Looking SHARP

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"Improving Safety & Health For SHARP Companies"

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Safety Pays, No Matter What Your Age

It's summer and many teenagers are out looking for their first summer job. Young workers are injured at a rate 5 times greater than older workers, even though they are exposed to the same hazards.

If you are a parent of a working teen, an employer who hires teens or supervisor of young workers, visit our website to download a copy of our *"Tips for Teens"* series. There's also a publication for teenagers on finding the right job and working safely.

No job is worth a child's life and safety pays, no matter what your age. Visit us on the web at www.labor.ok.gov. You can also request copies of all four publications by sending an email to the editor at bkulakowski@oklaosf.state.ok.us.

Summer Injuries Too Common

It's summer time and the mercury is rising. Unfortunately, when the temperatures rise, so do the number of injuries. Many industries report an increase in work-related injuries and illnesses during the summer months.

Heat is a common factor in many of these incidents. Heat can cause injury. Palms get sweaty and slippery. Safety glasses get foggy. Personal Protective Equipment becomes unbearable to wear. Hot surfaces and steam lead to burns. There's the ever-present risk of sunburn, and of course, the ever-present danger of heat stress.

Whether workers are in factories, or out on construction sites; in refineries or on drilling rigs, heat is the enemy of summer. According to the NIOSH publication *Working in Hot Environments*, the frequency of accidents in hot environments is higher than in more moderate environmental conditions: "Working in a hot environment lowers the mental alertness and physical performance of an individual. Increased body temperature and physical discomfort promote irritability, anger and other emotional states which sometimes cause workers to overlook safety procedures or to divert attention from hazardous tasks."

If the workers you need to protect can't get out of the kitchen, what can you do to reduce their risk of heat-related illnesses?

First its important to recognize that a worker can react to heat in a variety of ways, and it is important to recognize all of them. Even conditions that might not be deadly by themselves can cause serious problems.

Everything from age, weight, degree of physical fitness, degree of acclimation, metabolism, use of alcohol or drugs, preexisting medical conditions, type of clothing worn and prior heat injury can all affect a worker's sensitivity to heat. Because of all these factors, it is not easy to predict which workers will be affected —and how they will be affected.

Environmental factors can also come into play. Radiant heat, air movement, conduction and relative humidity are considerations that should be taken into effect.

And don't forget PPE; for instance, a self-contained

See Summer Injuries on page 3

The Challenge of Changing Culture: Working 100 Percent Safe

Industry has struggled for many years trying to figure out how to change the culture of their workers from working unsafe to working 100% safe. As a high level manager or owner, the biggest thing you need to know is, "your people are working like they believe you want them to work."

Consider the logic involved… People who want to keep their job so they can provide for their families; they believe they must please the ultimate person who is running the company.

If they perceive you are only there to make money, which is only possible when productivity is high, they will perceive that safety is of secondary importance.

Though you may be on record of having said, "Safety comes first." The fact is, you can say that as many times as you want and people will perceive that you are only saying that to keep OSHA out of your facility. They won't believe you mean it.

The primary reason, according to Wayne Jenson, director of safety at Stahl & Associates Insurance in St. Petersburg, FL is because of the layers of management between you and your people. The worker with the wrench in hand associates what you want by what his or her supervisor wants. If the immediate supervisor is focused only on production, because they too perceive this to be what you want, the worker will only believe productivity is number one and safety follows behind – and maybe not in the #2 position.

After all, in most cases, you created the system. The people who are in place at all levels are there at your pleasure. They will do what they perceive you want them to do, or, they perceive, they will get fired. That's just how it works.

This demonstrates the importance of good supervision in your safety and health management system, as well as to the success of your business. How do you think your supervision is portraying you? Are they representing you well? Are they demonstrating your values about safety?

Getting employee buy-in is another story, but how do you get your supervisors to buy in to the message that every employee must "work safe and follow all safety rules"? A worker may admit to breaking a safety rule, but seldom do they admit to working in an unsafe manner. That means, supervisors have to start with themselves. They are management's eyes and ears on the production floor or the construction site, or the drilling rig, or in the hallways of the facility. If employees see supervisors taking risks, bypassing rules, or "letting it slide… just this once", this is the example they will follow.

