Wiring a green tomorrow

NECA IBEW
OREGON PACIFIC - CASCADE LOCAL 280

Joint Safety Committee
Oregon Pacific-Cascade Chapter, NECA
IBEW Local 280
Thursday October 24th, 2024
Meeting AGENDA

Roll call: meeting called to order, In-Person and Zoom
Approval of previous Meeting Minutes

1.0 Communications

1.1 Please check out NECA website for supplementary materials
1.2 How we doing on any needs you might have that I can help?
1.3 OSHA has finalized their HASCOM update becomes effective July 19, 2024
https://www.osha.gov/sites/default/files/HCS_side-by-side.pdf

2.0 New Business- (safety packets distributed)

2.1 Fall Protection new adaption 3600# gate strength (1910)
2.2 Making sure we are doing internal safety audit and documenting them

3.0 OSHA Injury/Incidents (July-December)

Recordable

3.1 Right side chest strain drilling up on a ladder 7.22
3.2 Left middle finger dislocated while reversing drill, glove got caught 7.31
3.3 Worker in attic pulling wire felt pop in neck 8.20.24

First Aid/Near-miss

3.4 Roto hammer extended drilling- overexertion 8.13

4.0 Class Schedule- Posted online

All NECA Contractors are reminded that work related accidents and incidents should be reported via the Accident/ Incident report to the NECA office for consideration by the committee. If you need a copy of the report, contact the Chapter office.

IMPORTANT REMINDER: The variance granted to NECA/IBEW by OR-OSHA requires participation by both Labor and Management Representatives at the Joint Innovative Safety Committee. For the Committee to be viable and provide assistance to Contractors and IBEW Members we need to have consistent attendance of all committee members.

Next Meeting: November 21th, 2024

Joint Safety Committee
Oregon Pacific-Cascade Chapter, NECA
IBEW Local 280
Thursday September 26th, 2024
Meeting MINUTES

Roll call: meeting called to order in person
Approval of previous Meeting Minutes

Communications

We did a follow up on options for remote workers regarding devices which enable remote worker to communicate when cell service is poor or non-existent.

Reviewed and discussed an incident involving working on a live MCC

Discussed OSHA's policy on remote workers recordability of incidents while working from home.

Please see NECA web portal for downloads

OSHA Injury/Incidents (July-December)

Recordable

1.1 Right side chest strain drilling up on a ladder 7.22
1.2 Left middle finger dislocated while reversing drill, glove got caught 7.31
1.3 Employee tripped over metal and cut hand resulting in 7 stitches ?

First Aid/Near-miss

1.4 Roto hammer extended drilling- overexertion 8.13

Class Schedule- Posted online

Next Meeting – October 24th, 2024

Adjournment

September 26, 2024

Vaughn Pugh
Integrity Safety-Consultant

POWERFUL TRADITION ELECTRIFYING FUTURE

OREGON PACIFIC-CASCADE CHAPTER

Safety Meeting Packet

October 2024

1040 Gateway Loop, Suite A ◆ Springfield, OR 97477

541-736-1443 Office ◆ 541-736-1449 Fax

2024 LABOR HOURS RECAP
ALL SIGNATORY CONTRACTORS

Local 280

Contract Type	Annual Total		Average Hrs/Mo	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inside	755,592	8	94,449	74,012	101,934	100,773	87,884	98,875	95,375	83,897	112,842				
Inside Appr.	215,781	8	26,973	18,960	26,703	29,014	24,119	27,498	30,518	25,839	33,130				
MAI	0	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0					
Material	47,325	8	5,916	5,609	6,660	6,323	5,321	6,074	6,350	4,908	6,080				
Residential	74,213	8	9,277	6,746	12,107	9,655	8,335	10,120	9,123	7,581	10,546				
Residential Appr.	38,443	8	4,805	3,512	5,006	5,602	4,412	5,080	5,597	3,532	5,702				
S & C	131,003	8	16,375	13,307	17,510	18,882	16,439	17,807	15,744	14,183	17,131				
S & C Appr.	41,326	8	5,166	3,633	4,927	5,131	4,877	5,833	5,352	5,447	6,126				
Support Tech/MOU	39,144	8	4,893	5,417	7,965	8,376	5,621	2,967	2,483	2,988	3,327				
TOTAL 280	**1,342,827**	8	**167,853**	**131,196**	**182,812**	**183,756**	**157,008**	**174,254**	**170,542**	**148,375**	**194,884**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total NECA	**1,182,384**	8	**147,798**	**114,608**	**160,181**	**163,168**	**138,068**	**156,810**	**151,628**	**126,775**	**171,146**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
% NECA	**88.05%**	8		**87.36%**	**87.62%**	**88.80%**	**87.94%**	**89.99%**	**88.91%**	**85.44%**	**87.82%**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**

Local 659

Contract Type	Annual Total		Average Hrs/Mo	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inside	152,857	8	19,107	14,003	19,007	21,836	18,414	21,394	17,770	17,353	23,080				
Inside Appr.	59,059	8	7,382	5,743	6,772	8,892	7,354	8,059	6,608	6,729	8,902				
Material	3,768	8	471	300	378	565	493	585	440	482	525				
Residential	3,253	8	407	381	392	57	453	516	461	496	497				
Residential Appr.	2,557	8	320	366	332	391	318	302	208	290	350				
S & C	7,068	8	884	584	861	958	998	1,026	746	798	1,097				
S & C Appr.	7	1	7	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0				
Total 659	**228,569**	8	**28,571**	**21,377**	**27,742**	**32,699**	**28,030**	**31,889**	**26,233**	**26,148**	**34,451**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total NECA	**172,206**	8	**21,526**	**15,350**	**20,963**	**25,542**	**21,036**	**24,950**	**19,575**	**18,868**	**25,922**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
% NECA	**75%**	8		**72%**	**76%**	**78%**	**75%**	**78%**	**75%**	**72%**	**75%**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**

Local 932

Contract Type	Annual Total		Average Hrs/Mo	Jan	Feb	March	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inside	91,479	8	11,435	10,071	11,612	12,194	11,305	12,095	12,070	10,248	11,884				
Inside Appr.	34,470	8	4,309	3,824	4,504	5,168	4,253	4,472	4,168	3,494	4,587				
Residential	2,209	7	316	0	327	145	392	173	494	418	260				
Residential Appr.	4,942	8	618	378	545	580	699	762	931	554	493				
S & C	5,788	8	724	455	975	985	800	844	531	485	713				
S & C Appr.	1,657	7	237	0	184	397	235	186	248	154	253				
Total 932	**140,545**	8	**17,568**	**14,728**	**18,147**	**19,469**	**17,684**	**18,532**	**18,442**	**15,353**	**18,190**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total NECA	**111,172**	8	**13,896**	**11,471**	**13,943**	**16,524**	**13,713**	**14,693**	**15,114**	**11,695**	**14,019**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
% NECA	**79%**	8		**78%**	**77%**	**85%**	**78%**	**79%**	**82%**	**76%**	**77%**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**
Grand Total	**1,711,941**	8	**213,993**	**167,301**	**228,701**	**235,924**	**202,722**	**224,675**	**215,217**	**189,876**	**247,525**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total NECA	**1,465,762**	8	**183,220**	**141,429**	**195,087**	**205,234**	**172,817**	**196,453**	**186,317**	**157,338**	**211,087**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Total % NECA	**86%**			**85%**	**85%**	**87%**	**85%**	**87%**	**87%**	**83%**	**85%**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**	**#DIV/0!**

