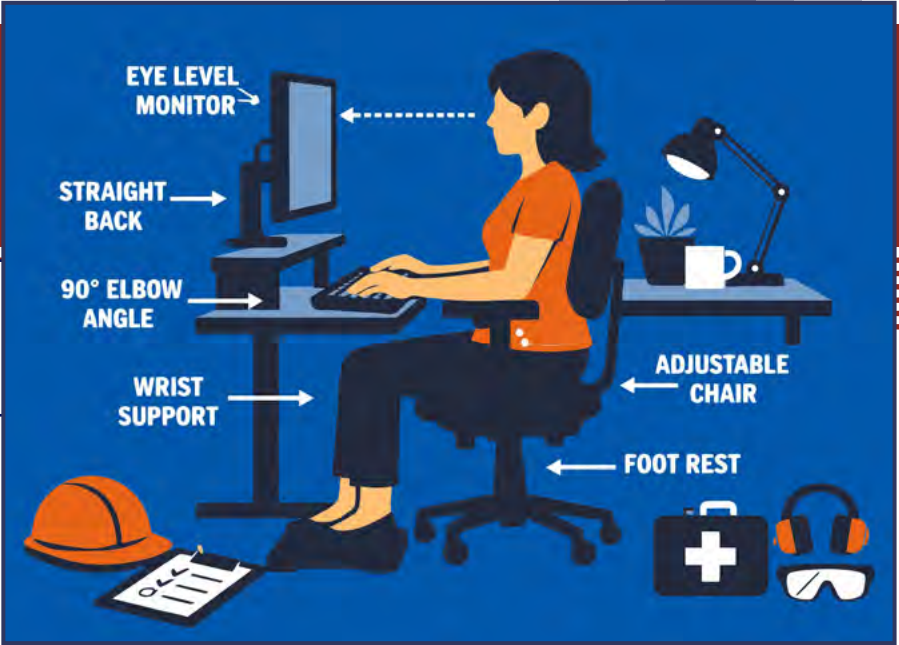
*OSHA cautions that PPE has limited effectiveness for ergonomic hazards.

OFFICE

WORKSTATION SETUP

Small adjustments can make a big difference over the course of time spent at the same workstation.

OSHA has provided the following checklists to help create safe and comfortable office work spaces that promote neutral postures.



WORKSTATION
- Head and neck are balanced and in line with torso (ears directly above shoulders, not bent forward or back). - Head, neck, and trunk are facing forward (not twisted to view monitor/work/documents). - Torso is vertical to slightly reclined. - Back is fully supported by chair lumbar support. - Shoulders and upper arms are relaxed (not elevated). Upper arms are in line with torso (not stretched forward unless supported by work surface). - Elbows are close to the body (not extended forward or outward unless supported by work surface or chair armrests). - Forearms are approximately parallel to the floor (90-100°). - Wrists and hands are straight in alignment to the forearm (not bent up, down, or sideways). - Thighs are approximately parallel to the floor or slightly elevated above knees; lower legs are approximately perpendicular to the floor. - There is sufficient room under the work surface so thighs have clearance space (not trapped between chair and table). - Legs and feet have sufficient forward clearance under the work surface so the user is able to get close to the keyboard/input device. - Feet rest flat on the floor or are supported by a stable footrest if the work surface cannot be adjusted. - Sharp or square edges that make contact with hands, wrists, or forearms are padded or rounded.



SEATING
- Backrest has height adjustability so support is provided for lower back (lumbar area). - Chair has a sturdy 5-leg base. - Seat width and depth should accommodate the specific user (seat pan should be wide enough for ease of egress and deep enough to support the entire thigh but not so deep that user cannot utilize lumbar support). - Seat front does not press against the back of user's knees and lower legs (seat pan not too long); thighs do not significantly hang off the front of the seat (seat pan not too short). - Seat is cushioned and rounded with a "waterfall" front (no sharp edge). - Seat height is adjustable and allows for proper alignment with the work surface. - Armrests, if used, should be adjustable (both up and down and in and out) and support both forearms while user performs computer tasks; they should not interfere with movement or positioning of the chair under the work surface. - Head rest (if provided) is adjustable and does not push the head forward past neutral. - Casters are appropriate for the floor surface (they move easily on carpet or other soft surfaces but do not move so easily on hard surfaces that the chair "scoots away" during sitting down or getting up from the chair). - Adjustments are straightforward and easy to perform while seated in the chair.

