

# SAFETY / OSHA UPDATE

A Newsletter from High Safety Consulting Services, Ltd.

Information on Safety & Health in Your Workplace



## THE SCHOOL BELL HAS RUNG

My oldest daughter could hardly contain herself this morning as I dropped her off for her first day as an eighth-grader. It doesn't seem that long ago when I was in the same situation – but I guess it was. In the last month, our three children have been increasingly irritating each other...and their parents! While I hate to see the ending of summer, school will bring much more structure to our daily lives. Once again August has been our busiest month of the year for indoor air quality work as we assist in evaluating or resolving air quality concerns.

During the summer school districts prepare for the new school year by conducting renovations, maintenance, and cleaning activities within district facilities. These activities, in conjunction with Mother Nature, often have an impact on Indoor Air Quality (IAQ). There are a few essential elements to maintaining adequate IAQ conditions within the schools or any environment. First, mold requires moisture and food to thrive. It is essential to eliminate water and moisture sources that may lead to microbial growth. Second, good ventilation and air exchange systems are necessary to prevent the build-up of airborne contaminants and provide a comfortable environment. Well-maintained systems provide filtered fresh-air to prevent the build-up of potential contaminants such as carbon dioxide and particulates with temperature and humidity levels that are pleasing to most occupants. On-going, preventative maintenance activities within school facilities can help your facility avoid getting sick. A complete guide to preventative maintenance is available to school districts at: <http://www.epa.gov/iaq/schools/tools4s2.html>

For those facilities managers who want to assure that their air quality is safe, we provide a SAFE AIR FACILITY EVALUATION (SAFE)<sup>™</sup> certification program which involves sample collection and system inspections for your facility. At the completion of the review, your facility can receive a wall-poster and window sticker indicating compliance with the SAFE<sup>™</sup> requirements. This can help to alleviate the fears and worries of occupants.

If you have a son or daughter heading off to college, you might also consider the hazards of dorm living. (Wow – a lot comes to mind here! – lifting beer kegs properly, keeping the volume level set below 90 dB - Ha). Security practices, electrical installations and appliances, access and egress, candle use, portable heaters – are just a few of the considerations for the home away from home.

## NIOSH

The National Institute for Occupational Safety & Health (NIOSH), the research arm of OSHA created by the OSHAct, has been in the news lately. NIOSH is housed under the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) with the NIOSH head reporting to the CDC. Both of these agencies are under the Department of Health and Human Services. The most recent proposal is to move NIOSH lower in the structure. This has raised concerns by some that the agency will have a lower level of effectiveness and support. My main complaint with NIOSH is that they have a lousy marketing program! – NIOSH has a huge array of safety and health information related to very specific work exposures. If you have not used this resource, I encourage you to do so... [www.cdc.gov/niosh](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh)  
A recent release by NIOSH addresses the exposure to food flavorings. This has resulted in some serious illnesses and subsequent legal actions. This news release can be reviewed at: <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/updates/upd-01-15-04.html>. We have assisted users of these flavorings in accessing exposures and developing controls to reduce exposure when warranted. If you have this exposure at your workplace, you would be advised to determine your compliance status.

**HIGH SAFETY CONSULTING SERVICES, LTD.**

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## **OSHA COURSE IN OCTOBER**

We are currently taking registrations for our OSHA 30 Hour General Industry Course in October. In this program you will have the opportunity to hear from a variety of instructors in a wonderful setting and tour a VPP STAR site. We provide lunch, OSHA standards and ample reference materials. We encourage supervisors, lead-people and managers to take this program so that they can better manage safety within their areas. We also encourage safety committee members to obtain this education. If you have responsibility for safety, you should attend this program. When I started in safety, I had wished that I had taken this program on day one, instead of three years into my "safety career". To see a course agenda or register see the link under programs listed below.

## **WANT TO TEACH THE OSHA CONSTRUCTION COURSE?**

See the link below and sign-up for the OSHA Construction Instructor program sponsored by the Keystone Occupational Safety & Health Center. We will be presenting this program for the center at our facility. You must have completed the OSHA 30 Hour Construction Course and have 5 years experience in construction-related safety.