2024 LABOR HOURS RECAP
NECA MEMBERS

Local 280

Contract Type	Annual Total		Average Hrs/Mo	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inside	666,118	8	83,265	64,139	91,106	89,245	76,790	87,341	85,290	72,597	99,610				
Inside Appr.	188,479	8	23,560	15,966	23,445	25,431	20,953	24,348	27,545	21,919	28,872				
MAI	0	0	#DIV/0!	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0				
Material	42,240	8	5,280	5,160	6,095	5,686	4,578	5,365	5,484	4,290	5,582				
Residential	46,381	8	5,798	3,854	5,927	6,615	5,602	6,559	6,273	4,497	7,054				
Residential Appr.	31,271	8	3,909	2,462	4,171	4,728	3,450	4,126	4,724	2,710	4,900				
S & C	130,478	8	16,310	13,048	17,217	18,487	16,209	20,289	15,081	13,458	16,689				
S & C Appr.	42,173	8	5,272	4,932	4,871	5,030	4,865	5,815	5,200	5,397	6,063				
Support Tech/MOU	35,244	8	4,406	5,047	7,349	7,946	5,621	2,967	2,031	1,907	2,376				
Total 280	**1,182,384**	8	**147,798**	**114,608**	**160,181**	**163,168**	**138,068**	**156,810**	**151,628**	**126,775**	**171,146**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Local 659

Contract Type	Annual Total		Average Hrs/Mo	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inside	117,368	8	14,671	10,417	14,765	17,052	13,696	17,004	13,579	12,789	18,066				
Inside Appr.	42,347	8	5,293	3,956	4,798	6,718	5,576	6,085	4,676	4,572	5,966				
Material	2,383	8	298	112	208	407	315	408	283	295	355				
Residential	2,126	8	266	181	219	309	301	305	227	282	302				
Residential Appr.	907	8	113	100	112	98	150	115	64	132	136				
S & C	7,068	8	884	584	861	958	998	1,026	746	798	1,097				
S & C Appr.	7	1	7	0	0	0	0	7	0	0	0				
Total 659	**172,206**	8	**21,526**	**15,350**	**20,963**	**25,542**	**21,036**	**24,950**	**19,575**	**18,868**	**25,922**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

Local 932

Contract Type	Annual Total		Average Hrs/Mo	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Inside	73,239	8	9,155	7,733	9,157	10,537	8,931	9,643	9,975	7,952	9,311				
Inside Appr.	28,313	8	3,539	3,173	3,714	4,392	3,547	3,684	3,488	2,693	3,622				
Residential	641	4	160	0	0	0	40	0	278	224	99				
Residential Appr.	1,787	8	223	110	160	213	160	336	594	193	21				
S & C	5,503	8	688	455	696	985	800	844	531	479	713				
S & C Appr.	1,689	7	241	0	216	397	235	186	248	154	253				
Total 932	**111,172**	8	**13,896**	**11,471**	**13,943**	**16,524**	**13,713**	**14,693**	**15,114**	**11,695**	**14,019**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**
Grand Total	**1,465,762**	8	**183,220**	**141,429**	**195,087**	**205,234**	**172,817**	**196,453**	**186,317**	**157,338**	**211,087**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**

NECA
OREGON PACIFIC CASCADE CHAPTER
NATIONAL ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION

Safety Training Topics

November 2024

Tools – Hand Tool Safety

Tools – Hydraulic and Pneumatic Tools

Tools – Powder-Actuated Tools

Tools – Power Tool Safety

The Safety Attitude

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Tools – Hand Tool Safety

WHY THIS IS IMPORTANT

A misapplied hand tool can easily result in injury.

A worn or damaged tool can easily result in injury. Tool-related injuries are 100% preventable. Check tools before you use them.

Poor tool use and maintenance habits are common.

If the tool slips off the part you're doing electrical work on, it may result in more than skinned knuckles-you could come in contact with energized parts.

PICK THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB

Do not use a screwdriver, wrench, or other tool as a hammer. Use a hammer, instead. If you use a ratchet as a hammer, you'll damage the mechanism and it will slip later.

Use insulated tools around energized equipment. Electrical tape wrapped on the shank of a screwdriver is not suitable insulation.

Avoid using adjustable wrenches. Use the correct size box end or open end wrench.

Do not use pliers to turn nuts or bolts.

When using a slotted screwdriver, use the correct size blade for a given slot. Use Phillips head tools for Phillips head fasteners, Torx™ head tools for Torx™ head fasteners, and so on.

Do not use a screwdriver as a pry bar.

A screwdriver with a fatter handle reduces wrist strain. Use hardened, industrial-quality tools.

REPLACE WORN TOOLS

Replace any tool if the plating is chipped or peeling.

Replace a screwdriver if the tip is chipped, bent, or rounded off.

Replace a box end wrench if the box edges aren't sharp or true.

Replace an open end wrench if the jaws are no longer square.

Replace an adjustable wrench if the jaws have noticeable play, the mechanism slips or binds, or the jaws are rounded.

Replace a socket wrench if the wrench binds, if the locking mechanism no longer holds, or the wrench won't easily switch from forward to reverse.

Replace individual sockets if they are cracked, they don’t stay on the wrench or extension, or if the faces or corners are no longer true.

Replace adjustable pliers if the jaws slip or bind. Replace them if the jaw grooves are worn too much for an effective grip.

Replace or sharpen any cutting tool that has lost its edge. Replace wire strippers and cutters that are dull.

MAINTAIN TOOLS

Keep tools clean so they don’t slip when you use them. Keep tools dry so they work properly. Keep them on a pad if storing them in a metal container.

Keep tools organized so you’re not tempted to use the wrong one.

Keep tools with moving parts, like adjustable pliers, lubricated.

WEAR PPE

Wear safety glasses to protect your eyes.

Wear work gloves as needed to protect your hands.

MISCELLANEOUS

When using a knife, push away from your body.

When using wire strippers, take care not to "aim" them at another person or at your own face.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- Why should you use the right tool for the job?
- What's the problem with using a worn or damaged tool?
- What should you use, if you need to hammer something? Why not a ratchet?
- How does the type of screw or other threaded fastener you're using help determine what type of screwdriver to use?
- When should you replace screwdrivers?
- When should you replace wrenches and pliers?
- When should you replace sockets and ratchets?
- When should you replace cutting tools?
- What are some rules about tool maintenance? Why is tool maintenance important?
- What are some PPE issues?

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Tools – Hydraulic and Pneumatic Tools

PRESSURE

Pneumatic tools operate with sufficient pressure to cause bodily harm or death. At the point of use for a distributed air system, the operating pressure is typically 30 PSI, but it can be much higher at the main air header. Portable pneumatic tools typically operate at the pressure of the air tank-usually 80 PSI or higher.

Hydraulic tools operate by forcing the volume of one chamber into the much smaller volume of another chamber, thereby multiplying the pressure. The explanation for the physics of this is called Bernoulli's Law. Pressure created by hydraulic tools can be several thousand PSI, which is enough to penetrate metals. Even manually-powered pump action punch sets generate significant pressure.

Check hoses and fittings before and during use. If a hose looks cracked or chipped, replace it.

Fix any leak immediately. A hose leak can mean a hose is about ready to pop off a fitting, or it can mean it is about to burst. A pinhole leak in a hydraulic line can slice off your leg.

Never aim a powered tool at another person.

Hold pieces down with clamps, rather than with your fingers or those of a coworker. If the work surface isn't amenable to clamping, use vise grip pliers or some other tool instead of your bare hands.

Safety glasses are the bare minimum PPE when using pneumatic or hydraulic tools. Depending on the situation, you may need to wear goggles or a face shield. Wear work gloves if exposure to metal shards is a possibility.

NOISE

The high-pitched whine of the spinning parts of the tool attacks your hearing at its boundaries. In fact, you may not even be able to hear noise that is destroying the cilia - those little hairs deep inside your ear. Wear hearing protection when using air-powered tools.

The noise of the compressor is usually loud enough to require hearing protection.

OIL

If a tool drips or leaks oil, wipe up the oil immediately. In addition to creating a slipping hazard, the oil may attack skin tissue or have vapors that are irritating or even harmful.

