



# The Safety Frontline

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2008

VOLUME 3, NUMBER 6

*ASSE Seminarfest  
Las Vegas, Nevada  
February 2009*

*JC Safety President Pam Ferrante will be conducting an 8-hour seminar on emergency response planning at ASSE's annual Seminarfest in Las Vegas on Friday February 13, 2009.*

*Seminarfest is a week-long series of professional development seminars lasting from one to three days and provide unparalleled opportunities for expanding your technical expertise. This year Seminarfest will be held from February 8-14 at the Flamingo Hotel and Conference Center.*

*Whether you come for one seminar or stay the week and participate in several, Seminarfest is one of the highlights of ASSE's continuing education program.*

*Early bird registration is available now by following this link  
<http://www.asse.org/education/seminarfest09/>*

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

**Phone**  
412-414-4769

**Fax**  
412-362-5268

**E-mail**  
pam@jcsafety.com

**We're on the Web!**  
[www.jcsafety.com](http://www.jcsafety.com)

## Difficult Times

Usually this space is reserved for brief comments on something topical. I'm often fairly lighthearted and try to introduce a little levity, but the difficult times we are facing both as a country, and as a profession, require a more somber tone. As a country we face a complicated financial situation that defies easy answers and we all need to be prepared to weather a storm many of us have never experienced. I recently heard from a dear friend who is now jobless due to layoffs and is worried about losing her home. For many of us, this recession is already personal.

As a profession, safety folks need to be wary that the hard fought gains we have made over the years in our quest for a safe and healthful workplace for all do not erode in an effort by employers to cut costs in the drastic economic times. So many employers still view safety as an aside rather than as a critical function. We need to be ever vigilant and continue to push the agenda with our employers, so that when we come out of this recession, we will be stronger than before we went in.

*Keeping it Safe!*  
**Pam Ferrante, CSP, CHMM**  
President

## Election 2008 – What Do the Results Mean to You?

While no one really knows what an Obama Presidency will mean for the safety profession, a few clues were voiced by Candidate Obama during the campaign. As an example, Obama expressed support for the Clinton-supported ergonomics standard that was vacated in 2000, creating conjecture that a major initiative at resurrecting a regulatory approach to ergonomics might be on the early agenda of the Department of Labor. Obama also criticized the Bush Administration for both lackadaisical enforcement efforts as well as limited resources provided to OSHA partnership activities. Might this suggest an increase in funding for OSHA and an expansion of its major programs?

One can also look at Obama's senatorial voting record to provide a glimpse of other initiatives he might champion. Obama supported substantial increases in OSHA fines; up from the current \$70,000 to \$250,000 as well as increases in the criminal penalties for employers whose workplace is the site of a fatality. Obama supported efforts to include private sector employees under OSHA's regulatory requirements and wanted whistleblowers to have increased protection from retaliation from their employers.

Whatever the future holds, one can almost certainly expect that there will be a greater emphasis at standard-making in the next four years. The Bush Administration promulgated fewer standards than any other president since the OSH Act was passed. It seems reasonable to believe that Obama will do more. How much remains to be seen. We'll be sure to keep you posted.

*JC Safety & Environmental, Inc. is certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), as a Woman/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (W/DBE) through the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program, and by the United States Small Business Administration as a HUB Zone Small Business*

## **New Highway Administration Rule Starts Soon**

Shortly after you will have received this E-newsletter, a brand new Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) rule will go into effect that is likely to affect many employers who are not traditionally covered by FHWA rules. As of November 24, 2008, any worker or volunteer in the right-of-way of a federal-aid highway who is exposed to traffic or construction equipment must wear high-visibility safety apparel. This rule applies to all workers, even those who are employed by non-highway contractors and it also applies to some volunteers, such as those who regularly pick us refuse on the roadside.

This rule was promulgated to comply with the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users, requiring the Secretary of Transportation issue such a rule and is an attempt to reduce the over 100 fatalities and 20,000 injuries that occur every year in the road construction industry.

This rule was issued two years ago in order to allow plenty of lead time for compliance. Employers should look to the ANSI/ISEA 107-2004 Standard for guidance on the types of clothing that meets the rule which are known as Performance Class 2 or 3. If in doubt, each garment should bear a label certifying the manufacturer's certificate of compliance.

