



The Safety Frontline

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More Fallout from 9/11

Recent hearings before a House and Senate Committees revealed substantial and growing health problems for those who responded in the initial days following the attacks on 9/11.

According to a study conducted by Mt. Sinai Medical Center, 70% of ground zero workers have suffered some sort of respiratory illness since the attack.

In addition, firefighters and other rescue workers have contracted the lung disease sarcoidosis at rates five times higher than in the time right before the attacks.

In a separate article, the Mt. Sinai medical team is also beginning to see higher than expected cancer diagnoses.

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Another Year Begins

Because I have school-aged children, the cycle of the year for me begins in September. It also seems to be that way for many of our clients – as August draws to a close, the pace at our office picks up. It seems as though everyone suddenly realizes that the summer is almost over and the projects that were put on the back burner while everyone vacationed, now move to front and center. We usually get really busy at this time of year as the focus on safety training and other safety-related projects becomes important. This is a good time to remind our clients that the practice of safety is a year-round enterprise. It's crucial that we keep the focus on safety all year long. If you think that your company's "safety cycle" is a bit out of whack, give us a call (412.414.4769). We'll sit down with you and devise a year-round plan to keep safety out in front at your organization.

**Keeping it Safe!
Pam**

What's in Your "Laundered" Shop Towels?

An article recently published online by INDA, the Association of the Non-Woven Fabrics Industry (www.inda.org) caught our eye. It details a study performed to analyze the metallic and oil content of shop towels that had been professionally laundered and returned for use by employees. Samples of recently laundered towels were collected from 23 locations in 14 states throughout the United States. The towels were submitted to an independent laboratory and analyzed for 23 metals as well as for oil and grease. Every towel that was analyzed contained elevated levels of various metals, including iron, lead, antimony and cadmium as well as oil and grease.

The study also attempted to estimate the exposure potential by a typical worker who might use these "clean" towels. The exposure evaluated in the study supposed an employee would use the towels to wipe off their hands and then potentially ingest the metals via exposure pathways that included towel-to-towel, towel-to-lip, and hand-to-mouth.

Using an estimate of 2.5 hand towels per employee per day and using California's EPA Limits for lead, the hypothetical employee exposure to lead would have exceeded the limits for lead ingestion to prevent reproductive effects by 26 times and for cancer by 1.3 times. Employees who use 10 laundered shop towels per day may risk exposure of additional metals including antimony and cadmium in levels that also exceed CalEPA's limits.

The study provided no recommendations for ongoing use of laundered shop towels. We would certainly suggest that if the study is valid, employees must be consistently reminded to regularly wash their hands before eating, drinking or smoking and to avoid touching their mouth area with their hands.

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Two Important OSHA Updates

As a follow-up to information reported in previous issues of this E-newsletter, here are two updates:

- Emergency responder health and safety is currently regulated by OSHA under numerous standards such as HAZWOPER, Confined Spaces, and Bloodborne Pathogens. Some of these standards are older and were never promulgated to address comprehensive emergency safety of workers, but to address specific safety issues. They also do not address changes in performance specifications for protective clothing and equipment that have occurred since the initial standards were promulgated

OSHA has requested information and comment from the public to evaluate what action should be taken to address comprehensive emergency response and preparedness. OSHA is planning to consider emergency response and preparedness at common emergencies (e.g., fires or emergency medical and other rescue situations), as well as large scale emergencies (e.g., natural and intentional disasters) and has signaled its intention to consider one standard to cover all emergency response. OSHA will also be evaluating the types of personnel who would constitute either emergency responders or skilled support employees at such events, as well as the range of activities that might constitute emergency response and preparedness. Comments are due December 10, 2007. Visit www.osha.gov to find out how to submit yours.

- OSHA will be holding a public hearing on its plan to update its personal protective equipment (PPE) design standards. The hearing is scheduled for 9 a.m. on Dec. 4, 2007, at the Department of Labor's Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C. Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Edwin G. Foulke Jr. said "OSHA is working to modernize its standards by updating references to outdated consensus standards. Holding this hearing will allow interested parties the opportunity to provide direct input on these important changes."

