

# Modern Workplace (Rx) Eye Safety

## A Burgeoning Service and Practice Opportunity for ECPs



### VM STAFF

NEW YORK—Did you know that more than 2,000 people injure their eyes at work every day? And of these injuries, an estimated 10 percent to 20 percent will cause temporary or permanent vision loss, Prevent Blindness points out. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) believes that the right eye protection can lessen the severity of those injuries and even prevent 90 percent of them.

For eyecare professionals, establishing a role in the prescription sector of the occupational and industrial safety business can help extend their expertise in new ways and can also enhance their relationships with workers, their families and organizations in their local communities, experts tell Vision Monday. Specialists are prepared to help ECPs build those relationships and set up Rx safety product solutions with an increasingly diverse range of specialty frames and lens materials.

Many plano safety options are out there. But the prescription aspect of safety is a critical, sometimes sight-saving, necessity for many employees/workers. A new survey this year, from Specsavers Corporate Eyecare, showed that there is a real

need for prescription safety eyewear. In a survey of over 500 U.K. companies, on average a third (33.6 percent) of employees who require safety eyewear have an Rx requirement.

Some employers choose to provide over-goggles to people who wear prescription glasses, rather than offer prescription safety eyewear. However, wearing two sets of lenses can cause reflections, which can impact clear vision, and can be uncomfortable. This means over-goggles are far from the ideal solution for employees who need safety eyewear and have prescription requirements, pointed out Jim Lythgow, director of strategic alliances at Specsavers.

Safety eyewear experts, laboratories and providers in the U.S. agree that compliance among wearers is paramount. This is helped by new materials, design features and technologies that make today's safety eyewear choices more comfortable and functional for employees of all shapes and sizes, for both men and women, for industrial, fabrication, health care, pharmaceutical and some high-tech settings.

In fact, some modern office technology company and laboratory settings are putting extra strain on employees' eyes, with some companies pointing out

computer and mobile screen glare as an increasing eyestrain hazard in the workplace—one also requiring a sensitivity to prescription wearers' needs.

New Rx safety products combined with easy-to-manage inventories and dispensing options, can create consistent revenue for eyecare practices and optical retailers as these professionals widen their scope of expertise and care.

The American Optometric Association (AOA) posts a range of information about eye hazards in the workplace and emphasizes the role that eyecare professionals can play in helping companies create safe work environments, ranging from industrial and manufacturing settings to laboratory and pharmaceutical offices.

The AOA offers several fact sheets and guides that are downloadable on its website to help ECPs better understand the role they can play by taking part in local Rx Safety initiatives and dispensing. That information is found at [www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/protecting-your-vision#4](http://www.aoa.org/patients-and-public/caring-for-your-vision/protecting-your-vision#4).

On the following pages, VM takes a top-line look at just a few of the Rx Safety collections, products and programs on offer from suppliers, laboratories and distributors around the country. ■

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## ArtCraft Optical Continues Its Rx Safety Legacy

The ArtCraft USA Workforce safety eyewear includes plastic and metal frames for men and women with styling, fashionable colors, quality materials and proven sizes. For over 25 years, the collection has continuously expanded with new lines and models. USA Workforce prescription safety eyewear meets ANSI Z87.1-2010 standards.

According to ArtCraft's Charlie Eagle, "Over the last few years, we have seen a significant increase in our safety business in parallel to the growth of the manufacturing sector. The industry for Rx Safety frames overall is constantly growing as more industries and vocations make safety glasses mandatory. Regulations on the global level continue to become more stringent for industries such as oil and gas, mining, construction and many others."

Eagle pointed out, "In addition to a substantial increase in our safety business due to the growth in manufacturing and regulations, larger players have exited the market which has provided us with new



**USA WORKFORCE**

opportunities. We have consistently grown our safety business over previous years."

ArtCraft is launching two new lines of USA Workforce Rx Safety frames in Q4 2019.

"By listening to our end-users, we will be launching a new USA WorkForce WF690 non-conductive safety frame. The new WF690 line is an ultra-comfortable, one wrap style with enhanced full protection foam seal and tight rubber gasket options. With the same rugged Grilamid material as the WF590, it is the latest

advancement in nylon polymers, ideally suited for safety Rx eyewear. The high-quality foam is fully sealed, will not crumble, and both the gaskets and foam seals are removable and replaceable. Each frame comes with two replacements and snap-in head strap for enhanced user experience," he said.

The new WF974 is inspired from blending modern and popular sunglass frame styles and color schemes into a functional safety product. The WF974 USA Work-

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## Essilor Rx Safety Programs Streamline Choice and Service for Employers and ECPs

Essilor's growing prescription safety business has been focusing on "the technology that makes working with Essilor easier, streamlined and more efficient for employers, employees and for eyecare professionals," according to John McMahan, senior director of the Essilor Safety Eyewear Division.

