

Safe Supervisor

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Practical, proven tips, ideas and techniques for managing a safer workplace ~ since 1929

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Incivility: The Molehill that Can Cause a Mountain of Work-Related Problems: Part II

This is the second story in a two-part series examining the importance of maintaining respect in the workplace and the wide-ranging negative consequences of letting disrespectful behavior go unchallenged. Part one in August's Safe Supervisor showed how easily small negative interactions among employees can spiral into a toxic workplace atmosphere. This month we will look at how supervisors can address the problem before it escalates.

Sally isn't having a good day and she's just arrived at work. "Don't come near me today," she warns everyone within earshot. "I'm too stressed."

Many supervisors who heard Sally's comment would brush it off, either because they thought she was just letting off steam or because they felt uncomfortable dealing with the situation.

But letting employees off the hook for such comments can lead to a toxic work atmosphere, says Sharon Bar-David, (www.sharonbardavid.com/) a Toronto motivational speaker and trainer who specializes in promoting respect in the workplace.

Whether intentional or not, Sally's behavior is not appropriate. Bar-David says a supervisor hearing such a comment needs to speak to Sally about her stress and clarify the expectation that people behave in a professional manner regardless of their personal moods.

Praise Publicly, Correct Privately Approach Isn't Always Right

Bar-David, who has a social work and law background, says talking privately to a worker who has shown incivility isn't always the best approach. For example, if a worker tells an off-color joke in front of others who might be offended, a supervisor needs to address that incivility on the spot in public, so

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Is Your Company or Organization H1N1 Ready? Many Aren't

Many Canadian businesses are ill-prepared for a fall outbreak of H1N1 virus, according to a Conference Board of Canada report.

"The H1N1 virus is behaving differently than organizations expected. Even though the summer months are not usually hospitable to the influenza virus, H1N1 continues to spread quickly," says Trefor Munn-Venn, the conference board's director of national security and public safety.

"Hope is not an option for organizations. They should begin responding now," he adds.

The Conference Board of Canada says many small-to-medium-sized businesses are so focused on the economic downturn that they are not thinking about how they could be affected if the swine flu becomes deadlier and affects hundreds of thousands or millions of Canadians.

Munn-Venn says organizations that don't have a pandemic response plan in place need to recognize how serious the H1N1 pandemic is expected to be and start preparing their businesses and their employees.

The consequences of not having a pandemic plan are serious. They include being held liable for exposing workers and customers to health risks, spreading the H1N1 virus to other companies and suffering severe economic damage as a result of losing customers and market share.

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NEWS you can USE ...

Faulty Lap Belt Caused Fatal Snowbirds Crash

The crash of a Snowbirds CT-114 Tutor jet during a rehearsal for an air show at Malmstrom Air Force Base in Great Falls, Montana in May 2007 was largely caused by a faulty seatbelt latch, according to a Canadian military investigation.

Capt. Shaw McCaughey, 31, who was flying upside down during a practice session, fell out of his seat after the lap belt disengaged. He could not reach the aircraft's control stick to control the plane and he was also unable to eject from the aircraft.

Col. Gary Doiron of the Canadian Air Force told a news conference that the locking mechanism on the lap belt should have been checked on the ground before the jet took off, but that did not happen.

Power Company Fined Heavily for Lockout Shortcoming

An electrical company has been fined \$300,000, plus a 25 percent fine surcharge, after an apprentice electrician employed by a subcontractor was electrocuted.

The apprentice, who had been working with two journeymen electricians to install temporary lighting, removed the cover panel of a live 600-volt transformer and contacted the taps within, with fatal consequences.

The incident occurred during the construction of an SNC-Lavalin Power Ontario Inc. plant in Toronto almost two years ago. The Ontario Ministry of Labour found that the electrical panel had not been tagged or locked out.

Also, it was determined that both the company and the subcontractor had lockout policies in place and that SNC-Lavalin had conducted an orientation for subcontractors. However, records did not show that the electrical crew had been given detailed training or a copy of either company's policy.

SNC-Lavalin Power Ontario Inc. pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that its subcontractor implemented a tagout or lockout procedure to ensure that workers were protected from shock and burns.

Info to go: Read more about electrical hazards by clicking on the Info to Go safety links at www.SafeSupervisor.com

PICK 6

Odds of winning the lottery **1 in 135,145,920** (multi-state mega-millions jackpot)

The number of farms operating in the US in 2006 was **2.1** million.

Drowning was the cause of **16** percent of US farm deaths involving young workers between 1995 and 2002 (NIOSH).

About **100** Canadians die from farm-related injuries each year, according to the Canada Safety Council.

Fractures were the most common injury involving youths on American farms in 2006, accounting for **27** percent of farm-related injuries.

Agricultural production is the **4th** most dangerous type of work in Canada, behind mining, forestry and construction, according to Statistics Canada.

Incidents involving farm machinery caused **23** percent of young farm worker fatalities throughout the United States between 1995 and 2002 (NIOSH).

The death rate for farmers and ranchers in the US for 2006
37.1 per 100,000

Source: Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)

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Worker's Death Leads to \$70,000 Fine

When you have employees working with bundled slabs of granite each weighing between 226 and 454 kilograms (498 and 1,000 pounds), steps need to be taken to prevent any sudden shifts of the material.