MONITOR

- 1. The monitor has sufficient adjustability so the top of the screen is at or below eye level so the user can read it without bending their head or neck down or back.
- 2. Adjustability is sufficient so users with bifocals/trifocals/progressive lenses can read the screen without bending the head or neck backward.
- 3. There is sufficient room so the monitor can be placed at a distance which allows the user to read the screen without leaning head, neck, or trunk forward or backward (about 18-20 inches or arm length).
- 4. Monitor is positioned directly in front of user to prevent the need to twist head or neck.
- 5. If multiple monitors are used, the position of the primary monitor is directly in front of the user and the other monitors are directly beside it. If time is split evenly between monitors, they are next to each other within a comfortable viewing angle with minimal head movement.
- 6. Glare from windows or lights is not reflected on screen causing the user to squint or assume awkward postures to clearly see the information on the screen.
- 7. Monitor brightness and contrast is adjusted for comfort.

KEYBOARD

- 1. Keyboard/input device platform is stable and large enough to hold a keyboard and pointing device.
- 2. Keyboard/input device platform can be adjusted so the hands are positioned over the keyboard with the elbows near the torso at 90-100°.
- 3. Keyboard can be adjusted to a horizontal or slightly negative slope.
- 4. Pointing device (mouse, trackball, joystick, etc.) is located right next to the keyboard so it can be operated without reaching.
- 5. Pointing device is easy to activate and the shape/size fits the hand; it may be desirable to have a device that can be used with either hand to provide periods of working rest.
- 6. Keyboard and pointing device are located as close to the midline of the body as possible and at the same level.
- 7. If a touchscreen device is used for data input, a detached keyboard and mouse are available if duration of use is more than two hours per day or 30 minutes at a time.
- 8. There are no sharp or hard edges that contact the wrists and hands.

GENERAL CONCEPTS

- 1. Workstation and equipment have sufficient adjustability so user is in a safe/supportive working posture and can easily make occasional changes in posture while performing computer tasks.
- 2. Computer workstation, components, and accessories are maintained in serviceable condition and function properly.
- 3. Items that must be accessed frequently are within easy reach, generally with the elbows close to the body. Items used occasionally can be at nearly full-arm reach.
- 4. Computer tasks are organized in a way that allows users to vary keyboard tasks with other work activities, or users are provided opportunities for micro-breaks or recovery pauses while at the computer workstation.
- 5. User has the ability to alternate between sitting and standing postures or activities that provide opportunities for movement and variability throughout the shift. Prolonged sitting or standing should be avoided.
- 6. Lighting levels are adjustable for differing tasks. Brighter lights should be provided for paperwork, and lower lighting should be used for general computer work.

MOBILE DEVICES

- 1. If laptop is used as a primary computer, it is set up using the same ergonomic principles as desktop computers; a separate keyboard and mouse are provided.
- 2. If laptops are used outside the office (e.g., on a plane, in a hotel), user postures should be changed regularly to improve neck and wrist posture, and duration of time on laptop should be minimized.
- 3. Laptops used in vehicles are set up at a comfortable angle and used infrequently; the user should take frequent breaks from computer tasks.
- 4. A separate keyboard and stylus are available when tablets are used for typing performed for extended periods of time.
- 5. Tablets and smartphones should be used with the shoulders relaxed, arms positioned near the torso, and neck in a neutral posture without excessive neck bending to view the screen.

ACCESSORIES

- 1. Document holder, if provided, is stable and large enough to hold documents (paper, binder, or books).
- 2. Document holder is placed at about the same height and distance as the monitor screen.
- 3. Wrist/palm rest, if provided, is padded and free of sharp or square edges that contact the wrists.
- 4. Wrist/palm rest allows user to keep forearms, wrists, and hands straight and in line when using the keyboard or pointing device. Height matches the front edge of the keyboard.
- 5. Telephone is positioned close to the work to avoid excessive reaches (18-20 inches).
- 6. Telephone can be used with head upright (not bent) and shoulders relaxed. If phone and computer are used at the same time, this may require the use of a headset.
- 7. Headset, if used, has a comfortable fit (not too tight or so loose that it will not maintain its position on the user's head).
- 8. Footrest is provided if the feet are not flat on the floor; it should be angled and support both feet.

HAVE YOUR OWN BACK
PROTECTING YOUR SPINE
IS UP TO YOU

Even the best administrative controls designed to prevent ergonomic injuries only work when you follow them.

Change positions regularly.

Avoid remaining seated, standing, or bent over in one position for prolonged periods.

Set up your workstation to fit you.

Adjust your chair, monitor, keyboard, and work surface rather than adapting your body to an uncomfortable setup. If needed, ask for a footstool or other additional supports.

Keep frequently used items within easy reach.

Repeated reaching, twisting, and bending can add unnecessary physical stress.

Use mechanical help when it's available.

Carts, dollies, hoists, stepstools, and other assistive devices exist to keep us safe; make use of them whenever they are needed, especially for long periods or repetitive work.

Keep loads close to your body.

When carrying a load, arms should be as relaxed as possible with elbows bent; having arms outstretched while handling a load increases physical demands.

Avoid twisting while lifting or carrying.

Move your feet and turn your whole body when you lift; hold the item you are carrying evenly distributed in front of you at a comfortable height.

Ask for help when needed.