For now the rule only applies to federally funded highway systems, although the FHWA is reviewing the possibility of extending it to all local and state highways. For more information, visit the FHWA website at <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/safetealu/index.htm>

## ***Social Networking with NIOSH***

Maybe you know of some teenagers or young adults who spend hours of time on the various social networking sites like My Space and Facebook. Maybe you wonder what the fuss is about. Or maybe you have your own page and have joined the crowd who use these sites as a way to stay in touch with friends and relatives, meet new people with like-minded interests, or read the blog of someone they enjoy.

Now you can do some social networking with NIOSH, now maintains pages on several of the more popular sites like Facebook and My Space. NIOSH believes that participation on these sites allows the organization to expand their outreach to various populations they might not otherwise reach, to say nothing of the unique exposure it affords them to millions of people around the world. It also gives NIOSH the means to allow users to subscribe to NIOSH services and products and obtain information and updates about the organization's activities. If you want to see what the fuss is about, log on to the sites and browse for "NIOSH" or follow the direct links below.

Facebook

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Washington-DC/NIOSH-National-Institute-for-Occupational-Safety-and-Health/2890205276>

My Space

<http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendid=405792648>

*J&C Safety Consultants is certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), as a Woman/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (W/DBE) through the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program, and by the United States Small Business Administration as a HUB Zone Small Business.*

## Frontline's Fast Facts

The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently released final data on fatalities for 2007. As would be expected, there was both good and bad news:

- Total fatalities were lower for 2007 than 2006; down from 5,840 to 5,488.

- Construction workers continue to be at the highest risk for fatal incidents. The total of 1,178 represents 21% of all fatalities, yet this sector represents ~10% of the workforce.

- Falls continue to be a major source of fatal incidents. At 835, they represented the highest total recorded since 1992.

- While fatalities among Hispanics dropped for the second year in a row, fatalities among African Americans reached their highest level since 1999.

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

Phone  
412-414-4769

Fax  
412-362-5268

E-mail  
pam@jcsafety.com

We're on the Web!  
[www.jcsafety.com](http://www.jcsafety.com)

## Protecting the Heavier Worker from Falls

As the weight of the average American continues to rise, we often read about the critical health problems, such as hypertension and diabetes, that result as well as the significant ramifications for our overall health care system. But we don't often hear about the impact that heavier workers have on the safety of the workplace in general and in particular fall protection.

The current ANSI standard for fall protection systems and components – ANSI/ASSE Z359.1-2007, protects users in a range of capacities from 130 to 310 pounds, which includes the weight of any tools and equipment the worker may be carrying. The capacity of this standard has not changed since 1992, despite having gone through several revisions since that time, the most recent one in 2007.

Fall protection manufacturers have begun to try and address the need for heavier workers by manufacturing harnesses, personal energy absorbers and other equipment that provides protection up to 440 pounds. These lines of equipment are all unique to the manufacturer. A clause in the OSHA regulations allows for a modification of the 310 pound maximum capacity, which is how equipment manufacturers have been able to create the line of products they sell for heavier workers. However, it is important to remember that this equipment does not meet any nationally accepted standard and cannot be certified as meeting the current ANSI Fall Protection Standard. This is likely to cause confusion amongst safety professionals and workers alike, many of whom believe they are protected by equipment when they may not be.

Unfortunately, there is no simple answer to this dilemma. Safety professionals who exceed the 310 capacity ANSI allows for must understand that they are taking the testing of the manufacturer as the only basis upon which to assure the safety of their workforce.

## 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. October was Fire Prevention Month. In an ongoing effort to educate businesses about fire safety planning, the Fire Equipment Manufacturer's Association offers several important fire safety checklists and planning/preparedness overviews at its website: [www.femalifesafety.org](http://www.femalifesafety.org)
2. The dangers of being in a boom-type access platform without a full body harnesses are illustrated in a live demonstration video which shows what happens to a live crash dummy riding in a platform while the lift is driven over a low lying obstacle. It graphically depicts the catapulting effect when an operator is not wearing a harness. Produced and distributed by the International Powered Access Federation (IPAF), the video is available in six languages and can be downloaded for free at [www.ipaf.org](http://www.ipaf.org)

J&C Safety Consultants is certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a Woman Business Enterprise (WBE), as a Woman/Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (W/DBE) through the Pennsylvania Unified Certification Program, and by the United States Small Business Administration as a HUB Zone Small Business