That didn't happen at an Ontario granite company where workers were unloading slabs of granite and the result was that one employee was fatally crushed. Workers were cutting wooden braces when one of the braces broke, causing that bundle of granite and three others to suddenly tip sideways. The victim was pinned against the side of the container.

An Ontario Ministry of Labour investigation revealed that there was nothing in place to stop the granite from tipping once the braces were cut.

Impex Granite & Marble Ltd. of Concord, ON, pleaded guilty to failing to ensure that granite was transported, placed and stored so that it would not tip, collapse or fall and that it could be removed or withdrawn without endangering the safety of any worker.

The Ontario Court of Justice in Newmarket also imposed a \$17,500 victim fine surcharge.

Young Worker's Death Brings \$75,000 OHS Fine

WorkSafeBC has fined EnCana Corporation \$75,000 for failure to co-ordinate health and safety procedures and failure to ensure the health and safety of its workers.

The fines relate to the death of a young and inexperienced worker, who was struck by highly pressurized wellbore gas following the completion of pressure testing of well control components.

According to WorkSafeBC, the gas became trapped inside the well service equipment because of the unsafe placement of a tubing hanger used during the pressure-testing process.

When the equipment failed, the gas exploded from the equipment and struck the worker. The fatal force of the explosion was equivalent to that of the energy of two sticks of dynamite.

The young worker had been employed by a company hired by EnCana to provide a specialized well service called snubbing. The snubbing firm had only been operating for a couple of months and while it had hired some workers with previous snubbing experience, it did not provide training or safe work procedures and did not conduct a risk assessment for the job at the Dawson Creek worksite.

EnCana's well site supervisor and the snubbing firm's supervisor both completed and signed a safe work permit declaring that a risk assessment had been conducted and written procedures had been reviewed and were available on site. In fact, those measures had never been carried out.



Picture This!

People willingly put themselves in some pretty precarious positions and if they get away with doing something dangerous once, it'll probably become a habit—until something goes terribly wrong or a supervisor gives them heck.

(WorkSafe Victoria, Australia)

Ontario Cracking Down on Energized Electrical Equipment Hazards in Mine

The McGuinty government in Ontario is conducting a September blitz of energized electrical equipment at mining operations through Ontario.

Inspectors are checking electrical equipment and practices at underground mines, surface plants and aggregate operations, paying particular attention to electrical hazards that could result in workers' injuries or deaths.

The blitz will focus on three key priorities:

- ✦ Ensuring that workers don't work on live, energized equipment, except as permitted by regulation,
- ✦ Ensuring that workers follow electrical lockout procedures, and
- ✦ Ensuring that employers have analyzed job hazards and tasks to determine the adequacy of clothing, equipment and procedures to protect workers from electrical shock and burns.

According to the Ontario Ministry of Labour, 34 Ontario workers have died while working near exposed electrical equipment since 2000. Most of those fatalities were attributed to working on energized or faulty equipment.

Although there were few injuries related to electrical equipment in the mining sector, the MOL says ministry inspectors frequently issue orders to mine employers to improve their electrical safety practices and protocols, hence the September blitz.

'Many workers don't turn off the power before working on electrical equipment and face possible electrical shock and burns as a result. The Government of Ontario and its workplace partners are committed to eliminating all workplace injuries, including those related to electrical installations,' says Labour Minister Peter Fonseca.

Swine-Flu Inspectors Infected as the Result of Improper PPE

Two Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) workers who weren't wearing the right type of PPE, or weren't using it properly, became infected with swine flu in spring 2009, one day after investigating a swine flu outbreak on a pig farm in Alberta.

The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) says the workers were wearing full-face respirators borrowed from a fire hall. The masks had not been fitted properly and the workers also had not been taught how to properly put on or remove their coveralls, disposable shoe covers, double gloves or full-face respirators.

An Alberta Health Services report into the incident notes that the workers lifted their masks inside the barn to allow sweat to drip down and removed their equipment without assistance. There were no showers on site.

The workers soon developed sore throats, cough, fatigue, sweating and headache and testing confirmed that both had the H1NI virus. Of particular concern was the fact that one of the sick inspectors flew on two commercial flights right after contracting the flu.

Procedures have since been implemented to prevent similar occurrences in future. They include a requirement for properly fitted and sized full-face respirators with N95 filters; eye protection with seals around the eyes; a trained staff member to assist workers in putting on and taking off gear and a maximum of two three-hour shifts to reduce fatigue and sweating.

FOCUS ON: HAZARDOUS CHEMICALS

Seven Common Hazardous Chemical Errors to Avoid: Part II

This is the second story in a two-part series examining errors that workers and employers make when dealing with hazardous chemicals, and solutions for avoiding problems. The first story examined the errors of relying too heavily on MSDS information for hazard communication, not reviewing the MSDS before using the chemical, not having the proper PPE for chemicals used in the workplace and overlooking the importance of fit-testing for respiratory protection. Part two will look at three other mistakes and possible solutions.