Don't try to be a hero by trying to lift loads that are too heavy, bulky, or awkward to manage safely. A real hero asks for help instead of risking an injury that could affect the entire workflow.

Vary repetitive work or take breaks.

Alternate activities throughout the day or take breaks from repetitive tasks to reduce prolonged stress on the same muscles and joints.

Stay physically active.

Regular activity can help maintain strength, flexibility, and overall musculoskeletal health.

Report ergonomic concerns.

Discomfort can be valuable information. A workstation or task that repeatedly causes pain should be evaluated rather than simply endured.



DISASTER PREPAREDNESS



READY FOR ANYTHING HOW THE STATE OF FLORIDA PREPARES FOR ALL TYPES OF EMERGENCIES

In Florida, disaster preparedness naturally brings to mind hurricanes -- but the full picture of emergency management includes planning for any and all types of emergency situations that can disrupt communities and government operations. This is why the Florida Division of Emergency Management (FDEM) takes an all-hazards approach with its Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan, which establishes a statewide framework for preparation, response, recovery, and mitigation of disasters, bringing together state and local governments, federal agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private sector partners before they are needed.

MEET FLORIDA'S STATE EMERGENCY RESPONSE TEAM When a major emergency threatens or affects Florida, it rarely affects just one service -- a major hurricane, for example, may require evacuation transportation, sheltering, medical assistance, road clearing, utility restoration, distribution of resources, public information, and other logistical support, all at once. The State Emergency Response Team (SERT) coordinates the efforts of organizations to combine their expertise, personnel, and resources during emergencies. The team is organized around 20 Emergency Support Functions (ESFs), each with a designated lead agency ([see graphic on page 11](#)).

Florida's State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) in Tallahassee serves as its hub; their new 208,400 square foot facility, opened in February 2026, provides more than twice the previous operational floor space and includes infrastructure designed to withstand winds of up to 200 mph, three backup generators, a large video wall for weather and incident data, and loading docks capable of supporting major resource deployments.

The SEOC operates at three activation levels: Level 3 is monitoring; Level 2 is a partial SERT activation; and Level 1 is a full-scale activation involving all primary and supporting agencies under the state plan ([see graphic on page 11](#)).

THE ROLE OF STATE AGENCIES Florida state agencies and universities must be prepared to protect their own people, maintain essential operations, and support the statewide response. When SERT activates, the team can draw on resources contained within these organizations statewide when local capabilities are exceeded.

Florida law requires state facilities to maintain disaster preparedness and continuity plans that address essential functions and personnel, including employee notification and accountability, lines of succession, alternate facilities, protection of vital records and databases, and regular training and exercises. Certain state entities are also required to designate an Emergency Coordinating Officer, or ECO (similar to what DFS refers to as a safety coordinator), to serve as the primary link with FDEM and coordinate preparedness, response, and recovery activities.

WORKPLACE READINESS MEANS PREPARING EMPLOYEES Even an organization with an excellent emergency plan can still encounter problems if its employees are not well informed, trained, and prepared. People who are not prepared at home may understandably have difficulty reporting for work -- a necessity in order to sustain essential operations. FDEM recommends state agencies and universities encourage their employees to develop a plan that accounts for the needs of everyone in the household, including children, older adults, and pets ([see page 12](#)), as well as securing their home and property. Workplace notification systems, continuity instructions, and official communications should be established and communicated to all employees well in advance.

PREPARATION IS A CONTINUOUS PROCESS Emergency preparedness is often treated as a seasonal task: buy batteries in June, replenish the bottled water in August, check the hurricane forecast and fill the gas tank if a storm is on the horizon. But disasters don't strike on a schedule -- it's critical to be as prepared as possible at any given time.

 ESF 1: TRANSPORTATION Department of Transportation	 ESF 2: COMMUNICATIONS Department of Management Services	 ESF 3: PUBLIC WORKS & ENGINEERING Department of Environmental Protection	 ESF 4: FIREFIGHTING Division of State Fire Marshal
 ESF 5: INFORMATION & REPORTING Division of Emergency Management	 ESF 6: MASS CARE Department of Children & Families	 ESF 7: RESOURCE SUPPORT Department of Management Services	 ESF 8: HEALTH & MEDICAL Department of Health
 ESF 9: SEARCH & RESCUE Division of State Fire Marshal	 ESF 10: ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION Department of Environmental Protection	 ESF 11: FOOD & WATER Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	 ESF 12: ENERGY Public Service Commission
 ESF 13: MILITARY SUPPORT Florida National Guard	 ESF 14: EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Division of Emergency Management	 ESF 15: VOLUNTEERS & DONATIONS Volunteer Florida	 ESF 16: LAW ENFORCEMENT & SECURITY Florida Department of Law Enforcement
 ESF 17: ANIMAL & AGRICULTURAL ISSUES Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services	 ESF 18: BUSINESS INDUSTRY & ECONOMIC STABILIZATION Florida Commerce	 ESF 19: EMERGENCY FUEL Division of Emergency Management	 ESF 20: CYBERSECURITY & INFORMATION SECURITY Florida Digital Service

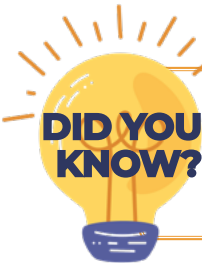
WHAT HAPPENS WHEN SERT ACTIVATES?

