



The Safety Frontline

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Slips, Trips and Falls Virtual Symposium

We have previously used this space to promote webinars presented by various JC Safety staff. As a cost-effective and "virtual" method of providing training to your workforce, they can't be beat.

This issue of The Safety Frontline gives us a chance to tell you about a whole virtual symposium. On October 20-22, the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) presents a three-day symposium devoted to the topic of slips, trips and falls, JC Safety President Pam Ferrante will be one of 12 concurrent session speakers.

Your registration gets you access to all concurrent sessions (which will be archived in case you are unable to attend for the live session), plus virtual networking and vendor exhibitions.

Follow this link for more information on costs and to register.

<http://www.asse.org/education/stfsymposium/>

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Production Is Up, But So Too Are Job Losses

As we begin to make the transition from summer to fall, the economic news provides us with different transitions. Industry data suggests that the workforce is demonstrating increased efficiency and production is up. But layoffs continue, callbacks are few and far between, and the number of workers who are chronically unemployed (greater than 6 months) grows each month. Those of us who were not substantially affected by the recession are still doing OK, but just in the last two weeks I heard from two fellow EH&S professionals with lengthy and impressive resumes whose employment searches have been difficult, have produced very few leads, and seemingly have no end in sight.

As we all continue to work to make sure that safety stays out in front in our organizations to help protect our co-workers, it's also important that we make sure we take the time to reach out to our fellow safety professionals and do what we can to help them get through this tough time. It only takes a minute to forward a resume on to a colleague or to offer to introduce someone to a new contact that might help in their job search. The sooner we get these good quality EH&S professionals who are dedicated to workplace safety back to work the sooner we all benefit. If this newsletter reaches you and you are looking for work, give us a call or send an email and we'll do what we can to help you. (pam@jcsafety.com or 412.414.4769)

Keeping it Safe!
Pam Ferrante, CSP, CHMM
President

MSHA's Final Rule on Underground Rescue Teams

Several years ago, workers in the mining industry suffered from devastating incidents that led to the loss of many lives including those in Sago, West Virginia and Crandall Canyon, Utah. Since then numerous major pieces of legislation have attempted to rectify the root causes of those incidents including the Miner Act of 2006, which was discussed in several previously published issues of *The Safety Frontline*.

Also in 2006 the New Emergency Response Act was passed delineating training and drill requirements for both mine-site and state-sponsored rescue teams. The United Mine Workers challenged several provisions of the Rule and recently the U.S Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit issued its decisions on the matter.

The final Rule published in the *Federal Register* calls for training for mine-site and state-sponsored rescue teams on a semi-annual basis at small mines and that all members of state-sponsored teams who are full-time employees must participate in two local mine rescues annually. You can read more about the additional provisions of the Rule at the MSHA website - www.msha.gov

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Is the Recession Making Your Workforce Healthier?

Maybe so, according to the National Business Group on Health (NBGH), an organization that boasts 300 large employers representing 55 million workers, who recently commissioned a survey of 1500 workers. The findings, released in May 2009, seem to indicate that workers are trying to save money by forgoing preventative health care and minor treatments in medical settings. The findings also appear to indicate increased levels of mental anxiety, particularly among older workers whose age provides limited opportunities to recover from the substantial losses in the stock market.

However, the study also found that a potential positive benefit was that the same workers appear to be more aware of the costs of health care to their employers and were taking demonstrable and independent steps to improve their health through lifestyle changes. The study calls this finding a "teachable moment" and urges employers to take advantage of this opportunity and raise the level of awareness and action among workers with regard to taking responsibility for their own health. Access the full report here - <http://www.businessgrouphealth.org>

H1N1 Returns

As fall begins to make its appearance with cooler nights and more temperate days, so too does the often predicted second wave of the H1N1 Pandemic. The first to be hit were college dormitories with their close living quarters. Most universities were prepared and took aggressive steps at the first signs to move ill students to places where they could get better as well as limit the spread of the virus. By the time you read this article, the wave will have spread to elementary, middle and high schools whose calendars typically begin 1-2 weeks later. It remains to be seen how well they have planned.