As industrial hygienist Ryan Stewart noted in part one of this series, chemical safety in the workplace is a joint effort between employees and employers. Following are the last three of seven errors surrounding chemicals that can have deadly consequences:

Mistake #5:

Failing to label containers of chemicals

The problem: Unless they fall into certain exempt situations, regulated chemicals must be labeled in accordance with the OSHA Hazard Communication (HazCom) Standard in the US or the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) in Canada. "One reason for these requirements is that without labels, workers might try to use their senses to determine what a chemical is. Although I've never seen it personally, knock on wood, I've heard colleagues tell stories of first aid cases for burnt tongues, fingers, etc. resulting from such incidents," says Stewart.

The solution: Make labeling easy by providing blank stickers and permanent markers for workers to use. Ideally, these materials should be readily available at the spot where the worker obtains the chemical. Training in labeling requirements and auditing in the workplace will help reduce labeling errors, according to Stewart.

Mistake #6:

HazCom/WHMIS training is not site-specific

The problem: Although there are several good HazCom and WHMIS training packages on the market, Stewart says

they often come up short on site-specific training. "Workers return from generic training, often from an outside service provider like a consultant, contractor or CD ROM, and think they are all done. But they're not. Information provided in these training sessions must now be tied to the chemicals, operations, processes and conditions of your own workplace. You need to give your workers context," he says.

The solution: Once workers complete generic training, provide them with site-specific training that transfers the information to your site. This training should include MSDS locations, safe handling procedures and spill response.

Mistake #7:

Inadequate precautions about smoking and chemicals

The problem: Most workers are pretty good about washing their hands before eating. The same can't be said about washing hands before smoking. "Poor hand hygiene habits can result in inadvertent ingestion and inhalation of workplace chemicals via cigarettes," says Stewart.

The solution: When providing training on the safe handling of hazardous chemicals, remind workers that all hand-to-mouth actions, including smoking, carry the risk of ingesting hazardous chemicals.

In conclusion, Stewart says that many seemingly self-evident points regarding hazardous chemicals get overlooked. "I think it's important to bring up these points, if only to give you a few ideas on how to improve your current program," he says. ♣

Three Workers Injured in Butane Explosion

Three workers were injured, one seriously so, when a drum containing small butane torches exploded at Snap-on Tools in Calgary.

The Calgary Fire Department says drum containers 1.5 meters in height were being unloaded from a truck within the building at the time of the explosion. The worker who received the most serious injuries had been moving one of the drums using a pallet jack.

When the pallet jack came into contact with an obstruction it's believed that a frictional spark was created, which in turn ignited butane gas inside the drum.

The 40-year-old man operating the pallet jack was engulfed in a fireball. He was taken to hospital in critical condition. Two other workers were treated and released.

Firefighters and hazardous materials specialists determined that there was a risk of further explosions involving other drums. The city's bomb squad was called in to respond to that potential hazard and about two dozen workers were evacuated.

Alberta Employment and Immigration issued a stop work order while it conducted an investigation into the blast.

Low Oxygen Caused Two Workers to Drown

Imagine entering an underground vault to inspect ducts and feed communications cables without realizing that oxygen levels were dangerously low and subsequently passing out and drowning in a meter of water at the bottom of the vault.

It happened to two Ontario communications workers in Oakville, ON, in late June 2007. The company that employed the workers, Wesbell Group of Technologies Inc., has been fined \$200,000, plus a \$50,000 victim fine surcharge, for failing to ensure that a written plan had been prepared and implemented to protect workers from confined space hazards.

The victims were Greg Gauthier, 52, and Rodney Metcalfe, 33. An Ontario Ministry of Labour investigation found that oxygen levels inside the vault measured as low as nine percent, far too low to sustain life. Safe oxygen content in air ranges between 21 and 18 percent.

Unless a plan is in place and followed to protect workers entering confined spaces, these types of needless deaths will continue to occur.

Info to go: Read more about confined space hazards by clicking on the info to go safety links at www.SafeSupervisor.com

DID YOU KNOW?

Concrete Pumping Delivery Pipeline Blockages can be Deadly

WorkSafeBC has issued a hazard alert after a construction worker was fatally injured by a whipping concrete pump hose.

The hazard alert urges supervisors to train workers to prevent blockages in pumping delivery pipelines and to recognize the warning signs of blockages that may have air trapped behind them.

Here's what happened to prompt the alert: A concrete pump truck operator was pumping concrete into a walkway outside a home while another worker held the rubber end hose, which was six meters (20 feet) long and had a coupling device attached to it.

When the pump truck operator saw that concrete had stopped flowing out of the hose, he pushed the emergency stop button and the pumping stopped. Unfortunately, compressed air that had built up behind the blockage suddenly forced concrete to burst from the hose, causing it to whip violently into the worker who had been holding it.

He fell backwards and struck his head on lumber on the ground. The worker did not survive.

Tremendous Air Pressure Can Build Up

WorkSafeBC says that inside the pipeline of a concrete pumper, air can become trapped and compress to hundreds of pounds per square inch of pressure. The release of this air can cause a hose to whip suddenly.

A hose-whipping hazard is created if air gets into a pumper's delivery system and is compressed against a blockage. Air can get into a pump line if the pump is stopped while the boom tip is in the downward position. Restarting the pump can push the concrete forward, compressing the air pocket like a spring against the blockage.

