



The Safety Frontline

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See You on the Road!!

Most of our travels over the next few months will be for private speaking engagements, but it's not too soon to start looking ahead to the 2009 Conference season. Some excellent events occur in the spring. Here's a sampling of where we'll be presenting this year:

Ohio Safety Congress
Columbus, Ohio
March 31st-April 2nd

- Pam Ferrante will present on Global Harmonization on Thursday April 2nd

AIHce in Toronto, Canada
May 30-June 4th

- Pam Ferrante will lead a Seminar on May 30th titled "Developing a Successful OEHS Consulting Practice"
- Pam will also be presenting an EHS Crossover Session on Risk Communications on Monday June 1st at 2:00 and will be participating in a 2-hour Roundtable on aging workers on Tuesday June 2nd from 10:30-12:30

ASSE PDC in San Antonio, Texas
June 28th-July 2nd

- Pam Ferrante will present on Risk and Crisis Communications on Tuesday June 30th.

JC Safety & Environmental, Inc.
321 South Negley Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15232
Phone 412-414-4769

We're on the Web!
www.jcsafety.com

We Move On!

Welcome!! We are thrilled to be starting 2009 and the fourth year of *The Safety Frontline*. We have always tried to make this E-Newsletter a place where timely topics of interest to a variety of safety folk can be found and we hope you agree. We try to keep our articles brief, while providing you with places you can go to get additional information. We find our articles by perusing the safety publications of organizations such as ASSE, NSC, AIHA. We also scour the web. Some of our favorite sites include NIOSH (www.cdc.gov/NIOSH), Facility Safety Management (www.fsmmag.com), and Safety Smart (www.safetysmart.com).

We'd love to get your ideas for future publications. We're sure you have favorite websites and organizations that provide a wealth of information that can be shared. Please give us a call or send an email and tell us where to go. Seriously!! You can reach us at 412.414.4769 or info@jcsafety.com

Keeping it Safe!
Pam Ferrante, CSP, CHMM
President

Will You See Less Injuries During the Recession?

Several articles have been published in recent weeks about the potential result of the current recession on workplace injuries. Given the lag between injury reporting on a national scale to the Bureau of Labor Statistics and publishing the data, it may well be early 2010 before we really know the answer. However, as we have subsequently learned, the country was now considered to have been in a recession since December of 2007. With 2008 data due out shortly, we may be able to begin to put a picture together sooner.

The "early line" is that we can expect to see a reduction in injury rates for both 2008 and 2009 for two fundamental reasons. The first is that injury rates in general have been declining for many years, albeit slowly. Many attribute this to improved workplace safety programs and a greater acceptance of the role strong safety programs play in reducing overall costs to employers, many of whom have been more willing to put out money up front in safety investments with an expectation of future returns.

The second is that injury rates historically decline in times of economic downturns. Several factors play a role including less work hours and layoffs of newer, less experienced workers, whose injury rates are typically higher. And sadly, some also believe workers are less likely to report injuries for fear having to take time off at a reduced WC pay rate or even losing their jobs.

Finally, what about safety professionals? How might they fare in these tough times? Again, only time will tell, but the expectation is that with the slow but steady ingrain of safety professional into the organizational structure, fewer are seen as overhead. That's good news for all of us.

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MSHA Ends Year by Publishing New "Safe Room" Rules

On the last day of 2008, the Federal Mine Safety and Health Administration published a new set of rules in the Federal Register requiring hardened safe rooms where trapped miners can safely await rescue. The rules are designed to prevent the kinds of tragic fatalities from underground explosions witnessed in 2006 in places like Sago and Aracoma in West Virginia and go into effect 60 days from the date of publication.

The rules call for the in-mine safe rooms to be capable of sustaining life underground for 96 hours or for 48 hours if there are special links to the surface. The regulations specify the size of the rooms and their capacity as well as breathable air supply and gas removal requirements. The rules also stipulate that the rooms must be located close to the surface of the mine. They must also be equipped with food, water, lighting, first aid supplies and communications equipment.

Costs to the industry are expected to be in the neighborhood of \$90 million the first year and at least \$40 million each year following. The rules apply to over 650 underground coal mines employing over 50,000 workers across the United States. Despite the cost, the National Mining Association, an industry trade group, supports the changes.