LEVEL 3 MONITORING	 DETECT ASSESS STAY INFORMED	- Normal monitoring / situational awareness - State Warning Point and FDEM staff monitor conditions - Agencies and ESFs that may need to act are notified	EARLY AWARENESS HELPS FLORIDA STAY AHEAD.
LEVEL 2 PARTIAL SERT ACTIVATION	 COORDINATE PREPARE TAKE ACTION	- Incident requires more state coordination - All primary / lead Emergency Support Functions are notified - SEOC staffed by FDEM plus the ESFs needed for the event - Resources may be coordinated or pre-positioned based on incident needs	A MORE COORDINATED RESPONSE BRINGS TOGETHER THE RIGHT PEOPLE AND RESOURCES AT THE RIGHT TIME.
LEVEL 1 FULL SERT ACTIVATION	 UNIFIED FULLY STAFFED AROUND THE CLOCK	- Full-scale state response - All primary and support agencies under the state plan are notified - SEOC staffed by FDEM and all Emergency Support Functions - State resources, missions and assistance are coordinated around the clock as needed	A STATEWIDE RESPONSE TO MEET EXTRAORDINARY NEEDS.

IN THE NEWS AUGUST 26, 2026

Governor Ron DeSantis announced the official rollout of the Coalition of Operational Readiness in Education (CORE) at Florida International University (FIU), a unique initiative meant to strengthen and modernize the emergency management industry through strategic partnerships with colleges, universities, training institutes, government agencies, and private sector organizations. CORE connects classroom instruction with workplace reality by providing college students with practical knowledge and hands-on experience through customized learning pathways, credentials, internships, apprenticeships, and other opportunities to better understand Florida's unique emergency management landscape. As CORE showcases potential careers within the field of emergency management, students will be offered specialized tracks to critical fields they may not have previously considered.

"Our goal is to reach every college, university, technical school, and trade school in Florida and create a model for emergency management workforce development that can be replicated across the country," said Governor DeSantis. FIU and ten other colleges have thus far committed to adopting the CORE program.



According to Florida law, you can obtain a 30-day refill of your prescription medication -- even if you have just refilled it -- if the county where you reside is under a hurricane warning issued by the NWS or state of emergency executive order declared by the Governor, or if the emergency operations center/emergency management plan has been activated.

PLAN & PREPARE

TAKE STEPS TO BE
READY FOR ANYTHING



STEP 1:
Form Your
Personal
Support
Network

Include at least three people outside of your home you trust to help you in an emergency situation. Give at least one person the key or passcode to your house or apartment. Make sure your support group knows where you store your emergency supplies and other documents and items important to you.

STEP 2:
Complete
a Personal
Needs
Assessment

Make a list of personal needs and resources needed for meeting them during a disaster: daily living needs (personal care, adaptive feeding devices, electricity-dependent medical equipment), cleaning up disaster debris, having transportation, dealing with blocked roads; have a plan for meeting these needs during an evacuation.

STEP 3:
Get Informed

Be aware of the specific hazards that threaten your home, workplace, and community (hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, wildfires, etc.). Know your evacuation zone and understand your home's ability to withstand potential storms. Learn about your community's disaster plans and warning systems. Sign up for local alerts at [AlertFlorida](#). Find out about special assistance programs -- citizens with disabilities or special needs who **register with their local emergency management office** may qualify for special sheltering or transportation programs.

STEP 4:
Create an
Emergency
Plan &
Disaster
Supply Kit

Decide in advance the circumstances that would necessitate evacuation for your household, and have a plan in place (where to go, what to take with you, evacuation routes, etc.). Your disaster supply kit should have supplies specific to your individual needs (see [FDEM's sample kit checklist on page 13](#)). Include contact information for loved ones, medical & insurance providers, financial institutions, and emergency services.

IN THE NEWS
SEPTEMBER 1, 2026

Governor Ron DeSantis issued a proclamation declaring September as Florida Preparedness Month, encouraging Floridians to take steps now to protect themselves, their families, and their homes from disasters that may impact the state. While preparedness is important year-round, September serves as a critical reminder to review disaster plans, restock emergency supplies, and know where to go if an evacuation is ordered as Florida enters the historical peak of hurricane season.

"Floridians should take this opportunity to ensure they are prepared for the remainder of hurricane season," said FDEM Executive Director Jared W. Perdue. "FDEM encourages residents to know their evacuation zone, make a family disaster plan, and build an emergency kit to save time, money, and stress now -- before a storm threatens the state."