WorkSafeBC says workers need to be warned of the hazard of hose whipping before starting a pour. To minimize whipping, end hoses should be no longer than allowed by the manufacturer. In this case the hose on the pump was 2.4 meters (eight feet) longer than that allowed by the manufacturer and it also had a coupling on the discharge end, which further risked the worker's safety.

If a pump is restarted after the boom tip has been down, ensure that workers stay clear of the end hose until concrete is flowing smoothly. 🍁

Know the Laws of Your Province

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ASSISTANCE PLAN REQUIREMENTS

Here's what you need to know about the ERAP requirements for the transportation of dangerous goods in your province or territory:



YUKON

Adopts the federal TDG regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods Transportation Reg., Sec. 3(1)].



NORT

Adopts the federal TDG/ [Transportation of Dangerous



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Adopts the federal TDG Regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Transport of Dangerous Goods Reg., Sec. 3].



ALBERTA

Adopts the federal TDG Regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods Transportation and Handling Regs., Sec. 2(1)].



SASKATCHEWAN

Adopts the federal TDG regulations, including the ERAP requirements [The Dangerous Goods Transportation Regs., Sec. 4].



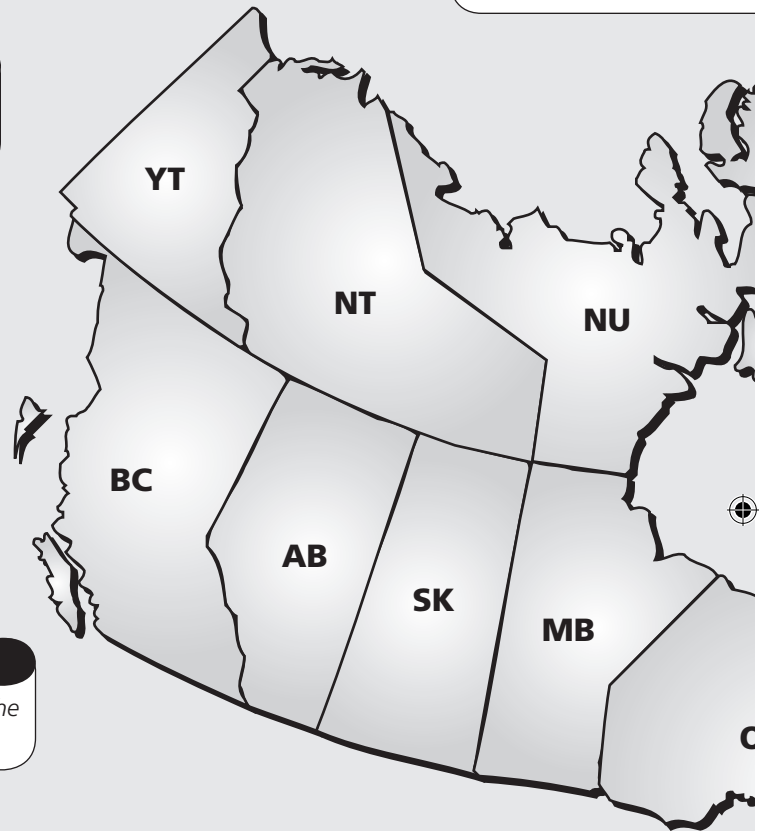
MANITOBA

Adopts the federal TDG Regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods Handling and Transportation Reg., Sec. 1].



ONTARIO

Adopts the federal TDGA regulations, includ [Dangerous Goods Transportation Act, Reg. 261 person who transports dangerous goods on a l to have an ERAP to carry motor vehicle liability no less than \$2,000,000 for each motor vehicle used to transport dangerous goods [Sec. 8(1)].