As a leading manufacturer of optical lenses in the U.S., Essilor offers such lens technologies as Varilux, Crizal, Transitions, Xperio UV and EyeZen, available in all prescription safety eyewear. "This helps ensure that employees will experience their best possible vision in all situations while on the job. Then, we combine these technologies with the impact and chemical resistance of rugged polycarbonate materials. The result is workplace eyewear that is durable, accurate, comfortable, and meets all the latest ANSI Z87.1-2015 standards," the company added.

Essilor's Rx safety business offers products programs



and services to a range of fields including the aerospace industry, construction, food packaging, oil and gas, pharmaceutical and other industrial programs.

Stated McMahan, "ECPs make additional revenue from dispensing our Essilor Prescription Safety Eyewear and have the ability to secure personal lens orders (including friends and family) from a safety lens customer." He added, "Essilor has the best innovation in lenses and quality and service. Essilor has won Supplier of the Year numerous times from some of the most prestigious organizations in the country."

Essilor Prescription Safety Eyewear offers frame and lens packages, competitive sampling and a large network of efficient, quality-driven labs.

Some of the advantages of a prescription safety eyewear program:

- Expands eyecare services available to your patients. Growing your eyeglass selection to include Essilor Prescription Safety Eyewear provides your patients with the convenience of selecting their prescription safety glasses at the same time they select

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## Hilco Vision's New 100% Made In USA Rx Safety Is a Highlight Within a Broad Offering

PLAINVILLE, Mass.—Earlier this year, Hilco Vision moved into new territory with the debut of the first 100 percent Made in U.S. Rx Safety frames from its OnGuard industrial safety eyewear division. Available in four attractive non-conductive metal free styles that are 100 percent made from USA materials and molded and assembled by a U.S. employee in the company's home state of Massachusetts.

Style features include comfort fit temples made of soft touch material providing added grip and superior comfort, a replaceable bridge that maximizes comfort and extends product life, available with a full seal option as well. US110 and US120 are offered in two color options and one size per style. The OnGuard Made in USA styles meet ANSI Z87.1 and CSA Z94.3 industry standards for Rx



Safety Impact, the company said.

Bob Woyton, senior director of marketing, reported that Hilco's Rx Safety business has been increasing for several years. He added, "The program has benefits for both broad based safety programs and the independent ECP. It's part our injection molded product line which is the fastest growing category in safety. Not only do

patients tend to choose these types of products, but they do not cannibalize fashion eyewear sales.

Woyton also observed, "Prescription safety eyewear is an underserved market. There is a far greater number of patients that have occupations that require safety eyewear but are not part of a mandated safety program than those that are part of one. Couple that with ECP initiatives in dispensing multiple pairs of eyewear. Safety is a natural fit to lifestyle dispensing and services a consumer need.

"It's not only embraced by patients because of the safety needs, but it also lessens the wear and tear of their fashion eyewear. And for ECPs looking to supplement sales eroded by managed care, it's really a great solution," he said. ■

## Hoya Safety: Providing Better Sight and Protection for Employees

**P**roviding quality safety prescription eyewear is one of the most important things we do within the vision care industry," pointed out Bruce Scott, VP and global manager, Hoya Global Safety. "We all strive across this great industry to give people the gift of better sight; but to protect someone's sight goes even further as it means an employee is able to go home at the end of a work day and enjoy their family. This is what gives us purpose at the Hoya Safety Division."

Scott reported that Hoya's like-for-like (comparative) revenues in North America for Hoya's Safety vision "have grown steadily every year, including the past 12 months. "That's quite an accomplishment considering what we are seeing in the industrial segment of our economy. A key indicator of the health of our economy are the railroads; and unfortunately, rail car utilization—which has been growing steadily each year this decade—is currently at levels below 2016.

"Add to this the uncertainty surrounding Washington's tariff wars and we have industries delaying or curbing their spend as they work to absorb new tariffs while also trying to determine if those same tariffs are short term or



long term policies. All of this uncertainty impacts everyone's business outlook. This makes me especially thankful for the growth we continue to see in 2019."

From a new product perspective, Hoya has invested in new groundbreaking technology which will have key applications within the safety eyewear market in the coming year. Added Scott, "We are also continuing with our strategy of developing new Pentax frame styles, such as the just-released Pentax ZT500. This new frame specifically addresses the growing trend toward multi-purpose eyewear, as it gives the option of switching from prescription safety eyeglasses to prescription safety goggles in just seconds."

Independent ECPs should always view safety work as a way to increase their patient base, Scott said,

reinforcing the view of other Rx safety experts. "While small businesses will continue to visit their local ECPs for safety eyewear needs, large national companies need specific programs created and managed by the Hoya Safety Division to fulfill their safety prescription eyewear needs.