Wash your hands after using pneumatic or hydraulic tools, so you don’t ingest the oil that these tools use.

Pneumatic tools usually have mineral oil or some other light oil in their working parts. The air around you will have some oil in it as you use the tool. Provide some ventilation to reduce toxicity.

Hydraulic tools use hydraulic fluid. This fluid does not have the same properties as the motor oil in your car. It is usually more toxic.

Depending on the fluid, you may need to wear rubber gloves to service the tool. If you are unsure, read the manufacturer's manual. Servicing the tool can be any- thing from adding hydraulic fluid to replacing a leaky seal.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- Do air-powered tools pose much of a hazard?
- Do hydraulic tools produce enough pressure to penetrate metal?
- When should you check hoses and fittings?
- When should you fix a leak?
- Is a pinhole leak dangerous?
- Where should you never aim a powered tool?
- What are safe ways to hold work pieces in place?
- What PPE is appropriate for use with these tools?
- What are some noise issues to be aware of?
- What are some safety rules regarding the oil or other fluids used in hydraulic and pneumatic tools?

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Tools – Powder-Actuated Tools

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Only qualified operators should operate these tools. Powder-actuated tools are, in essence, firearms-and deserve the same level of respect and care.

As with firearms, anyone near the area of operation must wear hearing protection. Unlike firearms, operators and anyone nearby must wear face protection-not just safety glasses-because of the proximity of the point of impact.

Always inspect the tool before use. A misfire can be lethal, so en on the side of caution.

Never load a tool until yon are ready to use it. Unload the tool before breaks. Never leave a loaded tool unattended-unload it.

Do not leave loads unattended. If you do not have a way to lock np unused loads, leave them with your foreman or another person designated for that purpose.

Never point the tool at any person, whether it is loaded or not. Point it toward the ground, any time it is out of its case and not being used.

Rope off the work area and post the appropriate warning signs.

Use the correct tool for the application. For example, don’t use a low velocity tool in a high velocity application or use a high velocity tool in a medium velocity application.

Use the appropriate powder charge for the application. You can determine the powder load by observing the color of the load (gray, brown, green, yellow, red, or purple) and the case color (brass or nickel). Nickel cases always have a higher energy level than brass ones. Caseless loads are in the six lowest energy levels.

Determine base material suitability prior to using the tool.

DETERMINING BASE MATERIAL SUITABILITY

- Using a fastener as a center punch on the base material you intend to use, strike the fastener with one sharp blow.
- If the tip left a clear impression in the material and the point of the fastener is not blunted, proceed with the first test fastening.
- If the tip didn't leave a clear impression in the material or if the tip of the fastener is now blunted, the material is too hard.
- If the material cracks or shatters, the material is too brittle.
- If the fastener sinks into the material, the material is too hard.

LIMITATIONS

Do not use these tools in the presence of flammable gases, vapors, or dust. Do not use in the presence of other explosive materials.

Do not drive the fastener into an existing hole, unless you use a manufacturer-supplied guide for that purpose.

Do not drive fasteners into very hard or brittle materials unless you have fasteners and charges designed for that purpose. Such materials include cast iron, glazed tile, glass block, face brick, and hollow tile.

If driving into thin material that the fastener might completely penetrate, place a suitable backstop behind the material.

Don’t drive a fastener into a spot less than 1/2 inch from the edge of steel or 3 inches from the edge of masonry.

Don't drive fasteners into concrete unless the material is at least three times as thick as the depth of the fastener penetration.

OPERATING THE TOOL

Use the shield, fixture, adapter, and/or accessory as specified by the manufacturer. If in doubt, consult the manual or contact the manufacturer for assistance.

Align the tool so it is perpendicular to the work surface. Otherwise, you may get a collateral discharge. The manufacturer may allow you to make exceptions to this rule by providing a different procedure for special applications- this will typically include additional precautions.

Make a test fire, before making all the fastenings required for the job. Start with the lowest energy level recommended for the job. If the fastener doesn't penetrate deeply enough, try the next most powerful charge.

Should a misfire occur, hold the tool against the work surface for a full 30 seconds. Then, follow the manufacturer’s instructions exactly. If you get more than one misfire in a given shift, ask your foreman to help you determine the cause.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- Who can administer powder-actuated tool training?
- What protection must everyone use when near a powder-actuated tool operation?
- Who can use these tools?
- When should a tool be loaded? Unloaded? Why?
- What should you do with unused loads if you must leave the area?
- What are the rules for pointing the tool?
- How do you know you have the right charge for the application?
- How do you test the material to see if it is too hard?
- What if you need to drive the fastener into an existing hole?
- What should you do if a misfire occurs?

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

Tools – Power Tool Safety

GENERAL RULES FOR USE

The minimum PPE is a pair of safety glasses. Hearing protection is usually warranted.

Do not wear loose clothing around rotating equipment, including power tools. This includes work gloves - use the proper type. Ask your foreman if you are unsure.

If you have long hair, wear it put up in a hairnet, ponytail, or other restraint to keep it from getting caught in the rotating parts.

Use the correct attachments and any guards that go with them. Do not use a dull drill bit or a rounded screwdriver bit.

Inspect the tool before use.

Don’t carry tools up and down ladders. Raise and lower them in buckets or other devices, or have someone hand them to you.

DRILLING

Mark your hole and set up the job so you can drill as straight as possible.

Don’t hold a drill by the vents. An arc can burn your hands.

Use the handle that attaches to the side of the drill to reduce the chance of wrist injury as you break through the hole or if you have other high-torque demands.

Use a sharp drill bit that is appropriate for the material you are drilling.

Avoid turndown shanks. Using such shanks often causes you to exceed the capacity of the tool.

Use cutting fluid if appropriate.

Do not use a wood bit on a pre-existing hole. Doing so will bind the bit, and the twisting of the drill can injure-or even break-your wrist. It could also snap the bit and throw it in your face.

Make sure you are on good footing so you don’t slip.

Use the right hole saw for the material, preferably one with a starter drill to reduce slippage. See the manual if in doubt.

If drilling masonry, use a masonry bit and a masonry drill or other tools made for that purpose. Do not use these tools for non-masonry holes.

De-burr any hole after making it.

CORDED TOOLS

Use corded tools with a GFCI, unless you have an assured grounding program. If you do have such a program, using a GFCI adds even more protection.

Avoid tripping hazards when laying out portable cords. Inspect portable cords before use. Never wrap a power cord or portable around your wrist, leg, or other body part. Keep cords out of water. Use industrial cords.

Match the capacity of the tool to the job.

Use tools or fixtures, rather than bare hands, to hold and support materials being worked on. For example, use clamps, pliers, vices, or pipe cutting tripods.

BATTERY TOOLS

A double-insulated battery-powered tool is very safe. It is not a license for carelessness. Drilling into a live conductor, even with such a tool, can be lethal.

Charge your battery before us, so you don't have to climb up and down ladders to get a replacement.

Don't use a battery-powered tool that is reaching the end of its charge. This is like using a worn screwdriver. Something will slip.

If you can use a self-locking chuck rather than key-tightened chuck, do so. This prevents slippage.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- What is the minimum PPE for using power tools?
- What are some issues with work gloves and power tools?
- What do you need to do to avoid "catch" injuries from rotating parts?
- Why should you not use a dull drill bit or rounded screwdriver bit?
- When should you inspect a power tool?
- How should you get power tools to your work location if you are working on an elevation such as a ladder?
- If you need to set anchors in masonry, what kinds of power tools and attachments should you use? Not use?
- Why should you use the handle attachment when drilling? What are some drilling errors that can lead to injury?
- What are some rules for corded tools?
- What are some rules for battery powered tools?

SAFETY TRAINING TOPIC

The Safety Attitude

MYTHS vs TRUTH

Myth: Safety is someone else's responsibility. I just work here.
Truth: Safety is everyone's job.