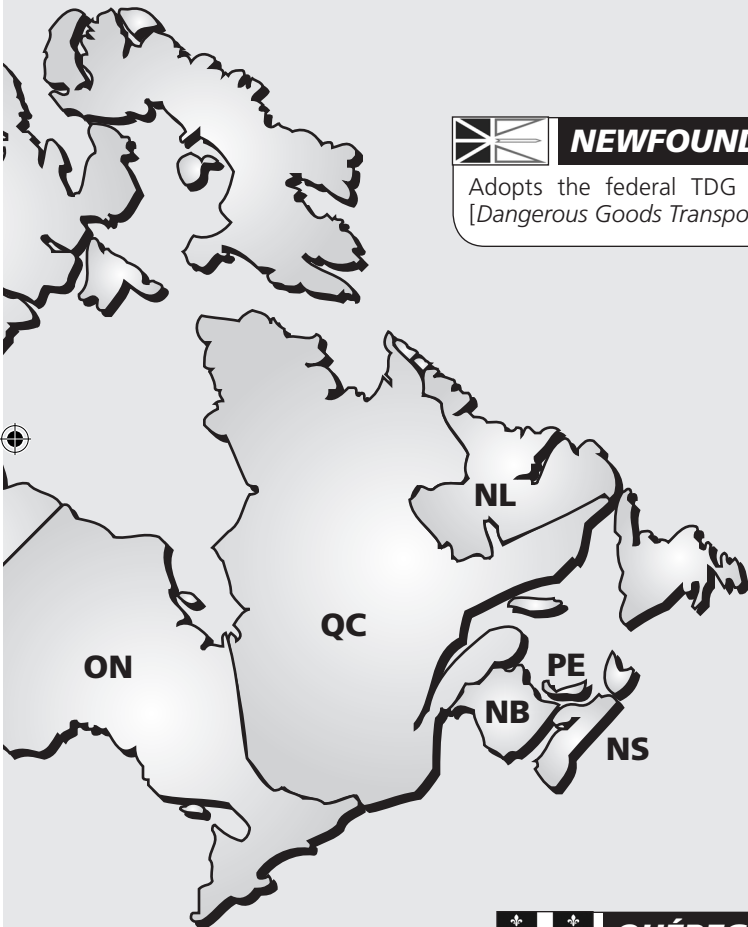
NORTHWEST TERRITORIES/INUNAVUT

Adopts the federal TDGA regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods Regs., Sec. 2].



FEDERAL

Part 7 of the *Consolidated Transportation of Dangerous Goods Regs.* covers the ERAP requirements, including the requirements for ERAPs [Sec. 7.1]; applying for ERAP approval [Sec. 7.2]; approval or refusal of an ERAP [Sec. 7.3]; applying for ERAP renewal or revision [Sec. 7.4]; approval or refusal of a renewal or revision [Sec. 7.5]; revocation of approval [Sec. 7.6]; requesting a review of a decision to refuse or revoke ERAP approval [Sec. 7.7]; processing a review request [Sec. 7.8]; and notification of a decision on review [Sec. 7.9].



NEWFOUNDLAND/LABRADOR

Adopts the federal TDG regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods Transportation Regs., Sec. 3].



PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Adopts the federal TDGA regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods (Transportation) Act Regs., Sec. 1].



NEW BRUNSWICK

Adopts the federal TDG regulations, including the ERAP requirements [General Regulation – Transportation of Dangerous Goods Act, Sec. 4].



QUÉBEC

Requires a person who offers for transport a quantity of dangerous substances with an index higher than the index in column 7 of Schedule 1 to the federal TDG Regulations to comply with the standards in Sec. 7.1 of the Regulations [Transportation of Dangerous Substances Reg., Sec. 33].



NOVA SCOTIA

Adopts the federal TDGA regulations, including the ERAP requirements [Dangerous Goods Transportation Regs., Sec. 2].

is, including the ERAP requirements [Reg. 261, Sec. 2]. Also requires every driver on a highway and who's required to have liability insurance in an amount of \$200,000 for vehicle or combination of vehicles [Sec. 8(1)].





WORLD of SAFETY ...



Three Trapped Miners Survive 25 Days before Being Rescued

How they survived wasn't pretty, but it was pretty remarkable. Three Chinese miners who became trapped in a flooded mine were rescued 25 days after they became trapped.

The miners became trapped in a flood at the Xinqiao Coal Mine in southern China June 17. They say they were forced to drink dirty water that seeped through the earth and chew on coal to stave off starvation. Rescuers broke through a collapsed tunnel to get to the trapped men.

It's not the first time this type of situation has occurred in China. Two brothers had to drink their own urine and eat coal to survive after becoming trapped in a mine in August, 2007. However, their ordeal, lasting six days, was much shorter.

Unbelievably, an average of 13 Chinese mine workers are killed every day.

OSHA Publishes New Ethylene Oxide Guidance Document

The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has released a new guidance document explaining exposure monitoring requirements for ethylene oxide.

Ethylene oxide (EtO) is an odorless, colorless gas widely used in hospitals to sterilize surgical equipment. It is also found in antifreeze, detergents, adhesives and spices. Short-term exposure to EtO can cause breathing difficulty and nausea, while long-term exposure can damage the nervous system and cause cancer.

The guidance document helps employers understand the EtO standard and explains how to monitor the air quality in workplaces where EtO is processed, used or handled.

"Because ethylene oxide cannot be detected by sight or smell, workers can be exposed to dangerous levels and not realize it. Understanding OSHA's EtO standard is vital to ensuring that employers know how to measure exposure levels so that workers are not exposed to potentially serious illnesses," says Jordan Barab, acting OSHA chief.

Info to go: *The ethylene oxide guidance document is available by clicking on the info to go safety links at www.SafeSupervisor.com*

FEATURE REPORT

Don't Wave Off Workplace Bee Hazards

Bees who are disturbed don't discriminate. All kinds of employees, from groundskeepers to electrical line workers, to highway construction crew members, are subject to being swarmed by bees.

And the results of an attack can be fatal. Each year in the US an estimated 17 people die after being attacked by domestic bees and the more aggressive Africanized honeybees. John Riehs, senior safety specialist with the Lower Colorado River Authority, says bees cause death through either a severe allergic reaction from a few stings, or from a massive venom dose delivered by 1,000 or more stings.

Riehs says if a bee colony invades your worksite, the area they are occupying needs to be barricaded and employees should be warned to stay away. "Most swarms leave in a few days once a permanent home has been found," he says.

However, if the bees opt to stay and build a hive, the services of a professional beekeeper will be required to remove the hive.

Riehs notes that bees become more aggressive when exposed to vibrations from chain saws, tractors, lawn mowers and other machinery. They may also be attracted to certain odors and colors.