Your challenge is to gain the supervisors buy-in, so that they too can "work safe and follow all safety rules". Supervisors must stand at management's side, a unified force that refuses to accept anything less that working 100 percent safe.

Jensen recommends, "Try leading a meeting where the point of the discussion is the value of working 100 percent safe. Something as simple as asking the question '*What would be the value of working 100 percent safe at this company?'* Listing the values on a flip chart is a powerful way to involve everyone. Ultimately, you lead the process, but let your people provide the answers. It has to be their idea if you want the culture to change."

> *"If you prove to your people that you care so much about them that you are willing to sacrifice productivity, or even the business if it will prevent the slightest injury, they WILL provide you with productivity."*
>
> *Wayne Jensen*

If you really want to prove to yourself that management is the hardest group to win over on safety culture, Jensen says ask them "If we begin telling our people today to work 100 percent safe, which means follow all the safety rules, what will happen to productivity?" The answer from management and workers alike, is "it will decrease"

The truth is that productivity always increases when people are required to work 100 percent safe. "You will have the greatest life saving opportunity of your entire life if you will say that to your people." According to Jensen, if you say, "I don't care if production drops off, I want you to work 100 percent safe."; If you prove to your people that you care so much about them that you are willing to sacrifice productivity, or even the business if it will prevent the slightest injury, they *will* provide you with productivity."

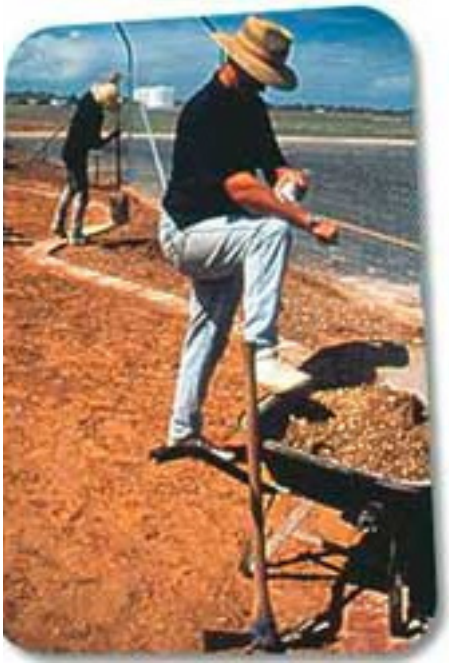
Source: Concrete Openings, March 2008

Summer Injuries *(continued from page 1)*

breathing apparatus can increase the possibility of heat stress due to its weight. Totally encapsulating chemical protection suits can also add to the problem.

OSHA does not have a specific regulation regarding heat stress. However, feasible and acceptable methods can be used to reduce heat stress hazards in workplaces. These include, but are not limited to:

- Permitting workers to drink water at liberty;
- Establishing provisions for a work/rest regimen so that exposure time to high temperatures and/or the work rate is decreased;
- Developing a heat stress program which incorporates the following:
- An acclimation program for new employees or employees returning to work from absences of three or more days;
- Specific procedures to be followed for heat-related emergency situations;
- Provisions that first aid be administered immediately to employees displaying symptoms of heat-related illness.
- A screening program to identify health conditions aggravated by elevated environmental temperatures;
- A training program informing employees about the effects of heat stress, and how to recognize heat-related illness symptoms and prevent heat-induced illnesses;.



While training is a key factor in reducing heat-related injuries, learning the causes and solutions isn't enough. It is also important to educate the workers themselves. NIOSH says that a good heat stress-training program should include:

- Knowledge of the hazards of heat stress
- Recognition of predisposing factors, danger signs and symptoms
- Awareness of first-aid procedures for, and the potential health effects of, heat stroke
- Employee responsibilities in avoiding heat stress
- Dangers of using drugs, including therapeutic ones, and alcohol in hot work environments
- Use of protective clothing and equipment
- Purpose and coverage of environmental and medical surveillance programs and the advantages of worker participation in such programs

Heat, however, is not the only enemy. UV rays are responsible for thousands of reported cases of skin cancer every year. Gone are the days where the shirtless construction worker sweated beneath the suns glaring rays, earning a fair wage and the perfect tan.