Myth: Safety is a bunch of rules. I can do anything the rules don't prohibit.
Truth: The rules aren't there to punish you, they aren't perfect, and they can't cover every contingency. Safety is a matter of doing the job in a way that is safe. Coming up with novel ways to hurt yourself is not a mark of maturity or intelli-gence.

Myth: The foreman and safety director enforce the safety rules, so if they aren't looking, the rules don't apply.
Truth: The real enforcers of safety rules are injuries and death-why break the rules?

Myth: I shouldn't have to practice safety unless everyone else does.
Truth: If other people are foolish, that doesn't mean you must also be foolish.

Myth: Safety meetings are just a break from work.
Truth: Safety meetings are about helping you not get injured or killed.

Myth: Safety gear is just a hassle. Hardhats and safety glasses are a bother.
Truth: Getting your eye pierced with a copper wire is a hassle and a bother, to say the least. So are many other potential injuries.

Myth: Safety rules slow you down, and the company doesn't really want to sacrifice production.
Truth: Work accidents slow down work, and create time losses that are not recoverable. Your management has approved each safety rule with good reason, and all jobs are scheduled with time allowed for safety practices. If the schedule is off, work this out with your foreman rather than endangering yourself and others.

Myth: My foreman is talking about the other guy. It can't happen to me.
Truth: People with this attitude are the ones most at risk.

THOUGHTS TO KEEP IN MIND

The slogan "Safety is No Accident" means you eliminate accidents by purposefully putting safety in the front of your mind.

You are your brother's keeper, or sister's keeper as the case may be. This industry is a very dangerous one, and all of us must look out for each other. When you alert your co-worker to a safety concern, the implication is not that the other person is deficient. The expectation is that you are doing your part in keeping both of you safe.

The intelligent and mature person is always willing to benefit from the good safe- ty advice of others. If someone helps you see you were doing an unsafe act, thank that person. The life just saved may have been your own.

Keep yourself physically prepared, so you can stay alert. Get your rest. Don't take illegal drugs. Use other drugs, such as liquor and over the counter medications, responsibly and not on the job.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR, WHAT TO ASK

Look for unsafe conditions when entering an area or starting a task.

Always ask yourself, "Is this the safe way to do this task?" Think in terms of "what if," and take the appropriate actions.

Ask others, "Do you think you are doing that safely?" if you think they are not. Safety is everyone's responsibility, individually and collectively. A friend- ly reminder may save the life of a friend.

REPORT

Report unsafe conditions to your foreman, and take any emergency measures needed to prevent an immediate danger. For example, put markers on a spill or clean it up.

Remember that an unrepentant, unsafe coworker is an unsafe condition, worse than is bad lighting or an oil spill.

Report injuries to your foreman.

REVIEW AND DISCUSSION

- Who is responsible for safety?
- If safety rules don't prohibit an action, does that make it safe? Why or why not?
- What are the real enforcers of safety rules?
- What is the purpose of safety meetings?
- Why should you not break safety rules to meet production quotas?
- In what way are you "your brother's keeper?"
- What should you ask yourself, when doing a job?
- What should you ask others when you see an unsafe act in progress?
- What should you do about unsafe conditions?
- To whom should you report injuries?

News & Training
Safety Alert
Powered by SuccessFuel

Heat, overexertion:

A double whammy of hazards in the spotlight

Sharpen Your Judgement

Did general contractor's failure to ask safety questions lead to subcontractor worker's death?

Safety Manager Pete Travers was on vacation. Unfortunately, it was raining.

His wife and daughters decided to go shopping at a local mall, leaving Pete to his own devices.

"Could I get a second beer, please?" Pete asked the hotel bartender. He was planning on having a few beers before heading over to sit by the pool and read a book he brought along for just such an occasion.

As he took a sip of his beer, his phone rang. He checked the display and saw it was a friend who was also a safety manager.

"Hello," Pete said, picking up. It was his old friend, George Simmons.

"I hate to bother you while you're on vacation, but I could really use a friend to lean on right now," George said, sounding upset.

"No problem," said Pete. "What's going on?"

Worker crushed as gate slides free from track

"We're being cited by OSHA," said George. "A subcontractor worker was killed on one of our jobsites.

"He and some other workers were pulling a heavy, sliding gate out when it came free from its roller track and fell onto him," George continued. "There was nothing keeping the gate in place other than a roller guide. No stops or anything like that."

"Why weren't there any stops?" Pete asked.

"This gate was eventually going to be motorized, but the motors weren't installed yet, " said George. "There are two gate panels, each weighing about 3,000 pounds. They could be moved manually, but we didn't know that.

"The installation contractor installed the panels, but ran into some problems with parts for the motor mechanism," George continued. "They pushed the panels into their cubby areas and told us nothing other than that we shouldn't touch them."

'As far as we were concerned, the gate was safe'

"Your company is the general contractor?" Pete asked.

"Yes," said George. "As far as we were concerned, the gate was safe as long as the panels were left in their cubby areas. Three supervisors did safety inspections while the gate was in this state and all of them found that it wasn't a hazard.

"However, another subcontractor was hired to paint the gate panels," George said. "There were some miscommunications and misunderstandings which led to them showing up to paint on a day when we had a limited presence onsite.

"That's when the subcontractor workers pulled one gate panel out to paint it," George explained. "They didn't realize the gate wasn't secured when it was extended and now one of their workers is dead."

"I'm sorry," Pete said, knowing how awful he'd feel in George's position.

"My company is fighting the OSHA citation, and I have to testify," said George. "OSHA claims we didn't have programs in place for doing jobsite inspections, failed to post signs around a hazard and failed to communicate about the hazard to subcontractors.

"We're arguing that we made every effort to inspect our worksite for hazards and communicate to subcontractors about them," George said. "I'm confident about the first part of that defense, but not about the second."

Did George's company win?

Sharpen Your Judgement

Did general contractor's failure to ask safety questions lead to subcontractor worker's death? (continued)

The decision

Out of the three citations, George's company was only successful in fighting one.

The company had a robust safety plan that called for detailed inspections and discipline of both its employees and subcontractors who failed to follow the rules. The evidence the company presented demonstrating that fact was enough to convince an administrative law judge with the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission to vacate the first citation.

However, the judge found the company lacking when it came to communication regarding the hazard. The company's failure to ask the installation contractor why the gate panels shouldn't be touched was a big problem. A reasonable employer would've asked the installation contractor why, the judge said.

Lack of due diligence, poor communication led to incident

Instead, the general contractor assumed no one could move the gate panels, because none of the company's supervisors ever saw the gate panels in the open position during inspections. The supervisors who inspected the gates found that they weren't a hazard while in their cubby spaces. None of them were experts in motorized gates, so there was no chance they could have realized there were missing safety stops during their inspections.

Because no one asked any questions about the gate, the potential hazard went unnoticed, according to the judge. Then a series of miscommunications and misunderstandings within the general contractor's chain of command led to the painting subcontractor being allowed to enter the worksite to paint the gate.

Ultimately, the judge found that the poor communication and the failure to post signs or otherwise notify subcontractors about the hazard was the general contractor's fault.

Analysis: Analysis: Don't assume anything when it comes to worksite safety

The company involved in this case had a good safety program in place. It conducted regular, thorough inspections of the jobsite and typically communicated with subcontractors regarding potential hazards.

However, it all fell apart when management and supervisors began making assumptions regarding the gate.

The manager who was told by the installation contractor that no one should touch the gate assumed there was a good reason but failed to ask why. Supervisors who inspected the gate assumed it was safe without asking more questions about it. All up and down the company's chain of command, managers and supervisors assumed other employees knew not to let anyone touch the gate when they actually didn't know.

If one person along the way would have stopped making assumptions about the gate being safe and started asking questions, it may have averted a tragedy.