**FLORIDA DIVISION OF EMERGENCY
MANAGEMENT RESOURCES
DURING AN EMERGENCY**

Stay tuned to local officials on your county's website:
**County Emergency Management
Websites**

Log on to the FDEM website:
www.floridadisaster.org

Call the State Assistance Information
Line (SAIL), which is activated during
emergencies to provide up-to-
date information and instructions
regarding the incident:
SAIL: 1-800-342-3557

DISASTER SUPPLY KIT CHECKLIST

- General**
- ☐ Two week minimum supply of medication, regularly used medical supplies, and a list of allergies
 - ☐ A list of the style, serial number, and manufacturer information of required medical devices
 - ☐ Batteries
 - ☐ Flashlights
Do not use candles
 - ☐ NOAA Weather Radio
Battery operated or hand cranked
 - ☐ Cash
Banks and ATMs may not be available after a storm
 - ☐ Cell phone chargers
 - ☐ Books, games, puzzles or other activities for children

- Phone Numbers**
- ☐ Maintain a list of important phone numbers including:
County emergency management office, evacuation sites, doctors, banks, schools, veterinarian, a number for out of town contacts, friends and family

- Clothing**
- ☐ Rain gear such as jackets, hats, umbrellas and rain boots
 - ☐ Sturdy shoes or boots and work gloves

- Special Needs Items**
- ☐ Specialty items for infants, small children, the elderly, and family members with disabilities

- First Aid**
- ☐ First Aid Manual
 - ☐ Sterile adhesive bandages of different sizes
 - ☐ Sterile gauze pads
 - ☐ Hypoallergenic adhesive tape
 - ☐ Triangular bandages
 - ☐ Scissors
 - ☐ Tweezers
 - ☐ Sewing needle
 - ☐ Moistened towelettes
 - ☐ Antiseptic
 - ☐ Disinfectant wipes
 - ☐ Hand sanitizer
 - ☐ Thermometer
 - ☐ Tube of petroleum jelly
 - ☐ Safety pins
 - ☐ Soap
 - ☐ Latex gloves
 - ☐ Sunscreen
 - ☐ Aspirin or other pain reliever
 - ☐ Anti-diarrheal medicine
 - ☐ Antacid
 - ☐ Laxative
 - ☐ Cotton balls
 - ☐ Q-tips

- Food and Water**
- ☐ Food
Nonperishable packaged or canned food and beverages, snack foods, juices, baby food, and any special dietary items to last at least 7 days
 - ☐ Water
1 gallon per person per day
 - ☐ Non-electric can opener
 - ☐ Paper plates
 - ☐ Napkins
 - ☐ Plastic cups
 - ☐ Utensils

- Important Documents**
- ☐ Insurance cards
 - ☐ Medical records
 - ☐ Banking information
 - ☐ Credit card numbers
 - ☐ Copies of social security cards
 - ☐ Copies of birth and/or marriage certificates
 - ☐ Other personal documents
 - ☐ Set of car, house, and office keys
 - ☐ Service animal I.D., veterinary records, and proof of ownership
 - ☐ Information about where you receive medication, the name of the drug, and dosage
 - ☐ Copy of Will
- *Items should be kept in a water proof container*

- Vehicle**
- ☐ Keep your motor vehicle tanks filled with gasoline

- Pet Care Items**
- ☐ Pet food and water to last at least 7 days
 - ☐ Proper identification
 - ☐ Medical records/microchip information
 - ☐ A carrier or cage
 - ☐ Muzzle and leash
 - ☐ Water and food bowls
 - ☐ Medications
 - ☐ Supplies for your service animal

Find more disaster
preparedness tips at
FloridaDisaster.org



CYBERSECURITY AWARENESS MONTH

OCTOBER 2026



Artificial intelligence has accelerated the rate at which hackers can find and take advantage of weak spots in our computer systems, putting individuals, organizations, and our country as a whole at risk. The Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) work together to fight cyber crime, focusing on protecting national infrastructure, hunting hackers, and finding software bugs before they can be exploited by bad actors. But they rely in large part on individuals to practice cybersecurity in their homes, businesses, and organizations.

Cybersecurity is not a single defensive action, but many actions that reinforce one another. This year's theme, "The 3Rs of Cybersecurity," covers the whole cyber lifecycle: **Reduce** what can be exploited; **Replace** what can no longer be protected; and prepare to **Recover** quickly from incidents by being prepared.

THE 3RS OF CYBERSECURITY

REDUCE VULNERABILITIES

QUESTION: What can be exploited by an attacker?