Sun exposure at any age can cause skin cancer and there are no "safe UV rays" or "safe suntans".

While people who are fair skinned may be at higher risk for sunburns, no one is safe from skin cancer, so everyone who works in the sun needs to protect their skin from the harmful rays of the sun.

- Cover up. Wear tightly-woven clothing that blocks out light. Light colors are best to reduce the absorption of heat into the fabric.
- Use sunscreen. A sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 15 blocks 93 percent of UV rays. You want to block both UVA and UVB rays to guard against skin cancer.
- Wear a hat. A wide brim (not a baseball cap) is ideal because it protects your neck, ears, eyes, forehead nose and scalp. Wide brim hard hats are also a good idea when head protection is needed.
- Wear UV-absorbent shades. Sunglasses (and safety glasses) don't have to be expensive, but they should block 99-100 percent of the UVA and UVB rays.
- Limit exposure. UV rays are most intense between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. If you're unsure about the suns intensity, take the shadow test. If your shadow is shorter than you, the suns rays are strongest.

Anticipating health and safety issues and taking action to prevent them is a long-term and profitable investment for companies. For more information on industrial hygiene and methods for promoting health and safety in the workplace, please visit the American Industrial Hygiene Association website at www.aiha.org and the OSHA website at www.osha.gov.

Sources: OSHA & NIOSH

The Writer's Block: What You Can't See Can Hurt

By Betsey Kulakowski, CSHO

Kulakowski

It's summer! And its a very dangerous time of the year. Kids are heading to the pool, everyone's out in the yard, it's time to clean out the garage, and construction is booming. Drowning, lawn mower accidents, falls from ladders, and heat stress exposures become much more prevalent.

Recently, I got a call from a company who's employee had been bitten by a snake and the doctors were trying to decide if they could save his toe. He'd been clearing out a debris pile and never saw the snake that bit him.

As a safety professional, its very easy to classify the hazards you can see. It's a lot harder to identify or predict the "no-see-ums". It's so important to never let your guard down. Part of an effective safety and health management system is the ability to predict the "what if's" and find the "unseen hazards" that may exist in your workplaces.

This can be quite challenging if your workplace is ever-changing, such as a construction site or oil rigs, or even if you're just doing a little summer site clean up, lawn mowing, or rearranging the inventory in storage. Management of change should be an integral part of your system. If you can predict the worst-case scenarios, then you can put controls into place to minimize or even eliminate the risks.

Along this same line, health hazards are often harder to identify than safety hazards, because you can't always see them. Noise, air contaminants, and chemical hazards are often overlooked because they may require special equipment to pinpoint. Regular monitoring, and periodic testing can help ensure health hazards don't remain unseen.

By anticipating and searching for the unseen, you can help ensure the effectiveness of your safety and health management system and ensure that what you can't see, won't hurt you.

*Betsey Kulakowski is the founding editor of **Looking SHARP** and a Safety Consultant with the Safety Pays® OSHA Consultation Program. She is recognized as a certified safety and health official in both construction and general industry. To contact her, please call (405) 528-1500, ext. 282 or email her at bkulakowski@oklaosf.state.ok.us*

A 40-year-old Tulsa man died this summer after contracting Rocky Mountain spotted fever from a tick bite. Health Department officials think he contracted it in Stephens County. Tick-borne diseases are more common in northeastern and eastern parts of Oklahoma.

Two cases of West Nile virus have already been confirmed in Oklahoma this year. One case occurred in Logan County, while the other was found in Pittsburgh County.

Last year Oklahomans reported the most cases of West Nile, with 107 cases and eight deaths.

Recognizing The Best of The Best

The list of companies who have made the commitment to go above and beyond is a long and distinguished one. In this issue of Looking SHARP, we recognize a long list of companies who have achieved excellence over the past six months.

