



# SAFETY ALERT # 17



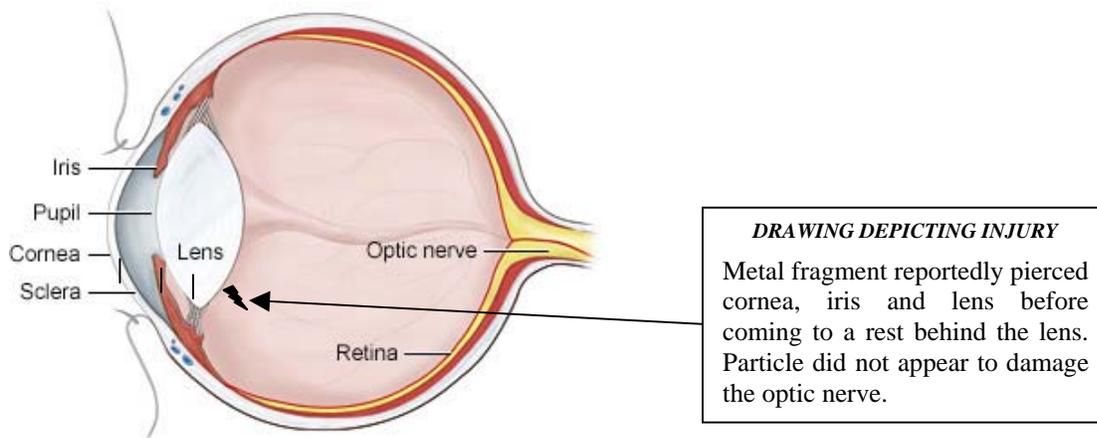
February 22, 2007

*In the interest of keeping everyone safe CAMSAFETY will be sharing injury information with preliminary root cause analysis. This information is intended to make you think not assess blame. If you have an incident that you would like to share send us the information and we will pass it along.*

## EYE INJURY RESULTING IN LOSS OF SIGHT IN ONE EYE

### What Happened

The worker has been blinded in his left eye as a result of metal fragment produced during a jobsite maintenance procedure. An air hammer was being used to remove large teeth on an asphalt pulverizer. Eye protection was not in use when the fragment reportedly pierced the cornea, iris and lens of the eye. The fragment came to rest behind the lens (*see anatomy of eye below*). The employee did not even feel pain when the splinter pierced the eye. However, he began to see “floaties” in the eye some time later. The physician thought that under the circumstances, it was a miracle that he was not immediately and permanently blinded! The damaged lens was removed in order for a replacement lens to be inserted in approximately 4 to 6 months. No damage was done to the optic nerve. It’s still not certain that a new lens will restore his vision



### Applicable MIOSHA Standards

#### **R 408.40624 Use of face and eye protection.**

**Rule 624.** (1) Face and eye protection, as prescribed in R 408.40623, shall be used where a hazard or risk of injury exists from flying objects or particles, harmful contacts, exposures such as glare, liquids, injurious radiation, electrical flash, or a combination of these hazards.

### Prevention

This one’s pretty easy, wear eye protection appropriate for the hazard.

### **Remember the Four Basic Types of Eye Hazards**

Basically, there are four types of particles that cause eye injuries on the job.



- 1.) Unidentified Flying Objects: These microscopic objects consist of dust and particles floating around the air, generated by wind, equipment, or cleaning operations. When working in dusty conditions, wear eye protection. Even a small speck in the eye can lead to trouble.
- 2.) Particles resulting from chipping, grinding, sawing, brushing, hammering or using power tools: These particles move at an amazing speed and strike with the force of a bullet. Wear eye protection any time over-head operations are performed. It may be advisable in some jobs to wear safety goggles under a full-face shield.
- 3.) Invisible hazards: You are unable to see the injurious light rays generated by welding operations or laser beams. And their effects often are not felt until hours later. Wear eye protection required when using such equipment. And if you happen to be working nearby, don't look in the direction of welding arcs or where a laser beam is being used.
- 4.) Liquids: Hot liquids, such as tar or asphalt, solvents, paint, and solutions for cleaning masonry or metal, can cause serious eye injury if splashed in your face. The use of proper eye protection, possibly a full-face shield, is essential when transferring liquids between containers and when using caustic or acid cleaners.

#### **General Information**

Recently a member called me with a question regarding eye protection. His company was cited by MIOSHA when a worker, who was cutting concrete block, did not have side shields on his ANSI Z87.1 prescription glasses. In an Informal Settlement Agreement (ISA) MIOSHA was willing to reduce the fine but would not lower the citation from Serious to Other Than Serious (OTS). They indicated that in cases of eye hazards they consider everything serious and would not lower the citation classification regardless of the circumstances. Given the case discussed above I'm not so sure that's a bad idea.