Cite: *Secretary of Labor v. The Penta Building Group*, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, No. 21-0575, 7/3/2023. Dramatized for effect.

Read more You Be The Judge in your Membership Dashboard

OSHA gives employers early heads up on what may be coming in heat illness prevention rule

by Merriell Moyer

OSHA released an outline of potential options for its proposed Heat Injury and Illness Prevention in Outdoor and Indoor Work Settings standard, giving employers an idea of what may be coming.

The document is a regulatory framework for a heat injury and illness prevention rule the agency envisions as "a programmatic standard that could require employers to create a plan to evaluate and control heat hazards in their workplace."

The agency said it has identified several options for control measures based on the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) Criteria for a Recommended Standard, existing state standards and stakeholder comments.

"Many of these options look familiar to anyone who does business in a state plan state with a heat standard," according to law firm Ogletree Deakins.

Agency provides regulatory framework for proposed standard

There are some possible exemptions

The standard could cover both indoor and outdoor work in all industries where OSHA has jurisdiction. However, OSHA is considering exempting:

- short duration exposures, such as 15 minutes of work in hazardous heat conditions every 60 minutes
- emergency operations
- work in spaces where mechanical ventilation keeps working areas below certain conditions with possible administrative controls required if the mechanical ventilation is not operable
- work done from home, and
- sedentary or light activities performed indoors, if these are the only activities performed during the work shift.

Written prevention program likely required

Employers would likely be required to create written heat injury and illness prevention programs containing:

- procedures to identify when heat hazards exist for employees
- procedures for implementing engineering controls
- procedures for implementing administrative controls
- high-heat procedures
- procedures for when employees are exhibiting symptoms of heat-related illness and emergency response procedures
- training of employees and supervisors, and
- selection of designated individuals to oversee and implement the program, including environmental monitoring.

Ogletree Deakins said a few potential new factors could be included in the standard, including options for dry climates that have lower than 30% relative humidity and for employees who wear vapor-impermeable PPE.

2 heat triggers under consideration

The document also suggests that OSHA is considering two heat triggers: an initial heat trigger and a high-heat trigger. The initial one

would trigger the heat illness and injury prevention program while the high-heat version would trigger high-heat procedures.

OSHA is considering options for these triggers based on ambient, heat index and wet bulb globe thermometer measurements. The triggers are also based on whether the employer is using a weather forecast or measuring the temperature onsite.

For example, with the initial heat trigger, OSHA is considering 78 degrees Fahrenheit or above for the ambient temperature if the employer is using a forecast and 82 degrees or above if the employer is measuring the heat onsite.

Under the same parameters, the high-heat trigger would be 86 degrees when using a forecast and 90 degrees when measuring.

If an employer relies solely on the weather forecast, OSHA may require controls to be implemented for the entire day when the forecasted daily maximum heat index or ambient temperature is at or above the forecast heat triggers. However, if onsite monitoring is used, the agency is considering requiring that controls only be implemented for the hours of the day when the monitored heat index or ambient temperature is at or above the trigger temperatures.

A provision for cool-down areas would be part of the standard for both indoor and outdoor work sites. OSHA is considering alternatives including the provision for shaded and air-conditioned spaces, but as Ogletree Deakins points out, how these alternatives differ from cool-down areas is "a bit vague."

Reducing exposure to indoor heat sources

For indoor spaces with heat-generating sources in the work area, OSHA is considering a requirement that would have employers reduce employee exposure by:

- installing local exhaust ventilation at the sources of the heat
- erecting shielding or barriers that reflect or absorb heat along with any radiant heat
- isolating the source of radiant heat from the workforce
- increasing the distance of employees from those sources, and
- modifying hot processes or other operations.

Administrative controls

OSHA is considering administrative controls similar to ones seen on state plan heat injury and illness standards such as making cool drinking water available as close to the work area as possible and encouraging employees to drink more water, along with:

- altering work schedules
- holding a pre-shift meeting or otherwise notifying employees when the high-heat trigger is met or exceeded
- notifying employees when high-heat procedures are in effect
- reminding employees of their rights to take rest breaks as needed
- making employees aware of the locations for water, shade and cool-down areas for mobile work sites
- designating employees to call 9-1-1 in a medical emergency, and
- restricting access to excessively high heat areas in indoor environments and placing warning signs outside or near these areas.

Acclimatization of new and returning employees to these environments would also be required.

Employers may have to consider hazards specific to the work site

Further, the standard may require employers to consider heat hazards specific to their work site and evaluate the potential use of cooling PPE, such as cooling vests. Employers may also be required to reconsider use of any PPE that traps heat.

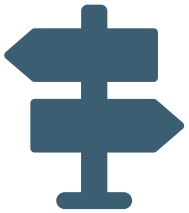
"Employee training, medical treatment and heat-related emergency response procedures will likely be components of a heat standard," according to Ogletree Deakins. "The emergency response components will likely impact other employer responsibilities, including maintenance of emergency response plans that provide a method for employees to clearly identify where help is needed when calling first responders."

There will also likely be a variety of recordkeeping requirements under the proposed standard, with the majority of those carrying an obligation of maintaining them for the duration of a worker's employment, plus 30 years as exposure records.

Read this story online

What Would You Do?

Is supervisor wrong for thinking common sense can fill in for safety procedures?



"That's my proposal for the new safety procedure," Manager Mike Kelly said, finishing a presentation he prepared for the department supervisors.

"You don't have to give me feedback right away," Mike added. "Think about it for a little while. Take a look around your work areas and see if it'll work. We may need to tweak some things for individual departments."

"Will do," Janet Costello said. "I think it'll work just fine in the warehouse, but I'll give it some thought anyway."

"Same for me," Ken Dawson, the manufacturing supervisor, said. "I probably won't need to make any changes, but I'll still take some time to think about it."

Jack Hall, the shipping supervisor, snorted in derision.

'It's common sense, they don't need procedures for that'

"Do you have something to say?" Mike asked.

"I don't see why we, or our employees, need to waste our time with all of these procedures," Jack said.

"These procedures are meant to keep our employees safe," Mike said.

"It's common sense," said Jack. "They don't need procedures for that. It's simple. They just need to pay attention and use their heads. No need to overcomplicate things."

If you were Mike, what would you do?

Everyone has different backgrounds, perspectives

Jack is wrong, no matter how simple the issue requiring the procedure seems to be. Common sense is a broad term that fails to take into account that everyone has different backgrounds and perspectives.

One person's common sense can be vastly different than another's. For example, take a simple task like sweeping the floor. A middle-aged adult who has worked in a warehouse for more than a decade may see the process as common sense – they've done it many times and know exactly the right technique to use to efficiently get debris into a pile using a push broom.

Now, instead of a middle-aged adult with 10 years of experience, imagine an 18-year-old with no prior work experience assigned to the same task. Maybe they had to push a broom to help clean up at school or in their home, but maybe not. They likely know that the bristle side goes down and that you have to push it to make it work, but they may be quite awkward with it until they figure it out.

Procedures level the playing field. Yes, they may be redundant for some employees, but they could also serve as a valuable refresher, and anyone who doesn't know will get instruction and a chance to ask questions.

Do you need a procedure on how to sweep the floor? Not typically, no. However, a procedure covering training for new employees could include a checklist that covers simple tasks, like sweeping, to go over with them to make sure they don't need further instruction.

Performing even a mundane task safely requires instruction

Further, performing a task in the safest way possible isn't exactly common sense.

Operating a forklift or a piece of manufacturing equipment requires instruction and training. That can also be said for a seemingly mundane task such as picking up a box without injuring your back. Picking up a box is common sense, right? Not if it's something you're doing repeatedly over an eight- or 10-hour shift. Also, not if it's an extremely heavy box.

In both situations, failing to use the right techniques to perform the task could lead to life-altering injuries.