At JC Safety we have been keeping this issue front and center since last spring with various recommendations for your workplace. In this issue we offer a few more:

- Take some time now to reinforce to your workforce, particularly those with young children, information about the transmissibility of viruses and the simple ways to reduce the spread – hand washing, coughing and sneezing into their elbow, and not sharing food at work.
- Review your sick leave policies to see if you need to adjust them to deal with this unique Pandemic circumstance. Workers who are ill and are unwilling to stay home have a huge impact on the spread of the virus, the length of time a wave will take to populate your workplace and move out, and ultimately in indirect costs to production.
- Make sure at least one person in your organization is staying on top of the latest news about the Pandemic and is taking the time to share that information with your workers via emails, paycheck stuffers or morning start-up meetings. Of particular interest now is the expected availability of a vaccine sometime in October. Questions about who will be able to get it, how it will be distributed, and the possible effectiveness and side effects are uppermost on the minds of your workforce. You can help minimize the confusion by providing timely and accurate information on an ongoing basis.

We at JC Safety are staying on top of the situation and would be happy to provide you with more detailed and customized ideas. Just give us a call or send an email.

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Frontline's Fast Facts

Although the summer construction season is waning, some new initiatives took place this year to improve safety for roadway workers as well as drivers. Because of the economic stimulus, the number of construction zones and traffic delays was expected to be much higher this year.

- Approximately \$33 billion is spent each year on roadway infrastructure construction, creating 7,200 work zones and delays due to traffic exceeding 450 million vehicle hours.

- An additional \$27.5 billion has been added for projects funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

- It is estimated that an average 1,000 people will be killed and 45,000 will be injured in work zones according to data compiled from the years 2000-2006.

- Texas leads the country in demonstrating substantial decreases in the rates of fatalities in their work zones, reducing the number of annual fatalities from 197 in 2002 to 124 in 2007.

- Ohio has had good success with reducing work zone crashes, reducing their number from 8,339 in 2001 to 5,772 in 2006.

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New OSHA Head Appointed by Obama

Since taking office in January, the Obama Administration has made several very clear statements about its specific plans for the Department of Labor and OSHA, and for workplace safety in general. The appointment of Hilda Solis to head DOL and of Jordan Barab to be Acting OSHA Administrator sent clear messages about a significant change in focus from a "business-friendly" approach to a more "worker-friendly" approach.

In July, Obama took another step in that direction by appointing David Michaels, PhD, MPH to become the permanent head of OSHA. Michaels has a background as a scientific researcher and has argued in articles and books that industry giants, particularly those in the asbestos and chromium industries, have consistently used scientific research to avoid taking responsibility for workplace health hazards. As late as the Winter of 2009 Michaels argued that OSHA was in dire need of a change in philosophy and direction. He suggested that a Rule needed to be promulgated requiring aggressive workplace illness and injury prevention, that the recordkeeping system needed a major overhaul as it was contributing to significant underreporting, and that the entire view of workplace safety needed changed via a dedicated campaign from the Administration and OSHA.

Many commentators on Michaels' pending appointment suggested that he would move quickly to more closely align OSHA with NIOSH and that seems to have borne fruit as the Administration has reappointed John Howard as NIOSH Director effective September 8, 2009. Many in the safety community viewed Howard as a real champion of worker safety and have been actively campaigning to have him brought back to NIOSH since his departure in 2008.

There's no doubt that the next few years will bring many changes to workplace safety. We'll do our best to be keep you up to date and aware of development that may affect you, so stay tuned and fasten your safety seat belts!

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 Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board (CSB) consistently produces high quality videos that make excellent training aids or Tool Box Talk content. The latest video focuses on effective emergency responses to chemical spills and releases. You can download it at their site (www.csb.gov) or on their You Tube page (www.youtube.com/csb)
2. NIOSH is taking the lead on women's workplace safety and health issues by producing a new podcast through its Office of Women's Health. Focusing on four key issues for women at work (job stress, work schedules, reproductive health, and workplace violence), the presentation elaborates on the problems and offers commonsense solutions. Download the podcast at www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=11503%20.

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