

SAFETY / OSHA UPDATE

A Newsletter from High Safety Consulting Services, Ltd.

Information on Safety & Health in Your Workplace



September 2002

OSHA's BIG PLANS...

A regulatory agenda issued in May lays out future plans of the agency. Many of these will never come to pass, but it is nice to know what the agency is thinking! Standards addressing Ethylene Oxide, grain handling, mechanical power presses, and trenching are in the plan. Commentary: Grain handling is a good topic, little is specified in the standard. The trenching rules are reasonably new (11yrs) and if followed provide a good level of protection...OSHA would be better off focusing on other exposures or enforcing the existing standard. I have seen many times after a significant accident, the public wants to have additional regulations developed. IN MOST CASES, existing regulations would have prevented the event, if followed and/or enforced. More rules are not always the answer! In the best performing companies, rules are rarely the driver for safety. Rather identifying hazards and reducing risks is the focus. Is your program rule-driven or risk-driven?

In Construction...

OSHA is looking at imposing rules on hearing conservation (BADLY NEEDED! -- Construction employees are not properly protected or monitored for hearing loss under the construction regulations). I encourage construction companies to go beyond current regulations and institute a comprehensive hearing protection program. This can help reduce work comp liability and more importantly protect people's hearing! In addition, confined space in construction will be reviewed. There currently is limited specific rules that apply to construction for confined space...so OSHA uses the general duty clause 5(a)(1) citing NIOSH or ANSI or some of the small references in the construction regulation. Signs, Signals and Barricade rules are being looked at again (They came out with a new rule proposal and then pulled it back)

DO YOU KNOW THE LANGUAGE?

Net Cash Flows (NCF), Internal Rate of Return (IRR), Payback Period -- These are the terms of business. A good safety manager NEEDS to know these terms and more importantly needs to know how to use them to manage safety and relate safety to the language of business. As safety managers in many companies are finding, the days of saying, "We should spend the

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\$50,000 because it reduces risk for our employees" are over. By using the tools of business and knowing how to apply them to safety projects, you can assure that the expense you intend to make is 1) A sound investment in reducing injuries, 2) The best loss control option. As a safety manager, if I can tell management we need to spend \$100,000 to fix this hazard AND it will provide us with a 32% IRR with a NCF after tax of \$ 15,000...It is likely, the project will go...Want to learn to use these and other tools? Sign-up for our Advanced Safety Management Program in December. This three-day program will give you the hands-on skills you need to increase your professionalism and internal company performance in safety. You will be more respected by your business peers when you talk their language. Register on our web-site at: <http://www.highsafety.com/>

WHAT'S UPPP WITH ERGONOMICS?

The first of the ergonomic guidelines have been released for nursing care facilities and OSHA is seeking comments on these guidelines. The guidelines are not law, but if you don't follow them, OSHA could use the general duty clause to cite. The next set of guidelines being produced are for the retail grocery and poultry processing industries. More will follow. There's been some effort by congress to pass a law requiring the passage of a ergonomic regulation within a two year-time frame. As far as I've heard...that hasn't happened yet. Each company is different and sometimes using a consultant (like HSCSL) to do ergonomics assessments makes sense...in others, it is better to have a "trained" ergonomic task group or committee address the issues. I was at two companies last week looking at work operations: One needed some "quick" consulting fixes to remove specific hazards and another needs a complete ergonomics program to address on-going exposures and improve processes. One of the problems with OSHA's prior rule was "one-size-fits-all". -- It just isn't so!

SHOCKING!

I am really surprised to see how many companies have already placed AED's in their workplaces. There are quite a few of you with AED programs! Great! At the cost of laptop PC, there is no reason not to have an AED as part of your safety program. We promote and provide the Survivalink / Powerheart AED's. There are some cheaper models available, but cheaper does not equate to better! In any case, we can offer other models. The Powerheart AED works entirely with 1-push button -- You can't get any easier than that!

"A Fish Rots at the Head"

This is a saying I saw somewhere in an advertisement many years ago. It makes me think of all the big companies that were doing the wrong things recently -- causing my stock investments to drop! The direction management sets, the things they say are important, the methods and means used -- all help to define an organization. When the top management waivers on ethical issues, it sends a message and things can go down hill from there. As safety managers / representatives / supervisors or others promoting workplace safety and health, we need to be aware that the decisions we make and the positions we take can impact internal perceptions by others -- positively or negatively. I was at a meeting where management was questioning a compliance issue and associated cost. The top guy, set the direction..."we have to be in compliance...anything else is not an option -- end of discussion" This clearly set the expectation for the future. He didn't say "Lets talk about the options, or how can we get around this?". It was clear anything less was not acceptable. If you are in a position of management or oversight...think about your decisions...ethically...and the messages that they send.

Programs

We have a number programs scheduled. Including OSHA 30 Hour for general industry and one for Construction at ABC in Manheim, PA. -- Both are running in October. Visit our website for more information. Click on 2002 course schedule for information.

www.highsafety.com

Hope you all had a relaxing / productive / safe Labor Day.

(I'm still trying to understand why they call it Labor Day but my associates don't come to work!)



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