



The Safety Frontline

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2009

VOLUME 4, NUMBER 6

How Will GHS Affect Your Organization?

As noted in our article on page 2, OSHA has published a Proposed Rule to align the current Hazard Communication Standard with GHS. The Final Rule is expected in 2010, requiring changes in the way hazardous materials are classified and how the hazards are communicated to workers.

Jennifer Silk, former Deputy Director of Standards and Guidance for OSHA and current Training Advisor to the United Nations Institute of Training and Research, will be conducting a 2.5 hour live webinar for AIHA on Thursday November 19th from 2:00-4:30 ET. This is a chance to get all the crucial information you need to begin to prepare your organization for the changes they will need to make.

The early bird rate expires on November 13th. Hurry and claim your spot. Follow the link below for more information and to register:

<http://www.aiha.org/education/dl/Pages/HazardCommunication.aspx>

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

Phone
412-414-4769

E-mail
pam@jcsafety.com

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

Another Year Nears an End – And What a Year

This is the last issue for the current year and after the release today of some bleak numbers about unemployment and underemployment, we continue to be reminded that, although the recession is “over”, things are still tough for lots of our colleagues and those whose workplaces we are dedicated to protect. At JC Safety we continue to work hard every day to provide cost effective ways to keep your safety program out in front while we weather this economic storm. If we can help you, give us a call or send an email (pam@jcsafety.com or 412.414.4769). In the meantime, enjoy the holiday season.

Keeping it Safe!
Pam Ferrante, CSP, CHMM
President

Fatalities are Down, But Serious Injuries are Up What Does it Mean?

In August the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) issued its report of fatalities for the 2008 calendar year. The numbers show a slight decrease of 9% from 2007, dropping from 5,657 to 5,071. The fatal case rate also declined from 4.0 in 2007 to 2.6 in 2008. While any decrease is good news, many in the safety profession are beginning to wonder about the relative stagnation in fatality rates over the past ten years. If our safety programs are working, why aren't the numbers continuing to decline?

Data also shows that the frequency of injuries has declined dramatically, a number often touted as a marker of the success of active workplace safety programs. However, recent assertions by OSHA suggest that a pervasive underreporting of injuries, both deliberate and unintentional, may be occurring. Perhaps BLS data may not be accurate enough to base any conclusions about the effectiveness of workplace safety programs and that the actual rate of injuries may be much higher?

Finally, until about 10 years ago the severity rate also declined substantially. But, beginning in about 1995, the rate of serious injuries, as defined by days away from work or days of restricted duty, began to rise and has continued to do so. Data from the BLS shows a 35% increase in those incidents requiring 31+ days away from work in the time period 1995-2005. In addition, the National Council of Compensation Insurance (NCCI) annual report for the same time period showed an increase of 88% in indemnity costs and a 137% increase in medical claims cost, compared to only a 26% increase in Workers Compensation costs.

These seemingly contradictory data points are generating much discussion in the safety community and in our offices here at JC Safety. We want to know what you think and would welcome your comments and ideas. You can send us an email or call. We'll track the responses we get and write more about it in our next issue.

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OSHA On the Move

We have mentioned in recent issues that OSHA was poised to move forward on a number of fronts and, since our last issue, they have done just that. We hardly know where to begin, but here's our best shot at a quick summary of what's been happening that we think you should know about:

- On September 30, 2009, OSHA published a Proposed Rule for the long-awaited revision to the Hazard Communication Standard. These revisions will bring the United States in line with the Global Harmonization System of Classifying Hazardous Materials (GHS). Responses are due on the Proposed Rule by the end of December 2009 and a Final Rule will appear sometime thereafter. How soon is anyone's guess, but when it is published employers are expected to have 2 years to retrain employees and manufacturers 3 years to re-classify hazardous materials as well as prepare revised labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS). We'll do a more detailed update when the Final Rule is published.
- As a result of an intensive review of the OSHA program in Nevada, a State-OSHA State, Acting Administrator Jordan Barab is signaling his intention to take a closer look at other State-run programs saying on October 20, 2009, "we will strengthen the oversight, monitoring and evaluation of all state programs". OSHA's review of Nevada's program revealed serious flaws including "failure to issue appropriate willful and repeat citations, poorly trained inspectors and lack of follow-up to determine whether hazards were abated. The comprehensive evaluation of the Nevada OSHA plan points to an urgent need for corrections in oversight and changes in all phases of its workplace safety and health program."
- On October 21, 2009, OSHA published an Advanced Notice of Public Rulemaking (ANPR) on another long-awaited standard – combustible dust. This is a follow-along to OSHA's National Emphasis Program (NEP), in place since 2007. The large number of General Duty violations stemming from the NEP led OSHA to believe that a standard was needed. The need for a standard has also been consistently urged by the Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) who investigated the deadly incident at the Imperial Sugar Cane Refinery in Georgia in February of 2008. The ANPR establishes a comment period, after which a Proposed Rule will likely be published. The timeframe for that is unknown so we will all have to sit tight and await the next step.
- On October 30, 2009 OSHA announced that it was attempting to crush its record for the largest fine ever levied for workplace safety violations by issuing proposed penalties against BP Products of North America, Inc. for \$87,430,000. The violations, many willful and serious, were mostly for the company's failure to correct safety hazards discovered following the devastating explosion at its Texas City, Texas plant in March 2005 that killed 15 and injured 170. Of interest is that the fines from the incident held the previous record of \$21 million.

What's next? We'll tell you in our next issue. Stay tuned.

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Frontline's Fast Facts

An article on page 2 of this issue references the recently released Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) data on 2008 fatalities. Other noteworthy numbers regarding fatalities from that report include the following:

- There was a 20% decline in fatal falls from 2007, which was the highest number ever recorded.
- Fatalities in construction also decreased by 20% and fatalities from exposure to harmful substances decreased by 13%.
- The number of workplace suicides increased to 251, the highest ever recorded.
- The rate of fatalities for loggers, one of the most dangerous occupations, increased to 90.8, the highest rate ever recorded.
- Fire and explosion related fatalities also increased by 14%.
- MVA accidents always top the list of most frequent fatalities and 2008 was no different – 40% of all fatalities were transportation-related.

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Cold, Seasonal Flu or H1N1? We Can Help You with That!

No, we didn't obtain our physician's license since the last issue, but one of our colleagues passed along a chart outlining the differences between the three illnesses. While it won't provide a sure-fire diagnosis, it may provide helpful clues that can answer at-home treatment questions or help you decide whether or not to make a visit to the doctor or ER. It would also make an excellent Tool Box Talk. Below is a summary of the document. You can access the full document at our website. Just follow the link from the homepage (www.jcsafety.com)

- Fevers are rare with colds, but very common on all types of flu, including seasonal or H1N1.
- Productive coughs are a hallmark of colds, but not the flu.
- Body aches are typically fairly mild with a seasonal flu, but increase in intensity with H1N1. They are sometimes part of a cold.
- Headaches are common with flu, but not colds.
- Both colds and seasonal flu tend to develop over a few days, while H1N1 features a rapid onset; as a novel virus, our bodies react pretty aggressively to its presence.
- General flu symptoms are common with both seasonal and H1N1 and include fever, aches, pains and diarrhea. Both illnesses usually run their course in 4-7 days.
- Sore throats are common with both the cold and seasonal flu, but not H1N1.
- Chest discomfort is usually present in both seasonal and H1N1, but when it turns severe, as is can with H1N1, immediate medical attention is required. Other serious symptoms include shortness of breath as well as blue fingertips, and lips in children.

It is important to note that, as the H1N1 Pandemic continues to run its course, the CDC is no longer recommending that symptomatic persons showing up at doctor's offices or emergency rooms be routinely screened for H1N1. Recent surveillance by the CDC indicates that 99% of all flu being submitted for typing is H1N1. Since the seasonal flu season has yet to gear up, any flu-like symptoms are generally presumed to be H1N1.

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. We recently came across this safety supply company that offers a free monthly safety poster. You can print as you go or sign up for a regular email. Go to <http://www.liftruck.com/safety/posters/index.asp?>
2. The latest Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) video is now available to download. The danger of combustible dust has been an issue long in the sights of the CSB. The new video on this topic is available on their website (www.csb.gov), to either download or order your own DVD copy. You can also view and download the videos on the CSB's You Tube channel (www.youtube.com/csb)

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