"If bees attack, your only defense is to seek shelter in a vehicle or building. Trying to outrun bees is futile. Bees

can fly about 20 miles per hour (32 km/h) and have been known to chase workers for over a quarter mile," he says.

How to Avoid Stings

Both bees and wasps are attracted to perfume, cologne and scented soaps. They also may be attracted to bright or patterned clothing. Advise workers who may enter areas where disturbing a nest is possible to be particularly watchful for the movement of bees/wasps to and from a particular location. Wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirts can reduce the severity of an attack.

Insect repellent sprayed on the skin and clothing has also been shown to deter bees and wasps.

If You Are Stung

If a honey bee stings and flies off, it will die soon afterwards, because its barbed stinger is ripped out and remains in the skin. Since venom is pumped into the skin for 45 to 60 seconds following a sting, immediately removing the stinger with an object such as the edge of a credit card will reduce the amount of injected venom. After removing the stinger, wash the sting site.

People who are allergic to bee or wasp stings need to seek immediate medical attention. Some people with these allergies carry epinephrine (adrenaline) to combat life-threatening reactions to a sting. 🍁



Drug and Alcohol Impairment Common among Dock Workers

The use of alcohol and drugs among dockworkers in Vancouver, BC, is rampant and is worsening a longstanding problem of sexual harassment toward women, according to a labor arbitrator.

Vince Ready, who was hired by the International Longshore and Warehouse Union Local 500 to investigate issues of concern to members, including sexual harassment of women, says in his report that, "Being intoxicated at work and even the open consumption of alcohol and drugs on the job appears to constitute acceptable behavior."

Ready, who has worked in labor relations for more than four decades, says he has never before encountered a workplace where the presence of illegal drugs and alcohol is so prevalent.

"Add gender to the obvious difficulties created by drugs and alcohol at work and you have an intolerable situation for women working on the waterfront," says Ready. "No one should have to work in the type of atmosphere described to me."

Ready says his interviews of dock workers revealed rampant evidence of harassment and unfair treatment of women, including:

- ✦ Inadequate toilet facilities that lack sufficient locks.
- ✦ Pornographic materials left in washrooms and other areas.
- ✦ A system of assigning work whereby "ugly girls" are given less desirable tasks.
- ✦ Better jobs being offered to women in exchange for sexual favors.

- ✦ Offensive graffiti.
- ✦ Pregnant women being exposed to materials that could endanger the health of their unborn babies.
- ✦ Groping or fondling.
- ✦ Crude and suggestive language.
- ✦ Racial discrimination.

Ready's report states that these practices show "a certain level of indifference to the principle of equality of women" and "reflect a poisoned work environment that is almost intolerant of the presence of women."

He says he was particularly disturbed to hear that many derogatory comments toward women are being made by supervisors. Ready's report recommends that a procedure be established to deal with harassment and discriminatory practices.

CAREER BOOSTER

Promotion May Hurt Mental Health: Study

According to long-held belief by researchers, an improvement in a worker's job status, through promotion, will result in better health because of an increased sense of self-worth and control over one's life.

But new research from England suggests that viewpoint is distorted, with the average promotion producing 10 percent more mental strain.

"Getting a promotion at work is not as great as many people think," says University of Warwick researcher Chris Boyce, a PhD psychology research student. "Our research finds that the mental health of managers typically deteriorates after a job promotion and in a way that goes beyond merely a short-term change.

"There are no indications of any health improvements for promoted people other than reduced attendance at GP surgeries (doctors' offices), which may, itself, be something to worry about rather than celebrate."

Boyce's comment about reduced visits to doctors refers to a 20 percent drop in doctors' visits following a promotion.

He and Andrew Oswald, a University of Warwick economics professor, studied data from the British Household Panel Survey, collected each year between 1991 and 2005. The survey includes information on about 1,000 individual promotions.

Ensure You Have Support to Help You Adjust

Boyce suggests that the best way to minimize the stress of a promotion is to get support from family, friends and co-workers.

Some other tips for dealing with the stress of a promotion are as follows:

- ✦ Request a clear description of your job duties, so you can concentrate on what's important and not waste time on tasks that aren't your responsibility.
- ✦ Talk to someone who has done the job you've been promoted into. This can often help reduce your anxiety, along with answering questions you may have.
- ✦ Delegate certain tasks to trusted employees.
- ✦ If you become overwhelmed with your new responsibilities, break a job down into manageable chunks and tackle one problem at a time.
- ✦ Use a day planner and write down tasks for the next day in order of priority before leaving work. Don't waste energy on tasks that can wait.
- ✦ If you find yourself getting panicky or angry, take a quick walk around the block or go somewhere private and take some deep breaths until you cool down.
- ✦ Take it easy on the coffee at work.
- ✦ Try to get enough sleep at night.
- ✦ Exercise regularly to help reduce anxiety.
- ✦ Avoid eating a high fat, salty or sugary diet. Eating right can make a huge difference in how you feel.
- ✦ Leave work at work. When you aren't at work, have fun with family and friends.

British Metal Refining Plant Heavily Fined for Two Deaths

A combination of safety lapses led to the deaths of two workers at a metal refining plant in Macclesfield, England and the company is now paying the price, with fines and costs equivalent to \$1.24 million US (\$1.3 million CAD).