SOLUTIONS

for Individuals & Organizations:

- turn on automatic updates for all connected devices
- use multifactor authentication (MFA) for all online accounts
- use unique passwords stored in a password manager, or use passkeys
- remove unused apps and extensions from devices and delete unused accounts

Organizations should also:

- maintain an accurate inventory of hardware, software, cloud services, and network-connected assets
- establish procedures for routine and emergency patch management
- continuously scan for vulnerabilities and prioritize those known to be actively exploited
- limit users and applications to only the least access needed
- train employees to recognize phishing, social engineering, and suspicious authentication requests

REPLACE END-OF-SUPPORT DEVICES

QUESTION: What can no longer be adequately protected?

SOLUTIONS

for Individuals & Organizations:

- make sure their devices are receiving security updates
- check support status for home routers and online devices and replace them when the manufacturer stops releasing firmware/security updates
- consider the manufacturer's support lifespan as part of the purchase decision
- erase all personal information from devices before disposal, and remove old devices from online accounts

Organizations should also:

- track end-of-life/service dates as part of asset management, and flag systems approaching these dates so replacement can be included in budget/procurement planning
- replace unsupported network infrastructure such as operating systems, servers, firewalls, etc. with supported versions
- include security support requirements in purchasing contracts
- thoroughly decommission retired systems and remove obsolete accounts

RECOVER QUICKLY TO SUSTAIN OPERATIONS

QUESTION: How can the harm of a successful attack be mitigated?

SOLUTIONS

for Individuals & Organizations:

- regularly back up important files to a location separate from the device (i.e., a secured cloud site or disconnected external drive), and periodically confirm that file backup is successful
- keep recovery codes and passkeys in a safe location
- know how to remotely lock or erase a lost device
- change credentials, check recovery settings, and review connected accounts immediately if an account is compromised

Organizations should also:

- develop and maintain a formal cybersecurity incident response plan integrated with business continuity/disaster recovery plans
- identify essential functions to determine restoration priorities
- maintain multiple backups of critical systems/data and regularly test restoration from backup
- plan alternative operating procedures for periods when email, networks, databases, and other essential technology is unavailable

IN THE NEWS

CYBERCRIME CASE STUDY: COCA-COLA / FAIRLIFE

JULY 16, 2026

The Coca-Cola Company disclosed that Fairlife, its dairy subsidiary, had detected unauthorized third-party access to part of its computer environment, including production-related systems, in connection with a ransomware attack. Coca-Cola responded by temporarily suspending all U.S. Fairlife production operations, while insisting that product quality and safety were not affected.

JULY 21, 2026

Reuters reported that a ransomware group called Anubis had claimed responsibility, saying it had locked Fairlife servers, stolen approximately 1 terabyte of data, and threatened to publish the information unless a ransom was paid. Coca-Cola has not publicly disclosed the initial point of entry, the particular vulnerability or credential involved, or exactly which production systems were compromised; the company did confirm that "certain data" was taken, acknowledging this was not simply encryption and disruption, but data exfiltration.

JULY 27, 2026

Eleven days after publicly announcing the attack -- Fairlife had resumed the majority of production at all four of its U.S. facilities, saying the incident was not expected to have a material effect on its financial condition or results.

LESSON: A cyberattack can shut down a facility, but having incident-response and business-continuity protocols in place can mitigate the damage and get things up and running again quickly.



CURRENT THREAT: MESSAGING APP PHISHING (AKA SMISHING)

The FBI and CISA have issued several Public Service Announcements warning that cyber actors associated with the Russian Intelligence Service (RIS) are targeting government officials, military personnel, political figures, journalists, and other high value-individuals through phishing attacks involving commercial messaging apps. The attackers have not compromised the apps themselves or their encryption; instead, they impersonate support services to trick users into providing backup recovery keys, verification codes or account PINs.

A stolen recovery key can allow attackers to access backed-up message histories and potentially take over an account -- even a newly created account using the same phone number. Anyone who accidentally shares a recovery key should immediately generate a new one in the app's settings. This invalidates the old key for future access, although it cannot prevent attackers from viewing backups they may have already downloaded.

MESSAGE #1: The Setup

Dear user,
This is Signal Security Support ChatBot.
Another Samsung Galaxy S 10 device is connected to your account.
Location: Drohobych, Lvivska oblast, Ukraine - IP: 178.212.97.211
If it were not you, send: / Cancel

Dear user,
We noticed suspicious activity on your device, which have led to data leak. We have also detected attempts to gain access to your private data in Signal. To prevent this, we ask you to pass verification procedure, which will take less than a minute. Please let us know as soon as you are ready.
Best regards,
Signal support

Signal Security Team
Recently, attempts to hack users of our messenger with the connection of third-party devices to the account have become more frequent.
In this regard, Signal updates Terms of Service & Privacy Policy and introduces Mandatory Two-factor Verification for users.

Stay safe and thank you for using the most secure messenger with end-to-end encryption.