Congratulations to: McElroy Manufacturing of Tulsa, Waste Management of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma Investment Castings of Blackwell, OK-1 Manufacturing of Altus, Duncan Industrial Solutions of Duncan, Air Power Systems of Tulsa, Quarry Landfill of Tulsa, Muskogee Community Landfill of Muskogee, Stillwater Milling of Perry, Waste Management of Tulsa, Duncan Industrial Solutions in Oklahoma City, East Oak Landfill of Oklahoma City, Stillwater Milling in Davis, SMC Technologies of Midwest City, Metals USA of Muskogee, Ball Pipe and Supply of Shawnee, SKF Sealing Solutions of Hobart, and 3-L Communications of Tulsa.

As of August 28th, there are 43 companies among the SHARP elite in the State of Oklahoma.

OSU-OKC Family Health & Safety Day

OSU-OKC will host it's third annual Family Health and Safety Day on Saturday, **September 6, 2007** from 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. OSU-OKC at OSU-OKC at 3401 W. Reno, north of Mathis Brothers Furniture.

This fun outdoor event will feature free car seat safety checks and several give-aways, while supplies last, including: gun locks, fingerprinting cards, smoke detectors, safety reflectors, and toothbrushes by Smiley O'Riley courtesy of Dental Depot. **Plus don't miss out on the GRAND PRIZE DRAWINGS!**

Participants will be able to gain valuable health and safety information on topics such as teen safety in the workplace, pet safety, internet safety, camping and outdoor safety, landscaping safety and much, much more!

Participants can also get their blood pressure, glucose and cholesterol checked during the event. Representatives with the campus will be available to discuss career opportunities.

Kids can bring their bikes and helmets and enter the bike rodeo, get their faces painted, participate in the "kid's arts festival" and enjoy the moon bounce. The Oklahoma City Fire Departments' life-saving smoke trailer will be available as well as OG&E's Electrical Safety Town.

For more information, contact Catreana Bennett at catreana.bennett@osuokc.edu or visit the website at www.osuokc.edu/fhsd

Spotlight on Excellence: Autoquip

There's nothing our consultants like better than finding a company that has its act together. We have the privilege of working with many. Autoquip Corporation of Guthrie is one of them.

Autoquip already knew a lot about safety before they entered the SHARP program in February of 2006. After all, they're in the safety business...so to speak. You see, Autoquip is the leader in the design and manufacture of material handling lift products such as Custom Lifts, Scissor lifts, Vertical Reciprocating Conveyor (Freight Elevators), and Dock lifts. A primary use of Autoquip lifts is for ergonomic material handling applications. Autoquip has manufactured both standard and custom products for over 60 years.

Autoquip works with customers who have challenging material handling requirements. GM, GE, Spirit, CVS, Raytheon, to name but a few, have turned to Autoquip to meet their specific material handling requirements.

Within 16 months of entering the SHARP Program, Autoquip had earned its first SHARP certificate, and stands poised to continue towards their first two-year certificate. When asked what their secret was, Director of Operations Chris Kuehni says that training and education have been key factors in their success, along with a strong commitment to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses and being involved in the planning and evaluation of safety and health performance.

"We value employee involvement, through the Safety Team as well as First Responders." Kuehni says, "Employees are involved in organizational decision making in regard to safety and health policies."

Above the normal monthly housekeeping walk through, that is measured and posted as a plant goal, the Safety Team conducts Random Audits bi-monthly in a given department. If that department scores an average score of 9.3 points the entire plant gets a luncheon. "During this audit, the Safety Team is looking for OSHA violations, adherence to Company Safety Rules as well as General Housekeeping. The Safety Team has created a matrix of scores to measure our success, including charts that measure trend analysis."

Kuehni adds, "Being proactive is always more effective, and once established its easy to see how an effective safety and health program impacts the overall effectiveness of business itself. Potential customers visit our facility to determine if Autoquip is capable of manufacturing product to their quality requirements. A clean, safe, efficient, productive factory is a key factor in their evaluation. SHARP is a tangible example of the overall quality of our manufacturing effort."