The two workers, 29-year-old Richard Clarkson and 50-year-old Stuart Jordan, died after argon gas leaked into a pit. The pit's oxygen alarm system had been switched off and a ventilation system that likely would have saved both men's lives had it been operating during the argon leak wasn't running at that time.

A lack of safety training was also a factor in the deaths, Worcester Crown Court was told. The company, Bodycote HIP Ltd., is said to have addressed the safety issues that caused Clarkson's and Jordan's deaths.

Luke Messenger, an inspector with Britain's government safety agency, the Health and Safety Executive, said both deaths were entirely preventable.

"The risks from confined spaces and asphyxiation due to the presence of argon were well known to the company, which had experienced a similar double fatality at a Bodycote Group site

in California just three years earlier," says Messenger.

"Despite this warning the company failed to undertake a proper risk assessment for entry into the confined space. Although they had implemented a safe system of work and permit to work procedure, they had not properly trained employees in their use, or ensured that these systems and procedures were being followed through their auditing procedure."

Info to go: Read more about argon gas hazards by clicking on the info to go safety links at www.SafeSupervisor.com

FROM THE FATALITY FILES

Young Bank Worker Dies in Stairway Fall

Think of dangerous work environments and offices and banks are probably not the first two things to come to mind, but a recent fatality in England shows that tragic events can occur in any setting.

Richard Charles Pow, a 26-year-old employee at a bank in Leeds, England, died after falling down a stairway at his workplace. Authorities are trying to determine what caused the worker to fall.

Those who knew Pow said he was one of the nicest and most helpful people anyone could meet. A friend said Pow never had a bad word to say about anyone and he had everything ahead of him.

Most people use stairs without thinking and that can be a real problem. Falls down stairs have many causes, including these:

- ✦ People are thinking about other things while climbing up or going down stairs.
- ✦ Handrails are not used.
- ✦ People try to carry large, bulky loads on stairs. Sometimes the load is so big that their vision is blocked by it.
- ✦ Lighting has either burned out or is insufficient to safely illuminate the stairwell.
- ✦ Carpeting or other flooring material may be bunched up or loose.

- ✦ Footwear isn't appropriate.
- ✦ People are rushing.

Most of us associate stair falls with being elderly and frail, but as the case outlined above shows, no one is immune to a nasty fall down the stairs. While most people who fall survive, debilitating injuries are not uncommon.

Ensure that the stairways in your workplace are not cluttered with debris and that lighting is adequate and stair treads are secure and not raised. Remind your workers to be careful on stairs. ✦

Father of Two Killed at Boat Plant

A 31-year old rigger described as a hard-working man of integrity and "a teddy bear at heart" died as the result of an incident at the Electric Boat Quonset Point shipyard in North Kingstown, RI, earlier this summer.

Ritchie A. Morse was pronounced dead at Kent Hospital in Warwick, RI, after being crushed between a transporter used to move large sections of submarines and two large sliding doors.

Witnesses say Morse unintentionally hit a button that closes the doors, when he had meant to depress the button that opens the doors. Weighing about 16 tons each, the doors suddenly slammed shut, causing fatal head injuries to Morse.

He had worked at Electric Boat for a decade. Morse leaves a wife and two children to mourn him. OSHA and the North Kingstown Police continue to investigate Morse's tragic death.

A subsidiary of General Dynamics, Electric Boat designs and builds nuclear submarines for the US Navy. ✦

Tree Cutter Killed in Fall

Tree cutter Dale Simek, 31, was wearing a safety harness while working 42 feet (nearly 13 meters) above the ground, but the device couldn't save his life when the base of the tree became unstable and collapsed.

Simek died as a result of traumatic injuries. Two co-workers from Affordable Tree Care of Sturtevant, WI, were on the ground and they were not injured when the tree collapsed. The crew had been cutting down a large tree at a residence in Elm Grove, WI.

Simek had worked for Afford Tree Care for four years. According to his obituary, Simek's favorite activities included having fun with his nephews and niece, jet skiing, skateboarding, drumming, running, lifting weights and watching sports.

The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is investigating the cause of the tree collapse. ✦

Roofing Company Owner Jailed

The former owner of a California roofing company has been sentenced to jail and fined heavily after pleading “no contest” to felony charges of failing to protect employees from a hazard. The charges were laid in connection with two incidents at separate jobsites, which left one worker dead and another with permanent brain damage.

Kenneth Hugo Alton, 57, of Santa Rosa, CA, owner of ANC Roofing, was sentenced to nine months’ jail and ordered to pay nearly \$250,000 in fines and restitution. Supervisor Robert Lawrence McAfee, 39, of Santa Rosa was sentenced to 30 days’ jail after pleading no contest to a misdemeanor charge of knowingly or negligently violating a worker safety rule.

On May 11, 2006, roofer Antonio Quezada Serrano died after falling 21 feet (6.4 meters) through a skylight while operating a felt laying machine. And on Sept. 21 that same year, another ANC worker, Jose Pina Maya, received serious head injuries in a 19-foot (5.7 meter) fall through a skylight.

Maya, who had been installing plastic sheeting on a roof, lost his balance and fell after reaching out to grab a piece of plastic caught by a wind gust.

