



The Safety Frontline

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Safety Committee Training

If your organization's Safety Committee is beginning to show signs of lethargy or has completely lost its way, join J&C owner Pam Ferrante for a one hour audio conference entitled – "Does Your Safety Committee Need Rescued?". This conference, presented through Progressive Business Audio Conferences (www.pbconferences.com) will be held on Wednesday January 16th from 1:00-2:00 PM EST. Registration is not yet available, so check back on the link above later in December.

Cost is \$199 per line. You can have as many staff present as you would like; an extremely cost-effective way to provide high quality training to your staff

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Good News or.....

The Bureau of Labor Statistics just released its report of worker fatalities for 2006 and noted, with some fanfare, that the total was the lowest recorded number since the BLS began keeping track in 1992. Only 5,703 workers died on the job in 2006. But that translates to approximately 16 workers per day or one worker every hour and a half. (In about the time it takes for you to read this newsletter, someone will have died on the job.) And despite the overall reduction, deaths in the mining industry more than doubled; in the aircraft-related industry they rose by nearly 50%; and Hispanic worker total deaths went up again last year. Only 5,703 indeed.

Keeping it Safe!
Pam

Should MRSA Be on Your Radar?

We've all learned to endure the over-hype of many news stories. Even those who consider themselves news-junkies know that there are some topics that get way more coverage than seems warranted. So we at J&C have taken a closer look at the recent coverage of MRSA (Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*). We wondered whether or not to advise our clients to take steps to prevent exposure to their workers. Here's some of what we've found:

- *Staphylococcus aureus*, commonly referred to as "staph" are a family of bacteria that are carried on the skin or in the nose of healthy people and can cause infections, most of which are minor and easily treatable.
- MRSA is one of the "staph" family; however it is a strain that is resistant to antibiotics, making treatment more difficult and sometimes causing deadly reactions.
- Staph infections, including MRSA, occur most frequently among persons in hospitals and healthcare facilities who have weakened immune systems. But there are numerous cases of persons acquiring the infection who have not been recently hospitalized or at risk for any other reason. The mode of transmission in some cases is unknown.
- NIOSH refers to the 5 C's: factors that can indicate an increased risk of infection in a particular setting – Crowding, Skin Contact, Compromised Skin, Contaminated Items/Surfaces, and Lack of Cleanliness.
- Employers can reduce possible MRSA infections in the workforce by emphasizing good hygiene, effective housekeeping, and keeping possible contaminated surfaces clean, all programs that should already be in place in your workplace.

NIOSH has devoted a page to this issue. Much more information and tips can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/mrsa/>

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OSHA Works to Improve Communication Among Hispanic Workers and Their Employers

In recent months OSHA has made major improvements in the content on the section of its website dedicated to assisting Hispanic workers and employers. If you haven't been to the page lately (or ever), you owe it to yourself to take a look.

Among the site's best features is a dictionary of over 2,000 translated terms that are commonly used on construction sites and in industrial situations as well as by OSHA in a compliance inspection. These dictionaries feature English-Spanish as well as Spanish-English translations along with phonetic pronunciation guides. Please note that this feature is not a translation tool, but if you need the English or Spanish counterpart to a commonly used word, you'll find it here.

In addition to the dictionaries, OSHA has established a group of regionally-based OSHA employees who are available to work as English as a Second Language (ESL) Coordinators. These staff members can assist local employers, employees groups as well as others with seminars, workshops and speaking events. They also provide basic compliance assistance for employers with large Hispanic workforces and provide outreach, education and training.

An interesting section includes success stories submitted by companies who have had success in reaching out to Spanish-speaking workers. This section includes description of an effort in Texas to provide the OSHA 10-Hour Outreach Training programs in Spanish and to provide translated materials to employers who request them.

