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HEALTHY VISION AT RISK THE MOST IN THE HOME

-Prevent Blindness America Urges Public to Protect Eyes When Doing Household Chores and Yard Work-

CHICAGO – Most people do not think about wearing eye protection while cleaning, cooking, doing yard work or working in the garage. However, half of all eye injuries occur when doing these everyday chores, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (AAO). Although 90 percent of all eye injuries are preventable by wearing the proper eye protection, the AAO reports that 78 percent of those injured were not wearing any protective eyewear.

Prevent Blindness America, the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization, has declared September as Home Eye Safety Awareness Month in an effort to remind everyone of the hazards in their own homes that could damage the precious gift of sight.

“All too often, when we're working around the house and doing chores that we've done a thousand times before without incident, we forget about the risks we take by not protecting our eyes,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “But all it takes is one split-second accident that could damage your vision for a lifetime.”

Prevent Blindness America strongly supports the AAO and the American Society of Ocular Trauma (ASOT) in their recommendation that every household have at least one pair of American National Standards Institute (ANSI) approved eyewear. The eyewear should have the “Z-87” logo stamped on the frames and can be purchased inexpensively at hardware stores and home building centers.

Almost 40 percent of home eye injuries are in the yard or garden. Debris from lawn mowers or power trimmers can unexpectedly enter the eye at a high rate of speed. Prevent Blindness America offers these tips on how to protect your eyes while doing work in the yard:

- When mowing, wear safety glasses with side protection or goggles. Check your yard and remove debris before mowing.
- When using a weed eater, wear safety glasses or goggles under a face shield.
- Wear goggles when working with power saws or trimmers.
- Turn off power tools when near an unprotected bystander, especially when young children approach. Bystanders and helpers need eye protection when around tools that are in use.

- Wear goggles to protect your eyes from fertilizers, pesticides and other yard chemicals, including lime dust.
- Read and follow all product instructions. Obey warnings on yard chemicals and equipment.

In addition, using household chemicals, including bleach or other cleaners, cause 125,000 eye injuries every year. Eye protection should be worn when using any chemical. Also, after any project, make sure hands are washed thoroughly before touching the eyes or face.

For more information on how to protect your eyes at home and eye protection recommendations, call Prevent Blindness America at 1-800-331-2020 or visit www.preventblindness.org.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, it's committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020 or visit us on the Web at www.preventblindness.org.

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