## **AED PROGRAMS CONTINUE TO GROW**

We continue to place AED's into proactive workplaces which are concerned about employee health and safety. A complete program can be installed for under \$ 3000 for most facilities. If you want to see how easy it is to use these devices, contact us for a demonstration. We can assist with medical direction, placement, training and response planning. Call Kevin Keith for more information 717-293-4482. OSHA in it's on-going effort to create alliances created an alliance with the American Heart Association at the end of last year..."OSHA and the American Heart Association will work together to raise awareness about heart disease and stroke, as well as develop programs to reduce death and disability from these illnesses in the workplace." – AHA Website news release.

## **SLIP-RESISTANCE IN STEEL ERECTION WORK IS RE-OPENED BY OSHA**

Steel erectors are allowed to be exposed to falls up to 15 feet! - As compared to most other construction trades, this is 9 feet higher (At 6' fall protection is required for most trades) Note that the general industry number is 4' – It stands to reason that steel erectors are 9 feet tougher than everyone else (sure.) – In any case there are two times when steel workers can be exposed to falls up to 30 feet (or two stories whichever is less). One is in the erection of primary steel structural support members and the other is in a controlled decking zone (CDZ). HOWEVER, OSHA requires that the erectors wear harnesses and have a fall protection system available for hook-off, but they do not require connection for these two activities. This is just plain stupid in my book (the results of negotiated rule-making). In any case, OSHA had established a provision for slip-resistance on painted steel on which ironworkers will walk. Many three-coat paint systems can create an extremely hazardous walking surface, coupled with the 15-30 foot drop...a serious hazard indeed. OSHA requires a specific slip-resistance test to be performed (ASTM 1679) on these coatings. This provision is to be effective in 2006. They are asking for comments on this aspect of the standard. Since I provide slip-resistance testing services under this standard for coating companies and because our firm is in structural bridge steel, I have provided OSHA with detailed comments.

If you are interested in this topic, note: <http://www.highsafety.com/hsl/resources/services/sliptesting/> - See the 'standards' section for a copy of my comments to OSHA.

## **SARBANES-OXLEY COMPLAINT PROCESS ESTABLISHED BY OSHA**

OSHA has been saddled with the employee protection provisions of the Sarbane-Oxley act. This act provides protection to whistle-blowers who report inconsistencies in financial reporting. The S-O rule is focused on assuring full disclosure of off-balance sheet transactions, establishment of new auditing procedures and protection of employees in reporting inconsistencies. The intent is to prevent another Enron. The unfortunate aspect of this is that we are trying to regulate ethics by law which is never very effective. Further, for the majority of organizations it simply means a higher cost of operation in order to comply. The law is to protect us from the few unscrupulous individuals that have decided to go into business but at a cost which will be borne by the public. I am not suggesting the Enron and similar incidents are not worth preventing...but as a society, attempting to apply ethics by law is expensive and fails to solve the basic problem. The law applies to public companies, but has been a guide for private organizations as well. OSHA indicated that over 300 complaints have been received under this provision.

## UPCOMING TRAINING PROGRAMS presented by HSCSL:

See our training page for more details on the following programs: <http://www.highsafety.com/hsl/resources/courses/>

OSHA Instructor's Course for Construction (September 20-23, 2004) Four-day course. This program will be offered through the Keystone Occupational Safety and Health Center (KOSH) – an Authorized OSHA Training Institute. Call them at (800) 318-4846 or visit their website [www.koshcenter.org](http://www.koshcenter.org) to register.

Slips, Trips, and Falls (October 14, 2004) Presentation given by Steve High at the Northeastern Regional Occupational Health & Safety Conference & Expo in Wilkes-Barre. Call us toll-free at (877) 285-1129 for more information.

OSHA 30-Hour General Industry Course (October 18-22, 2004) Five-day, OSHA-authorized course. 4.5 ABIH CM points. Tour a VPP STAR site as part of this course! We adjust this course to the participant's exposures and interests.

OSHA 10-Hour Construction Course (November 15-16, 2004) Two-day, OSHA-authorized course. This program will be offered through Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC) Keystone Chapter. Call them at (717) 653-8106 or visit their website [www.abckeystone.org](http://www.abckeystone.org) to register.

Topics in Safety Management (December 2-3, 2004) Two-day course. Designed for the safety manager with five or more years experience in the safety field.

**NOTE: All of our prior newsletters are archived on our website under the "Contact Us" Tab**

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