Dear user,
This is Signal Security Support ChatBot.
We have noticed suspicious activity on your device, which could have led to data leak. We have also detected attempts to gain access to your private data on Signal. To prevent this, you have to pass verification procedure, entering the verification code to Signal Security Support ChatBot. DON'T TELL ANYONE THE CODE, NOT EVEN SIGNAL EMPLOYEES.

Our system has detected a recent login attempt to your account from an unrecognized device or location. As a security measure, we have blocked this attempt and sent a verification code via SMS to your registered phone number.

If this was NOT you:

To secure your account and block this unauthorized access please reply to this message with the verification code you just received.

If this WAS you: You can safely ignore this message. The login attempt will be automatically approved shortly.

Thank you for helping us keep your account secure.

Smishing: How It Works

RIS cyber actors send phishing messages masquerading as automated CMA support accounts (see examples), attempting to deceive targets into taking an action, such as clicking a link or providing verification codes or account PINs. If the user performs any of the requested actions, they unwittingly provide the actors with unauthorized access to their account either by adding the attacker's device as a linked device or through a full account takeover. As the campaign evolves, actors may use additional techniques, such as malware to infect the victim.

Action Required: Data Recovery Needed
Your Signal Account data (messages and media) is at risk of permanent loss due to a sync issue.

To avoid losing your messages and media:

1. Go to Settings -> Backups -> Configure -> Enable Backups -> View Recovery Key.
2. Copy the recovery key to your clipboard.
3. Paste the key into this chat.

This links your existing backup to your account. Failure to do this may result in losing access to your account and all stored data.

MESSAGE #2: The Takedown

More screen time leading to eyestrain for desk workers: survey

S+H Staff
July 29, 2026



Photo: Helen King/Gettyimages

Rancho Cordova, CA -- More than 7 out of 10 desk workers who recently took part in a survey say they've experienced digital eyestrain and other visual discomfort related to increased screen time.

Conducted by market research company Workplace Intelligence, the survey involved 800 human resource/employee benefit leaders and 1,200 adult full-time workers in the United States.

A report accompanying the survey results states that the workers averaged 99.2 hours of screen time a week -- a 2.3% increase from the previous year. As a result, 71% of the workers reported experiencing screen-related visual discomfort.

According to a press release, the condition contributed to tired or uncomfortable eyes, blurred or double vision, and difficulty keeping visual focus after extended screen use. The workers also indicated that digital eyestrain limited their productivity, leading to an average of 7.5 lost hours of productive time each week.

Meanwhile, 87% of the HR officials said their organizations should increase efforts to help all workers decrease screen time.

The workers seem to agree: Only 34% reported that their employer encourages breaks to help prevent digital eyestrain, while 32% say their organizations offer education related to minimizing visual discomfort.

The report highlights the American Optometric Association's recommendation to follow the 20-20-20 rule to reduce eyestrain caused by excessive screen time: Every 20 minutes, take a 20-second break to look at something 20 feet away (see below).

Originally published
in Safety + Health
Magazine



Eyestrain 101

The American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO) cautions that staring at screens for long periods can cause eyestrain, fatigue, and headaches; it can also cause eye irritation, leaving eyes red, parched, and feeling gritty. People who look at screens for two or more hours in a row every day have the greatest risk of eyestrain.

Here are the AAO's recommendations for preventing digital eyestrain:

Keep your screen at arm's length. When working with a desktop computer, keep the screen about 25 inches from your face, or about an arm's length away. If doing so makes the words on the screen appear too small, adjust the font size.

Mind the glare. Screen glare from lighting can irritate your eyes; try a matte filter for your screen to help diminish glare.

Give your eyes rest time. AAO notes that eyestrain occurs after long and continuous screen use, and recommends workers follow the "20-20-20 rule": Take a break every 20 minutes by looking at something 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This will allow your eyes time to relax.

Avoid dry eyes. Try using a personal humidifier at your desk to help keep your eyes moisturized. Additionally, keep eye drops handy to lubricate your eyes if they feel particularly dry.

Pay attention to lighting. If your screen is too bright, your eyes have to work harder. Adjust your screen's brightness, as well as the lighting in your office or home, to reduce eyestrain.

If these steps don't help, AAO recommends seeing an ophthalmologist.

Cellphone use behind the wheel: myths and truths



Photo: Luis Alvarez/Gettyimages

Safety Tips | S+H Staff
May 25, 2026

Workers are four times more likely to crash when using a cellphone while driving. If you talk and drive at the same time, your brain can't do either well. For example, it's nearly impossible to read a book and have a phone conversation. While driving, this often results in crashes because of delayed braking times and a lack of attention to traffic signals.

Here are some common beliefs about using cellphones behind the wheel -- followed by the facts.

Myth: Drivers can multitask.

Truth: The human brain can't do two things at once. Instead, it switches between the two tasks, which slows a driver's reaction time.

Myth: Talking on a cellphone is the same as talking to a passenger.

Truth: Adult passengers are copilots. They can help drivers stay alert to prevent crashes. People on the other end of a phone call can't see the road.