Lack of procedures causes death of 46-year-old freight clerk

When it comes to safety, procedures are especially important. Again, that's because doing a task safely isn't always common sense.

A Washington State Fatality Assessment & Control Evaluation

What Would You Do?

Is supervisor wrong for thinking common sense can fill in for safety procedures? (continued)

(FACE) program report covering the death of a 46-year-old freight clerk serves as a tragic example of why procedures, and training on those procedures, are necessary.

The clerk worked for 10 years at a large supermarket chain. On December 24, 2020, he was assisting another clerk who was checking in a tractor-trailer.

After the truck backed up to the loading dock, the co-worker opened the trailer door and realized that the driver came to the wrong dock. The clerk arrived at this point to assist his co-worker. They met briefly on the dock before the co-worker went back outside to talk to the driver.

Clerk crushed between loading dock wall and trailer

The clerk closed the trailer door after his co-worker left, but then opened it again after a few seconds. He looked inside before leaning his head and shoulders through a gap between the exterior loading dock wall and the rear of the trailer. Then he came fully back inside and closed the trailer door.

Once again, the clerk leaned out of the gap between the wall and trailer. This time, the driver was preparing to pull the truck forward. When its parking brake was released, the trailer lurched back and crushed the clerk against the wall.

When the tractor-trailer pulled away, the co-worker returned to the dock and saw the clerk lying on the pavement below where he had fallen after being crushed. The co-worker called 9-1-1, but the clerk died at the scene.

Employer had no dock safety policies, procedures

FACE program investigators found that:

- the employer didn't have loading dock safety policies, procedures and training for workers
- workers routinely leaned out between dock walls and trailers to communicate with drivers, and
- the trailer was parked away from dock bumpers and on a slight downgrade toward the loading bay.

With no procedures and training in place, workers were left to use their common sense when it came to safety on the dock. While it seems like it may be common sense to not place your upper body between a wall and a tractor-trailer, there are multiple reasons why the clerk may have felt it was safe to do so, including:

- other workers did it and never got hurt
- it was a common workplace practice that no one was disciplined for, and
- he didn't realize there was a hazard.

Common sense didn't prepare this clerk, or his co-workers, for the danger. Investigators concluded that developing and using several different procedures could have prevented this fatal incident. FACE program investigators recommended:

- tailoring an accident prevention program to the particular needs of the workplace and the hazards involved
- using and enforcing safety and health training programs that are effective in practice, and
- creating a procedure requiring drivers to check in, leave keys, and wait in a designated safe place inside the shipping and receiving area where workers can talk with them away from hazards.

These procedures, along with several controls such as loading dock modifications and signage, could prevent similar incidents from occurring, according to the FACE program report.

Read more What Would You Do? in your Membership Dashboard

INJURIES

OSHA: Injuries from workplace violence incidents that occur offsite still recordable if job-related

by Merriell Moyer

INTERPRETATION LETTER *SAYS 'ON-THE-CLOCK'* AND *'WORK-RELATED TASK'* ARE **KEY TERMS**

Injuries from workplace violence incidents that occur outside of the actual workplace are still recordable, according to an OSHA Standard Interpretation Letter.

The letter states that an incident of workplace violence is recordable even if it occurs away from the worksite as long as the employee involved is performing a work-related task "in the interest of the employer."

OSHA issued the letter in response to a question from a law firm representing an employer whose employee was involved in a workplace violence incident while away from the worksite.

Employee shot while in company car during work hours

The employee was a driver who was driving a company vehicle while on the clock and traveling on a public roadway. This driver was between service calls near an intersection when a four-car collision occurred as the result of another car coming from the wrong direction in the same lane.

After the crash occurred, the wrong-way motorist got out of his car, shot the driver, stole the driver's truck and fled the scene.

There was no evidence that the driver said or did anything to

provoke the attack. Later that day, the employer learned that the wrong-way motorist had been in the middle of a serial crime spree at the time of the crash.

Worker 'traveling in interest of employer' when incident occurred

On behalf of the client employer, the law firm wanted to know if this injury resulting from the violence, which occurred while the employee was on the job, was something that had to be reported.

OSHA answered in the affirmative:

"Based on the information in the above scenario, at the time of the collision and shooting, your client's driver was traveling in the interest of the employer … was driving a company vehicle and was traveling between service calls when the accident and shooting occurred."

Further, "traveling to and from customer contacts is an activity 'in the interest of the employer,' and therefore your client's driver was in the work environment at the time of the injury."

Only applies when on the clock and engaged in work-related task

This is significant, according to law firm Seyfarth Shaw, because the letter states that "OSHA's recordkeeping regulation does not allow employers to exclude injuries and illnesses resulting from random acts of violence occurring in the work environment from their recordkeeping forms."

Seyfarth Shaw said, "OSHA reached this conclusion even though the incident had occurred not at the worksite, but on a public highway, an area that historically has fallen within the Department of Transportation's jurisdiction."

That means that even random acts of violence performed by "individuals with no connection to the worksite or employer – e.g., robbers, active shooters, etc. – will be considered work-related, and any injuries sustained as a result of these random acts must be recorded on an employer's OSHA 300 log."

However, remember that this only applies when the incident involves an employee who is engaged in a work-related task during work hours.

Read this story online

Case Study

4 important things to consider when making a workplace violence prevention plan

Violence has become a major hazard to employees in many workplaces, from hospitals and schools to delivery vehicles and warehouses.

While federal OSHA is working on a standard to address workplace violence in health care, what can safety professionals in other industries do to mitigate this growing threat?

First, it helps to understand the hazard.

"What happens in the workplace is a reflection of what is happening in the community," said Eva Glosson, an industrial hygienist with the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, during a presentation at the 2023 American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Expo in Phoenix, Arizona.

Unfortunately, violent crime in the U.S. is currently on an upswing and that translates to more violence in the workplace, according to Glosson.

OSHA, NIOSH have slightly different definitions

Workplace violence is defined by OSHA as the act or threat of physical violence, harassment, intimidation or other threatening disruptive behavior that occurs at the worksite such as threats, verbal abuse, physical assault and homicide.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) differs slightly from OSHA with its definition of the term, saying that any of these acts or threats count as workplace violence when an employee is on duty, not just at the worksite.

Individual states and employers may have different interpretations of workplace violence that goes above and beyond the definitions provided by OSHA and NIOSH.

The 4 types of workplace violence

There are four types of workplace violence. These are based on the relationship the perpetrator has to the workplace:

- Type One involves the perpetrator having no legitimate business relationship, meaning they enter the workplace with criminal intent. For example, a convenience store with someone entering the business for the sole purpose of armed robbery.
- Type Two is a customer or client as the perpetrator. This also applies to individuals in the custody of the business, such as a passenger on a bus or a student in a school.
- Type Three is peer-to-peer violence. A co-worker to a co-worker or a supervisor to a direct-report, for example.
- Type Four involves a known person, which typically means a dispute with a current or former intimate partner that gets brought into the workplace. However, this type doesn't have to involve an intimate partner. Instead, it could involve a parent, sibling or even a neighbor.

Type Four is the leading cause of death for women when it comes to workplace violence and Type One is the leading cause of death for men.

'Pre-de-escalation'

When it comes to tools and workplace violence prevention, there's a lot of discussion about de-escalation, but de-escalation means something has already happened. Someone is already in a state of excitement at that point.

What safety professionals need to think about is what Glosson calls "pre-de-escalation." What is being done to ensure people aren't getting into a state of violence and aggression in the first place.

When it comes to written safety programs, workplace violence specific to the individual jobsite needs to be addressed. For example, if the jobsite is a retail store, then it's important that

Case Study

4 important things to consider when making a workplace violence prevention plan (continued)

employees know about crime prevention and the hazards associated with Type One and Type Two violence.