*Would you like to tell share your success story with our **Looking** SHARP readers? We're always looking for SHARP companies to feature and we love to share your success with others and recognize your efforts. To receive a "Spotlight on Excellence" questionnaire, email the editor at bkulakowski@oklaosf.state.ok.us. Your company could be in the spotlight!*

Flooding and Tornado eTools Unveiled

Federal agencies estimate that about 125 people die every year in the United States because of flooding. Workers who must respond to flooded areas will be most at risk. Likewise, a major tornado can be lethal. Preparing for tornados and responding to them effectively can reduce the dangers caused by these storms.

While most workers can stay inside during such a storm, some workers may be required to go into the storm. However, many of the hazards occur to workers immediately after the storm has passed, such as during cleanup and utility restoration work. These activities are even more hazardous in areas of flooding, which are often caused by these storms.

With a good portion of the Midwest, including parts of Oklahoma, under water due to recent rains and flooding, and the rash of tornados that have spawned all over the US, OSHA has recently unveiled a new Flood and Tornado Clean up and Recovery page on the OSHA website.

Adapted from the tools developed following Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the interactive website includes a variety of fact sheets, tools and quick-cards to help employers keep their employees safe during the post-storm clean up operations.

Topics ranging from search and recovery for those responding to the crisis, to roof-tarping, electrical hazards, water removal and mold remediation are covered. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.

Source: OSHA

Things That Make You Go *'Huh?'*

Here's Your Sign! Found on a small tractor: "*Danger: Avoid Death*." That warning was selected as the winner of the 11th annual "Wacky Warning Label Contest," sponsored by Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch. The contest is part of an effort to show the effects of lawsuits on warning labels.

Kevin Soave of Farmington Hills, a Detroit suburb, won the $500 grand prize for submitting the tractor's "Danger: Avoid Death" label. The $250 second place was given to for a label on a T-shirt iron-on transfer that read: "*Do not iron while wearing shirt."* The $100 third-place prize was found on a label on a baby stroller featuring a small storage pouch that warns: *"Do not put child in bag."* Contest organizer Bob Dorigo Jones says the silly labels reflect how broken America's civil justice system is.

Source: Yahoo! News

ISHN Names OSHA Site The "Best of The Net"

Who's got the most popular safety-related website? Hands down, it's OSHA's web site, cited by 22.2 percent of those surveyed by Industrial Safety and Hygiene News.

In 2005, then-OSHA chief Jonathan Snare told the National Safety Congress annual meeting that 60 million people would visit the OSHA website that year. Surely the numbers have only gone up since then, as web traffic across the board has increased.

Why does OSHA's site get heavy traffic? 1) It's non-commercial; 2) content is free; 3) content is expertly written and extremely relevant - expert standards interpretations, guidelines, news updates, research and statistics; 4) there is an urgent "need to know" what OSHA is up to, given its standards and enforcement power; and 5) OSHA leaders have decided to invest heavily in expanding the breadth and depth of content on the site.

Last fall, OSHA unveiled on its site a newly formatted publications page. The page features an extensive list of free publications. With over 300,000 visits every month, it is one of the most popular places on OSHA's site, the agency boss, Edwin Foulke, told a maritime advisory committee meeting last November.

"We have adopted popular features that we see in many commercial on-line order sites. New components - such as the "Most Frequently Viewed OSHA Publications" and "Publications Recommended by OSHA" - will make it easier for visitors to obtain additional important materials," said Foulke.

In a speech to the HR Florida Sate Council last October, Foulke spent seven paragraphs promoting features of OSHA's web site.

"The website offers free fact sheets, guidance documents, pocket guides, posters, and hundreds of other pages of information that show you how to keep employees healthy and safe on the job. And please: Do not be afraid to visit our website; OSHA never targets visitors to our website for an inspection!" He said.

Source: ISHN E-zine

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Safety Pays® OSHA Consultation Division
4001 N. Lincoln Boulevard
Oklahoma City, OK 73105