"Through our partnerships with ECPs across the country, we send manufacturing and industrial employees to these local ECPs for important eye health exams while also creating new patients for the ECP by way of the employee's spouse and children. For those select ECPs who strive to work directly with their local employers, Hoya's Eyes on Safety program provides a turnkey solution for helping them provide the best safety prescription eyewear solutions," Scott said. ■

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## Kenmark Wolverine Rx Safety: New Product Options Help ECPs Develop Steady Sales

Attention to durable safety frame details and sportier designs in lighter materials are driving much of Kenmark's Wolverine Rx safety frame sales, pointed out Jason Wehlage, Kenmark's VP of product and design. "We are seeing continued success with our Dura-Lock side shield, as well as with the lightweight, nylon wrapped styles which take on a sportier look and sunglass feel," Wehlage said.

How can ECPs benefit from taking an active role in Rx safety programs? According to Wehlage, "It really comes down to the independent practices being a destination for all their eyewear needs, and our reps do a great job of educating practices on the potential to reap the benefit. Usually, safety eyewear is not a product displayed for the masses, but by offering a small capsule for their clientele, it allows the ECPs to capture the customers who will fulfill their needs elsewhere."

As Kenmark noted, "For over 130 years, Wolverine is the brand that uniquely binds American ingenuity and



craftsmanship. Born of work, they make every product as enduring and tenacious as the people who wear them. Today, they provide high quality boots, shoes, apparel, eyewear and gear for their customers. The eyewear is made using the same high quality products as



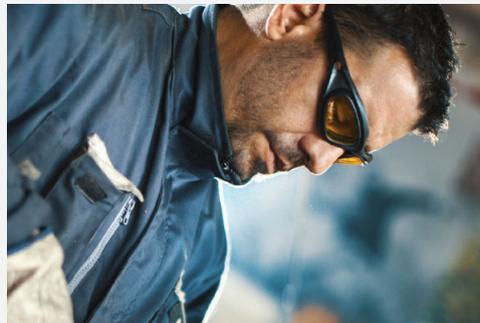
their boots and gear, ensuring the same durable and dependable performance. Wolverine Safety Eyewear is the only branded safety eyewear collection in the optical industry to employ the trademarked Dura-Lock side shield technology." ■

## Walman Optical: Rx Safety Offers New Ways to Discuss Eye Health With Patients

MINNEAPOLIS—Walman Optical's objective, the company says, is to generate new patients for optometrists, ophthalmologists and optical dispensaries by referring industrial customer base and industrial eyewear customers. Customized industrial eyewear programs can be developed by Walman and ECPs.

Meg Klaers, who oversees Walman's Rx Safety programs, pointed out that independent eyecare professionals are instrumental in sharing messages of eye protection and eye health.

She added, "Digital eye strain, migraines, back, neck and shoulder pain are becoming quite common so blue light protection conversations are a must. On another note, DIY projects inspired by Pinterest and HGTV means that ECPs have a brand new way to connect with their patients and prescribe protective eyewear during eye exams. These are things every patient should be aware of and likely are exposed to, so now is the time to create



a safety eyewear offering and give way to potential second-pair sales."

She noted "Practices can also avoid costly warranty jobs if the patient is wearing the right frame for the task at hand—dress eyewear for everyday and protective eyewear for blue light and work projects."

Walman's Rx Safety programs are supported by a range of safety product suppliers. Among some of the

newer options, Klaers noted, "With the increasing use of energy efficient lighting and a rise in the awareness of the negative impacts it can have on the health of employees in any working environment, customers are asking for blue light products more so than ever. Also, wrap frames continue to gain popularity which brings a greater need for anti-fog coatings."

### Walman's prescription safety program includes:

- Specialized custom tailored Safety Eyewear programs.
- Limited administrative involvement by your staff.
- A wide selection of safety frame styles for every application.
- Dispensing services provided by a nationwide network of eyecare professionals.
- Dependable four- to five-day service on most prescription orders. ■

## ArtCraft Optical, continued

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Force non-conductive model features a wide peripheral view range, improved temple comfort, reinforced and integrated side shields and a sleek modern style.

ArtCraft sells via wholesalers, brick-and-mortar stores and partners.

ArtCraft opened its doors on Feb. 18, 1918, making it the oldest ophthalmic metal frame manufacturer in the U.S. Company founder, Charles J. Eagle, was originally a Swiss tool maker and his total focus became the production of only the finest quality frames for the eye-wear industry. The third generation of the Eagle family now leads the company. ■



## Essilor, continued

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their fashion eyewear or order contact lenses.

- Increases patient traffic to your practice. Helping someone with their safety eyewear needs doesn't just result in additional prescription safety eyewear fittings. Happy patients are more likely to refer family, friends and co-workers.

- Strengthens your community presence. Fostering relationships with your prescription safety eyewear patients' employers and local businesses raises awareness of you and your practice and builds a loyal patient base. ■