When coming up with this part of the written safety program, it's important to look at what other employers in the industry are doing and use that for benchmarking.

It's also important to consider these four things:

1. Prevention through design

In Type One workplace violence, there is a theory on crime prevention through environmental design. This is something a lot of late-night retail workplaces are based on. It asks the question, "Does your physical environment invite crime or violence?"

This is the kind of mindset you need to have when looking at your own jobsite for workplace violence prevention, regardless of industry.

2. Risk analysis focused on violence

Just like with any other hazard, another important thing to do is perform a risk analysis to understand your high-risk tasks. What tasks do your employees do that could put them at risk of workplace violence? What are other members of your specific industry dealing with? Is that something your workers also have to worry about?

These are the types of things you need to build your workplace violence policies around. The risk analysis could also help to inform where and how to place engineering controls, such as alarms and PPE, if applicable.

3. Enforcement of HR harassment policies

When it comes to peer-to-peer violence, communication is extremely important to prevention. If a co-worker is talking about performing a violent act in the workplace, it needs to be taken seriously. In many cases, mass shooters have communicated their intentions to others, making these incidents entirely preventable.

This is also where human resources policies come into play. Enforcement of policies that are meant to prevent bullying and harassment are a key component to preventing workplace violence. Remember, it's all about pre-de-escalation, and these policies are meant to keep employees from becoming aggressive toward one another.

4. Creating a policy for Type Four Violence

Type Four violence is very personal in nature, which means it can be very difficult to talk about. That's why having a written policy specifically addressing it is extremely important.

If a co-worker is going through a messy break-up with a significant other and this results in stalking, threats and restraining orders, you don't want that co-worker wondering if they should share this information, how to go about doing so, and who they should share it with.

Having a written policy in place that employees are aware of can help make the sharing of this information with an employer a little less uncomfortable. It will also make the employee feel much more comfortable sharing the information in the first place, making for a safer workplace.

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Real Life Safety

Forklift attachment worked great 'til worker fell to his death from it: Firm in OSHA's crosshairs

"You're full of good ideas!" barked Mitch Bradshaw, the owner and de facto plant manager of a materials warehouse. "I wish I'd been able to hire you 10 years ago."

"Thank you very much, Mr. Bradshaw," said George Colbert, the new safety manager.

"Come on, call me Mitch. I may own the place but I'm on the floor every day getting my hands dirty like everyone else."

George laughed. "Yessir! Mitch," he said. "I guess safety's been a team effort over the years?"

"Pretty much," said Mitch. "There aren't many OSHA regs we need to worry about. I keep an eye out for issues. So have my other managers. But we're growing and taking on more customers all the time, so bringing on a full-time safety manager was the way to go."

"Got it," said George. "You're right, you and your crew have done a great job on safety. I did a run-through of the facility and saw a couple minor issues which I can take care of this week.

"Way I see it, the big issue is —"

"Forklifts," said Mitch. "I hear where you're coming from. We'll have to start changing habits around here I guess."

"I've taken a look at the attachments we've put on the forklifts," said George. "Only one of them is passable. Put on according to manufacturer specs. But the other one in service is … questionable is how I'd put it."

"All I'm saying is, we need to do it right or not let the workers use it," said George. "That is easily our biggest compliance issue and one that could lead to someone getting seriously hurt."

"All right! You're the safety manager," said Mitch. "Give everyone a reminder."

Mitch walked away. *I'm afraid it could take more than one reminder*, George thought. *Plus they're more likely to listen to you, the owner, than me, the new safety guy*.

New policy spurs grumbling from the crew

"All right, that's enough for today," said George. "Does anyone have any questions about our new forklift policy?"

George noticed workers looking off to the side and heard a bit of grumbling. "Come on, now's the time to talk about it."

"We're swamped right now," said a worker. "Sitting in the bird's nest saves us all a lot of time. We can stock shelves and pull product in no time."

"I get that," said George. "But the one bird's nest, as you call it, isn't OSHA compliant. I don't think it's safe. My job's to make sure you all go home every night in one piece."

"It's never been a problem," said another worker. "I've been here more than 10 years. OSHA ain't coming out here anyway. Our injury rate is fine!"

"You know, sometimes luck plays a part in that," said George. "If OSHA did come out, I can guarantee you they'd check the forklift and fine us. Thousands of dollars easily. For a smaller company like us, that can lead to people losing their jobs."

Most of the crew nodded their heads. George noticed no one was smiling. "Are we good?" he asked.

"Yeahhh," came the response from the staffers. George knew he'd have to stay out on the floor a lot over the next few weeks to make sure everyone got the message.

Safety manager can't be everywhere at once

A week or so later …

"Who's got the forklift?" said Will Nesmith. "We're falling behind!"

"It's out on the floor dummy," said his co-worker Terry Kauffman.

"The heck with this," said Will. "Let's take this one."

"I don't know," said Terry. "The new safety manager says it's off-limits for now."

"Yeah and Mitch was giving everyone a hard time yesterday about us falling behind," said Will. "Last I checked, Mitch signs the paychecks around here."

Terry drove the forklift down the aisle with Will in the bird's nest. All went well until Terry accidentally sideswiped a support column. The forklift attachment came free from the forks and Will fell hard to the concrete floor.

Real Life Safety

Forklift attachment worked great 'til worker fell to his death from it: Firm in OSHA's crosshairs (continued)

The attachment landed on top of him as did the forklift, which Terry struggled to bring to a complete stop. Will died from his blunt trauma injuries.

Result: In the weeks after the tragic accident, OSHA came out to investigate. The company received willful citations for:

- failing to provide fall protection for employees working at heights up to 13 feet, and
- exposing workers to fall and struck-by hazards by allowing them to ride on improper and unsecured forklift attachments.

Total fine: $299,339.

Read more Real Life Safety in your Membership Dashboard

Who Got Fined & Why

Employee safety concerns at Dollar Tree store lead to $98K fine for blocked exit routes

Employee concerns over unsafe work conditions led to an OSHA inspection at a Wisconsin Dollar Tree store, resulting in a $98,000 fine for a repeat violation.

OSHA inspectors found merchandise blocking aisles and exit routes, creating trip and fall hazards and preventing workers from having a safe exit route in case of an emergency.

The agency has issued citations to Dollar Tree Stores Inc. for violations in more than 500 inspections across multiple stores in the U.S. since 2017. Out of those 500 inspections, 300 violations were found.

Fine: $98,219

Company: Dollar Tree Stores Inc., Pewaukee, WI

Business: Retail

Reason for fine:

One repeat violation for failing to:

- ensure exit access was at least 28-inches wide at all points

2 amputation injuries in 2 months results in $277K OSHA fine

Two amputation injuries in two consecutive months at a Wisconsin meat and sausage manufacturing plant resulted in a $277,000 OSHA fine.

In December 2022, OSHA inspected the plant following an injury involving a worker who lost a finger to an auger on a meat processing machine. A second injury in January 2023

Who Got Fined & Why

2 amputation injuries in 2 months results in $277K OSHA fine (continued)

involving a worker's hand getting crushed in a sliding guard on a trash compactor resulted in another inspection.

The two inspections led to citations for one repeat and multiple serious violations, mostly involving lockout/tagout procedures and machine guarding.

