

Toughing It Out - Building Character, Strength and Safety for the Future

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"It was the best of times; it was the worst of times." Perhaps these words from "A Tale of Two Cities" can frame our current economic situation. No doubt we are in unprecedented financial times. Some businesses are being walloped by the financial crisis while others are riding the waves in a relatively calm area of the ocean. Some are wondering if the next wave will turn over their boat. I presume most of us are a little sea sick as we look out over the waves of our current situation or open our 401K statements. It is certainly easy to see the "worst" part of Dickens' statement, but what about the "best?"

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend a presentation by a member of High's Board of Directors, Kirk Liddell. Kirk is president of Irex Corporation and has always impressed me as very insightful thinker. Kirk suggested that those who survive the storm will be stronger and that storms aren't *all* bad! Storms make us pull together and work harder. They present the incentive to re-examine what we are doing and why. They also present a perfect opportunity to strengthen the crew and the ship, so as Mr. Liddell suggests, we can be victims of our circumstances or we can look for opportunities and take advantage of what the storm can offer.

One area in which you can strengthen your ship is in the area of safety performance. Safety is always about the future. It is about preventing future risks and improving our ability to recognize and respond to them before they are experienced. Now may be the time to consider building your team's strength in safety. Everyone agrees that safety is important, especially in construction. It can make or break a job and in some cases, make or break a company.

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In the heat of the construction season, it is often difficult to find opportunities to train personnel while trying to meet construction schedules and customer demands. This is especially true of our lead personnel -- those that make the job run smoothly and solve daily dilemmas. These are the folks who we also rely on to manage site risks so it is important that they have the tools to do this effectively.

Each year ABC offers the OSHA 30-Hour Course in construction safety. This program is the cornerstone of safety education for construction companies and provides a comprehensive overview of OSHA requirements. Topics include: scaffolding, excavations, electrical systems,

chemical exposures, blood-borne disease, fall protection, cranes, confined spaces, safety management and many more. The course has become wildly popular, and in 2008 over 680,000 OSHA cards were issued by OSHA (includes OSHA 10 and 30 hour classes)! This is twice as many as just four years ago!

Participants receive course completion cards from the OSHA Training Institute. The cards do not expire. However, because of the changing nature of safety requirements, we recommend updating your card every five years. Controlling risks has a huge payback in many ways. Taking the time to formalize safety processes now will provide a good base for improved operations in the future.

It might be time to strengthen the crew to be better, smarter....and safer. We can have the vision of gloom and doom or seek out the best of times in the worst of times. See you in class!



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ABC Keystone will hold two 30-Hour OSHA classes this year:

→ **March 31, April 1, 7, 8**

→ **October 6, 13, 20, 27**

Both courses will be presented by High Safety Consulting from 7:30 am – 4:30 pm each day. Visit www.abckeystone.org to register online!