

Safety for Car Dealers

Retail car sales and repair dealerships are busy places. Some of the potential employee hazards are more obvious than others. However, there are practical ways to help prevent injuries to service techs, body shop and parts employees, and also sales and administrative people (who typically incur infrequent but severe and costly workers' compensation claims).

The most likely causes of serious employee injuries for car dealers are:

- Trips, slips and falls
- Lifting or carrying heavy parts and components
- Repetitive activities, most often for administrative employees who accomplish computer related tasks, but also for members of service departments
- Severe cuts and lacerations
- Vehicle accidents involving salespeople and parts drivers

Minor cuts, lacerations, bruises, burns and eye injuries are common sources of less damaging incidents. However, eye mishaps from such things as grinding, exposure to irritant liquids or chemicals and improper use of compressed air can cause serious lost time injuries. Service technicians often suffer eye contact with dirt or other material while performing overhead work on vehicles. At a minimum, these often require minor medical attention and result in lost production time.

The keys to success in preventing car dealership employee injuries include:

1. Recognizing that unsafe conditions, procedures and employee actions (and usually a combination of these) cause injuries. All of these causes can be controlled effectively.
2. Developing a practical, task-specific Injury & Illness Prevention Program that emphasizes: effective identification and correction of hazards; employee training and accountability; supervisor involvement and responsibility; inclusion of all employees and all departments; and communication.
3. Ownership and management that communicate commitment, support and the expectation that all members of the dealership team will work together to establish and maintain the safest possible workplace.

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