Fine: $277,472

Company: Abbyland Foods Inc., Abbotsford, WI

Business: Animal slaughtering, except poultry

Reasons for fine:

One repeat violation for failing to:

- provide methods of machine guarding around points of operation, ingoing nip points and rotating parts

20 serious violations for failing to:

- ensure employees use a safe means of access and egress to and from walking-working surfaces
- ensure ladder rungs, steps, and cleats had a minimum clear width of 11.5 inches on portable ladders and 16 inches for fixed ladders
- ensure each employee is protected from falling through any hole, including skylights, that is 4 feet or more above a lower level
- ensure employees working less than 4 feet above dangerous equipment are protected from falling into or onto the equipment
- protect employees working on the unprotected working side of a slaughtering facility platform that is 4 feet or more above a lower level
- provide training to employees to recognize hazards associated with accessing and working from a slaughtering platform
- include self-closing gates that slide or swing away on guardrails used around holes that serve as points of access
- assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present that require the use of PPE
- ensure that employees use appropriate eye or face protection when exposed to eye or face hazards
- conduct a periodic inspection of the energy control procedure at least annually

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Read more Who Got Fined & Why in your Membership Dashboard

Family, union claims heat-related deaths are underreported

HAZARDS

Farmworker dies in 100-degree temperatures: Was it heart attack or heat illness?

by Merriell Moyer

Elidio Hernández Gomez was working on a California farm during an August 2023 heatwave. When he collapsed and died, the coroner called it a heart attack. His family and others claim it was heat illness.

The United Farm Workers (UFW) union sided with the family, arguing that Hernandez died because of the extreme heat.

"Elidio Hernández should not have died," UFW president Teresa Romero told CalMatters. "Elidio had two young daughters who now don't have a father."

Family, co-workers fear retaliation if they speak out

The 59-year-old worker reported to a supervisor that he was feeling sick but didn't receive any help, according to Romero. When he collapsed, the incident wasn't reported, but his co-workers were told to take him to a hospital. The employer hasn't been identified.

Temperatures in the Fresno area on Aug. 8, the day of the incident, was around 100 degrees.

The coroner's report claimed "Hernández Gómez's death was due to atherosclerotic cardiovascular disease, which is when cholesterol plaque builds up in arteries, obstructing blood flow."

A spokesperson for the Fresno County Coroner's office told CalMatters that there was no evidence showing that heat played a role in the death.

Romero said the union and the UFW Foundation are assisting the family but family members and co-workers fear retaliation if they speak out.

Despite state heat standard, deaths 'historically undercounted'

Heat-related deaths are historically undercounted in California, despite the state's heat illness safety standard, since many heat-related deaths are recorded as heart failure, strokes or respiratory failure, according to The Fresno Bee.

The Bee stated that a Los Angeles Times investigative report said the true number of heat-related deaths could be as much as six times the state's official count.

As of Aug. 21, 2023, Cal/OSHA hasn't received a report of Hernández Gómez's, CalMatters said. The state safety agency said it was still gathering facts to determine if the incident warrants an inspection.

Proposed bill would require federal OSHA to create heat standard

California is one of five states nationwide with a heat-illness prevention standard. That standard is considered "best practice" by union leaders and safety experts.

"I'm glad that the state of California is actually a leader in this space," U.S. Senator Alex Padilla of California said, according to Bakersfield.com. "But we need them on the federal level because workers across the country deserve the same protections."

Padilla, a Democrat, was one of several lawmakers who re-introduced the Asunción Valdivia Heat, Illness, Injury and Fatality Prevention Act, which if passed, would require federal OSHA to create a nationwide heat standard for all workers in high heat environments.

That bill would require employers to provide access to cool water and shade, paid breaks and medical services, and training on heat-related illnesses, just as the Cal/OSHA standard does.

The re-introduced bill "recently went to the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. It has 18 cosponsors in the Senate and 35 in the House of Representatives," CalMatters states.

'Law on the books not the same as law in the fields'

Enforcement is also included in the bill, Bakersfield.com states, through regular inspections, penalties and violations, something that some industry workers believe is currently missing even in California.

Romero, the UFW president, acknowledged that California's outdoor heat standard has saved lives. However, she added that employers have to know there will be legal consequences if they don't take action when their employees show signs of heat illness.

"The law on the books is not the same as the law in the fields," she said.

Read this story online

Training Tips

An eye safety demonstration they'll never forget

Here's a simple way to get workers to take eye safety seriously:

At your next training session, have your staffers take turns wearing safety goggles with Vaseline smeared on the lenses.

That'll show them what the world will look like if they suffer an eye injury.

Easy way to ensure workers' footwear is up to the job

Want to make sure staffers aren't sporting footwear that could lead to a slip, trip and fall?

Appoint one worker as your footwear specialist and have him or her inspect the rest of the crew's shoes every three months.

Have the footwear specialist look for worn down treads, cuts or slices in leather, etc.

It's an easy (and free!) way to reduce the chance someone takes a fall on the job.

8 hazards to keep an eye out for on your next safety walkthrough

When you're on the lookout for workplace hazards, take a tip from the U.S. Military.

During safety inspections, supervisors look for:

1. Overloaded electrical circuits
2. Blocked aisles and passageways
3. Electrical cords in walkways
4. Improperly stored chemicals
5. Missing/old fire extinguishers
6. Slippery or uneven floors
7. Poorly maintained ladders, and
8. Missing safety or exit signs.

Read more Training Tips in your Membership Dashboard

Report: Overexertion tops 2023 list of costliest workplace injury causes

by Merriell Moyer

TOP INJURY CAUSE COSTS EMPLOYERS $12.8B ANNUALLY

Overexertion involving outside sources is at the top of the list of costliest workplace injury causes in 2023, according to a new report.

Liberty Mutual Insurance's Workplace Safety Index (WSI) is an annual report that "examines the top 10 causes of the most serious disabling workplace injuries – those leading to more than five missed workdays – ranked by their direct cost to employers based on medical expenses and lost wages."

The 2023 WSI states that injuries from overexertion involving outside sources accounts for $12.8 billion annually.

That's the "largest chunk of the overall $48.2 billion spent on the top 10 injuries in workers' compensation," according to Business Insurance.

The rest of the top 10 costliest injury causes include:

- falls on the same level at $9 billion
- falls to a lower level at $6 billion
- struck by objects or equipment at $5.1 billion
- other exertions or bodily reactions such as awkward postures at $3.7 billion
- exposure to other harmful substances at $3.4 billion
- vehicle crashes at $2.6 billion
- caught in or compressed by machinery at $2 billion
- slips, trips or falls at $1.9 billion, and
- vehicle crashes involving pedestrians at $1.6 billion..

These and other injuries cost U.S. businesses more than $1 billion per week, according to the 2023 WSI. That's more than ensure employees working less than 4 feet above dangerous equipment are protected from falling into or onto the equipment $58 billion per year, with most of them caused by the 10 types of incidents listed above.

New additions to the list

Exposure to other harmful substances and vehicle crashes involving pedestrians are on the WSI for the first time.

Without COVID-19 data, the 2022 WSI ranked exposure to other harmful substances at 18. Since that data has become available, this cause of injury has moved up to sixth place in 2023.

Liberty Mutual found that vehicle crashes involving pedestrians mostly occurred in occupations like:

- sales and truck drivers
- material movers
- food service
- distribution managers
- retail salespersons
- building cleaning and maintenance, and
- protective services.

Those occupations "were likely to be impacted by the challenges that COVID-19 placed on the U.S. supply chain, as well as on industrial hygiene, security, and novel delivery or parking-lot operations."

Read this story online

Who Got Fined & Why

OSHA fines contractor $35K for fatal trench collapse

An Illinois water and sewer line contractor was cited by OSHA following a fatal trench collapse in December 2022.

A 27-year-old worker was fixing a residential water line in a trench 7-feet deep when the cave-in occurred, crushing him to death. Another employee in the trench at the time escaped unharmed.

OSHA inspectors found that the contractor failed to install cave-in protection that would've protected the workers in the trench.

Fine: $35,940

Company: Rooter Solutions Inc., Buffalo Grove, IL

Business: Water and Sewer Line and Related Structures Construction

Reasons for fine:

One willful violation for failing to:

- protect employees in an excavation from cave-ins with an adequate protective system

One serious violations for failing to:

- ensure employees wore protective helmets when working in areas where there was a danger of head injuries

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Read more Who Got Fined & Why in your Membership Dashboard