OSHA is proposing to revise the PPE sections of its general industry, shipyard employment, long shoring and marine terminals standards regarding the use of eye and face protective devices and head and foot protection. A notice of proposed rulemaking was published in the May 17, 2007, Federal Register and the public was given until July 16, 2007 to submit comments.

Those who intend to present testimony at the hearing must notify OSHA in writing of their intention to do so no later than October 1, 2007. Parties who request more than 10 minutes for their presentations at the hearing and those who will present documentary evidence must submit the full text of their testimony and all documentary evidence no later than November 1, 2007. Interested parties may submit notices of intention to appear, hearing testimony and documentary evidence electronically at <http://www.regulations.gov>.

However, there is still no definitive word on how OSHA plans to address the ongoing issue of payment for PPE. You may recall that OSHA has been saying for years that employers are required to pay for PPE, but a ruling several years ago by the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission interpreted OSHA's current regulations otherwise. OSHA has said it plans to correct that problem and issue a revised rule in September, but as of this writing, nothing has been published. They may still make it, but.....

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The Value of a Good Equipment Inspection Program

One of the fundamental components of a good quality safety program is ongoing procedures for the inspection of tools and equipment. These inspections are sometimes mandated by various OSHA standards with varying regularity; in the case of powered industrial trucks, it is pre-use. However, whether mandated or not, inspections are an excellent means to discover potential hazards and remove unsafe tools and equipment from service before an incident occurs.

At J&C Safety Consultants we recently received a "Safety-Gram" alert from a colleague about a problem discovered on several JLG Manlifts at one company in the Southwest. The problem was discovered specifically on JLG 860SJs at the swivel area where all 8 bolts had been inexplicably sheared off on two separate lifts. Unfortunately the bolts are concealed by a cover plate, making it difficult to observe the damage, but were discovered during a routine pre-use inspection.

This story gives us an opportunity to make two recommendations to you – 1. Stop now and take the time to do a thorough inspection of any manlifts at your facility, especially JLG 860SJs. 2. Re-visit your equipment pre-use inspection program. Make sure it is comprehensive and details exactly what items should be inspected by your employees. Make sure all inspections are documented and have a supervisory or safety department person audit the inspection process periodically to make they are being completed as directed.

Frontline's Fast Facts

According to the National Safety Council's 2007 edition of "Injury Facts", every hour in the United States:

- **One work-related death occurs (8,760 per year)**
- **Five motor vehicle deaths occur (that's over 43,000 per year)**
- **Six off-the-job unintentional injuries occur (that's a whopping 52,560 per year)***

***According to a survey by the same organization, over 83% of those that responded say their company does not have an off-the-job safety program.**

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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. The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Identification Board (CSB) is a federal agency that investigates many of the nation's chemical accidents and provides recommendations to other agencies to prevent the same incidents from re-occurring. (In recent issues of this e-newsletter, we reported on the CSB's investigation of the BP Refinery fire in Texas several years ago.) The CSB regularly compiles re-creations of their investigations on DVDs for distribution. They are great for training and we recommend adding one to your library. Just go the website and make the request - http://www.csb.gov/index.cfm?folder=csb_videos&page=request
2. The Emergency Response Guidebook is a joint publication of the US Department of Transportation, Transport Canada, and the Secretariat of Communications and Transportation of Mexico (SCT) for use by firefighters, police, and other emergency services personnel who may be the first to arrive at the scene of a transportation incident involving a hazardous material. The book is available for purchase and is useful for dealing with haz mat emergencies at your facility, but you can also download the book (or selected portions of it) at the following link <http://www.ehso.com/hmerg.php>. (Be aware that the publication is undergoing revision as we speak and will soon be re-issued, so check the site regularly to make sure you get the new copy when it comes out.)

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