“This incident was a tragedy that was preventable. Workers have a fundamental right to be protected and an expectation that they will return home safely from their job to their family and loved ones. When safety laws are ignored, it is more than an accident; it is a crime,” said District Attorney Stephan Passalacqua.

California safety laws require that workers approaching within six feet of any skylight be protected against falling through openings. 🍁

Supervisor Fined After Worker Seriously Injured

A supervisor at a Toronto, ON-based resins and plastic manufacturing plant has been fined \$3,000 and the company itself has been fined \$70,000 after a worker suffered serious injuries.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour found that proper fall protection measures and procedures were not undertaken at the Durez Canada Company Ltd. plant in Fort Erie, ON.

A worker on the roof was performing maintenance on lines and equipment used to move steam in the plant. The worker stepped outside a guardrail to perform a task and fell almost 16 meters (52 feet) to metal barrels below.

The employee suffered serious head, arm, leg and hand injuries. An investigation found that the worker had received no training and supervision and had not been provided with a safe work procedure to use when working with a demister pot.

The investigation also determined that supervisor Pat Driver had failed to ensure that the worker used the protective devices, measures and procedures prescribed by law. Driver was fined \$3,000 after being found guilty under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The company was found guilty of failing to ensure that a worker was provided with adequate fall protection in the circumstances and failing to provide instruction, information and supervision to the worker to protect that person’s health and safety.

In addition to the fines, Durez Canada Company Ltd. and Driver must pay 25 percent victim fine surcharges (\$17,500 and \$750 respectively). 🍁

British Builder and Contractor Jailed for Young Worker’s Death

A British builder has been sentenced to three years’ imprisonment after a teenage boy he had employed was fatally crushed by a collapsing wall.

Colin Holtom, 64, of Latchingdon, Essex, was convicted of gross negligence manslaughter in connection with the death of Adam Gosling. The 15-year-old boy was struck on the head by a falling wall north of London, England.

Also jailed for 12 months on a conviction of working while disqualified was contractor Darren Fowler, 47, of the London area.

Holtom had been subcontracted to work on landscaping on a project overseen by Fowler.

The court heard that Holtom told Adam and his older brother, Dean, to demolish a brick wall that was leaning into a neighbor’s yard, but they were not instructed how to safely go about doing it and were left unsupervised. Adam was not wearing a hardhat or safety shoes.

The judge scolded Holtom for displaying a cavalier and irresponsible attitude toward Gosling and his older brother. Gosling’s father, Mark, wrote in his victim impact statement that Holtom has shown no remorse for the boy’s death. 🍁

Farm Owner Jailed in Connection With Teen Worker’s Death

A woman who owns a farm in New Hampshire has been sentenced to 10 months’ jail in connection with the crushing death of a 17-year-old high school student.

Mary Corbett pleaded guilty to a charge of negligent homicide in connection with the death of Travis DeSimone, who was crushed by a collapsing concrete wall on Corbett’s farm in Marlborough, NH

Corbett directed DeSimone to use a saw to cut metal support pipes next to the wall. When he did so the wall came down on him. The indictment states that Corbett knew that the wall, which was leaning and fractured, was not safe, yet she let the student and others work near it anyway.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has proposed \$84,000 in fines against Corbett. She is contesting that matter. 🍁

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Incivility: The Molehill that Can Cause a Mountain of Work-Related Problems: Part II

other workers will get the message that the behavior won't be tolerated.

"Don't say, 'I was offended by that joke.' Instead, say, 'Jokes that focus on people's physical attributes are not appropriate in our environment.' The purpose of correcting offensive behavior in public is to create common standards and to enforce organizational values," she says.

If you catch the same worker making inappropriate comments or telling off-color jokes in future, that person needs to be warned that the behavior will be documented and disciplinary action will follow should it happen again.

Watch Your Own Behavior

Supervisors can't have one standard for themselves and another for workers. If you fly off the handle and belittle a worker in front of other workers, you are a poor role model for civil behavior.

"If you aren't going to straighten out your own act, then don't bother trying to correct others," says Bar-David.

What if You are the Victim of Uncivil Behavior?

People of all levels within a company or organization are coping with stressful job demands, often with reduced staffing levels. As a supervisor you may have to deal with inappropriate comments, including yelling and condescending remarks, from a boss.

"Very often, bosses aren't aware of the effects their own incivility. In those situations you need to figure out a constructive way to talk to them about it," she says.

The smartest approach is to make your feelings known in a way that will not get your boss's back up. If you use a statement such as, "You really embarrassed me when you lit in to me about that missed shipment in front of

my workers yesterday" you can expect a defensive response. It's far better to say, "I feel terrible about that problem with the shipment. Can we talk about it, Jim?"

"In the course of the conversation," Bar-David says, "proceed to describe in non-accusatory terms how his behavior impacted you."

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Are you H1N1 Ready?

The board notes that leading organizations that have plans in place are focusing on:

- Communicating their response effectively:** A major challenge is to communicate effectively and share information with employees, customers, supply chain partners, governments and media.
- Developing internal support and capacity:** The response to a pandemic must have support throughout the organization, including the senior management team and various lines of business and departments. This response must be maintained until the pandemic threat is over.
- Garnering external support:** Organizations do not operate in isolation. They must co-ordinate with supply chain partners and governments and share this information with other similar businesses.

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