Richard Strickler, acting assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health expressed his strong support saying that miners can now rely on their ability to remain safe underground until rescue is possible. The United Mine Workers of America had not commented on the published rules at the time of the writing of this article.



It's Time to Post Your OSHA Form 300A

It's that time of year again – time to post your OSHA Form 300A. Remember that the Form 300A must be posted in a conspicuous location where employees gather such as a lunch room, time clock or central bulletin board from February 1, 2009 to April 30, 2009. The form must include a summary of occupational injuries and illnesses for your location during calendar year 2008 and it must be certified by an executive staff person within your organization. This would include an owner, officer, or the highest ranking person working at the establishment.

If your organization has multiple physical locations, a separate OSHA Form 300 (Injury log) and Form 300A must be kept for each establishment that is expected to be in business for more than one calendar year. An organization may keep one Form 300 and Form 300A for all establishments that are expected to be in business for less than one year.

If you are still confused or have question on how to fill out the form or categorize injuries and illnesses, please let us know and we'll help you get the information you need.

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Frontline's Fast Facts

In our last issue we noted the recently released Bureau of Labor Statistics data on fatalities for 2007. In this issue we take a quick look at non-fatal workplace injuries for 2007:

- Total injury rates decreased again winding up the year with an injury rate of 4.2 per 100 full-time workers. The rate for 2006 was 4.4.
- The rate for 2007 was the lowest it has been since 2002.
- The number of total cases decreased from 4.1 million in 2006 to 4.0 million in 2007.
- Half of the total cases involved days away from work or job transfer at a rate of 2.1 cases per 100 workers, also down from 2006's rate of 2.3 cases per 100 workers.
- Industry sectors showing declines included agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, mining, construction and manufacturing. Of the major sectors, only the service-providing industry showed an increase.

JC Safety & Environmental, Inc.
321 South Negley Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA
15232

Phone
412-414-4769

Fax
412-362-5268

E-mail
pam@jcsafety.com

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Superfund Program Meets its 2008 Goals

The EPA is touting its successes in 2008 saying that it met or exceeded every one of its clean-up goals for the year. Thirty more Superfund sites were removed from the National Priority List for a cumulative total of 1,060 or 67% of the listed sites since the program's inception in the 1980's. Susan Bodine, assistant administrator for EPA's Office of Solid Waste and Emergency Response also noted that the completed construction project sites were returned to their respective communities for productive uses.

In addition to the completed construction project sites, the EPA also reported that an additional 85 sites were designated as ready for anticipated use, which means that all measures are in place to assure that the sites are protected for all current and future uses. EPA also oversaw or directly conducted 372 emergency response and removal actions due to immediate threats to communities by cleaning up spills and accidental releases. All identified unacceptable human exposures were controlled at another net total of 24 sites; the program now totals 1,306 sites under control.

Funding for the projects noted above came from a variety of sources. Nearly \$462 million came from the Superfund program for construction and post-construction projects, including \$55 million for new work at 16 projects across the country. Private party commitments were secured to fund clean-up work to the tune of \$1.9 billion, which includes \$1.6 billion from potentially responsible parties for future work, with the balance going to reimburse EPA for work already completed.

The Superfund program continued to work on future efforts by listing 18 new sites and proposing 17 sites to be added to the National Priority List. To see if one of these sites is in your neighborhood, go to www.epa.gov/superfund/sites/index.htm.

FRONTLINE'S FAST FREEBIES



Who says you can't get something for nothing? In every issue we will bring you two freebies. Go get 'em!

1. Washington State Department of Labor and Industries has initiated a program called TIRES (Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis) whose goals are to reduce injuries, particularly musculoskeletal disorders, slips/falls and "struck by/caught in" injuries. At the web page you will find lots of excellent articles. But if you scroll to the bottom of the page, you will find super posters that you can print out and use in your organizations. www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Research/Trucking/Default.asp
2. The OSHA website is always changing and new material is frequently added. Recently we came across a new eTool on prevention of MRSA (*methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus*). Given the substantial rise in cases since the 1970s, it might be a good idea to learn more about it. www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hospital/hazards/mro/mrsa/mrsa.html

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