The pages also feature numerous OSHA publications that are available in Spanish, including Fact Sheets and several of the basic OSHA Publications including "All About OSHA" and "Employee Workplace Rights". Finally, OSHA offers a Spanish version of the OSHA Job Safety and Protection Poster, which is required to be in all workplaces. For more information and to look at all that is available, follow this link:

http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/index_hispanic.html

An Asbestos-Free Country??

We all have been living with the various Federal regulations that provide extensive protection to workers who need to remove asbestos from buildings or manage it in place through operations and maintenance programs. These regulations have been a part of basic safety programs for over 25 years, but not everyone is aware that the use of asbestos in this country is still legal. In other words, putting new asbestos in place while not often done due to liability issues, is not always illegal.

In October, the Senate unanimously passed Senate Bill 742, the Ban Asbestos in America Act of 2007. Action is still pending in the House and it is unknown if the measure will pass in a different form and be sent to a Conference Committee.

The Bill would ban importation, manufacture, processing and distribution of products containing asbestos. If passed, the EPA will handle implementation by amending the Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA). EPA would also start a nation-wide mesothelioma registry, managed by the CDC through NIOSH and start a public information campaign about the hazards of asbestos.

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Frontline's Fast Facts

According to the Department of Transportation, the lowest highway fatality rate ever recorded occurred in 2006. Here's the skinny:

- A total of 42,642 people died in traffic crashes in 2006 compared to 43,150 in 2005.
- The decline represents a 2% decrease which further translates to a fatality rate of 1.42 per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.
- Fatalities of occupants in passenger vehicles dropped to 30,251, the lowest annual total since 1993.

Transportation Secretary Mary Peters attributes some of the decline to better enforcement of seatbelt laws and from the enactment of tougher safety requirements in vehicles.

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Do You Employ an Aggressive Driver?

Many organizations struggle with managing their fleet safety issues. The obvious results of aggressive drivers are vehicle crashes that include damage to company-owned or leased vehicles, possible property damage and injuries to the drivers or others on the road or on foot. Additional costs include moving violations for speeding and other citations issued to aggressive drivers. In a recent article in *Safety + Health*, the monthly publication for professional members of the National Safety Council, the National Highway Traffic Safety Council cites aggressive driving as the No. 1 traffic safety threat in this country.

According to the article, most aggressive drivers are motivated by a need for power. They may do this in their personal relationships or on the road by trying to control their environment. Secondly, many aggressive drivers show high levels of impatience, particularly if they have to drive in congested and stressful conditions.

Employers who utilize drivers for various tasks of their businesses need to keep in mind that creating unrealistic delivery deadlines is often a contributing factor to aggressive driving among professional drivers. Reviewing and/or modifying schedules and delivery routes may be the best strategy. In addition, many companies report success with the use of the various driver reporting systems that encourage people to call in unsafe drivers to a toll-free telephone number printed on the back of a vehicle. However, the best method for reducing this problem may be as simple as an effective screening program that carefully reviews the driving records of potential employees, combined lengthy "shadowing" periods where driving skills can be evaluated by a more senior driver. The use of a fleet safety vehicle that patrols the areas where drivers must go looking for possible protection behaviors is also an effective tool.

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. If you are a regular reader of the *Safety Frontline*, you know we frequently refer to items available for free downloading or order in this section. We have another publication that we think deserves your review and attention. It's entitled: "*Simple Solutions: Ergonomics for Construction Workers*". At just over 90 pages, a thorough review will take some time, but we've found that the topics are self-contained and can stand alone, so you can pick and choose those which apply to your organization. As with all NIOSH publications, downloading is available on their website or you can order one with a glossy cover. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2007-122/>
2. The Consumer Product Safety Commission offers hundreds of short video clips on a wide variety of consumer-related safety hazards. While many of these brief video clips are related to consumer types of safety hazards, incorporating them into an off-the-job training program or a quick tool box talk can help spice up your presentation. The clips are free to download and edit at <http://www.cpsc.gov/mpeg.html>.

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