Myth: Hands-free cellphone use is OK.

Truth: Drivers talking on a cellphone can miss up to half of the driving environment, including red lights, stop signs, and pedestrians.

Myth: It's safe to use a cellphone at a stoplight.

Truth: Even at stoplights, drivers need to remain attentive to all hazards, even when stopped. Texting at a stoplight still causes a driver to be distracted.

Myth: Voice-to-text is safe.

Truth: A recent AAA study found that a driver can be distracted for up to 27 seconds while sending a voice text.

Originally published
in Safety + Health
Magazine



NSC's online Defensive Driver Training course is available to a select number of state of Florida agency and university employees.



New Users: (not yet registered)

1. Click the button above to go to the website (training.nsc.org/myfloridacfo) and click **NEW USER**.
2. Type in your Access Code (provided by your agency or university) and click **REGISTER**.
3. Complete the New User Registration form, including a unique Login ID and a password of your choice, and click **CREATE ACCOUNT**. You will receive a confirmation email containing your Login ID; keep this email for your records in order to access the site again later.
4. On the **MY COURSES** page, click on the course title to begin your training.

Returning Users: (registered)

1. Click the button above to go to the website (training.nsc.org/myfloridacfo) and click **RETURNING USER**.
2. Type in your Access Code (provided by your agency or university) and click **LOGIN**.
3. On the **MY COURSES** page, click on the course title to resume your training.

PLEASE NOTE:

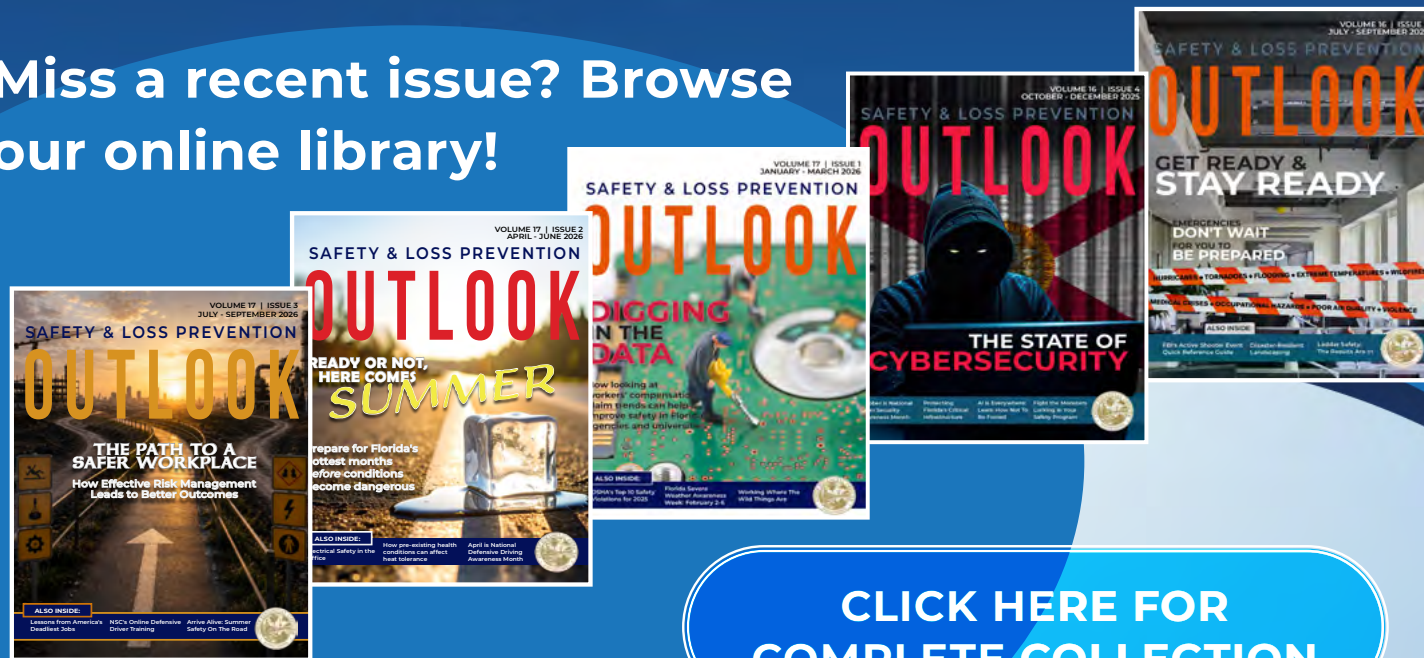
- The session will time out after five minutes. ALWAYS click SAVE AND EXIT in the course, then logout on the upper right side of your account page to save your progress.
- Do not login to your account on more than one browser/tab/device at a time or you will lose your progress.

For technical support, please contact the Help Desk at traininghelp@nsc.org or 833-367-2576.



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