

SAFETY / OSHA UPDATE

A Newsletter from High Safety Consulting Services, Ltd.

Information on Safety & Health in Your Workplace



WELCOME TO 2007 – HAVE A BURGER ON US!

2006 was a fine year and I want to thank all of our customers and clients for your support and patronage in this past year. Our year-end customer service ratings were 4.52 out of 5.00 for training and 4.77 out of 5.00 for our services. To me, this means we are doing a good job, but there is always room for improvement. If you have suggestions for us, we are all ears... We welcome your input. In fact, right now we are running a client / potential client survey to help us define our training programs for 2007. If you are within 25 minutes travel distance and would like participate in our survey, give Barb Rutt a call at 717-209-4045. If you complete and return the survey to us, we will issue you a \$5 "Arch Card" good at your nearby McDonalds. (Get the salad). We reserve the right to limit survey participants by size, company and geographic area. Surveys need to be completed within one week.

HOW CAN WE STOP THE 'STUPID' ACCIDENTS?

I get this question a lot. Companies make progress with the safety programs and reduce accident rates to or below the national average for their industry by applying tried and true loss prevention strategies. Then they get stuck. They reach a plateau. The accidents that remain seem nearly impossible to control. Someone falls down the steps for no apparent reason other than a missed step. Someone sneezes and blows out their back. Another bloke walks into a wall while passing through a doorway. A salesman shuts his car door and catches his finger in the door handle causing a fracture. Safety folks wring their hands trying to determine how to prevent these types of event from occurring in the future and often come up empty-handed.

Many safety directors and some companies promote zero accident goals but then feel helpless in achieving the stated goal with insidious accident events such as these. As safety professionals I think we need to recognize a few basic facts: (1) ALL activity, no matter how innocuous it may seem, presents some level of risk. We cannot be free of risk at any point in our life! (2) The more individuals exposed to a risk, the more likely the risk will be realized. If the risk that I will trip over my own two feet is 1 in a 10000 and I employ 10000 people then I should expect at least one event each year wherein someone trips over their feet. Applying this to all of the minimal but potential risks that we each face each day there is some likelihood that some risk events will be realized and result in injuries that require reporting. I call this very minimal level of injury events "noise". These are events that are connected with inherent human error and daily "living" risk.

BUT BE VERY, VERY CAREFUL! Sharing a concept of minimal realized risks presents some very real risks in and of itself! **MAINLY** – It is one big **FAT** excuse to have accidents! This can absolve individuals and management systems from responsibility. Something that is absolutely critical to an effective safety program. I have many times heard individuals explain away accidents as "stupid" accidents – ones that really don't count – because there isn't anything we could have done to prevent them. Remember, most accidents **ARE** preventable and many are not investigated well enough to actually assure they are just "noise". In the stairway fall above: Did we check the condition of the individual's footwear? The design of the staircase? What was the state of mind of the performer? Was water present? What visual cues about changes in walking surfaces were available? What were the lighting conditions? What are the physical characteristics of the performer? Etc. A complete investigation will help to determine if perhaps the event is in reality "noise".

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Zero accidents are a great goal and one that many companies have achieved. How do you get there? (1) Management Support and Commitment. (2) Effective Measurement & Management Accountability Systems for Safety. A reminder to you all that accident counting is NOT the most effective way to measure safety success! (3) On-going Awareness and Culture Maintenance. This is walking the talk. It is on-going awareness. It is how management responds to safety issues. It is what the top executive says. It is what the supervisor and every co-worker promote. It is continual safety knowledge education. It is caring about each other. (4) Processes to support the Culture. This is the safety committee. It is the auditing processes. It is the maintenance program. It is the disciplinary process as well as the recognition systems. (5) Finally, Commitment to make safety a way of operating as a value -- not a priority because priorities change. There are probably a number of other aspects I could include here...but these are really the most important.

Zero accidents are a real goal. Zero risk is not. Minimizing risk is how we can have a chance of reaching a zero accident goal. Setting a goal at anything other than zero just seems wrong. Having a goal to injure three people instead of six next year just sounds bad – Doesn't it? Set a zero accident goal and chart some objectives to reduce risk over time. Focus on the actions to reduce risk, rather than reducing the accidents directly – this will follow in due time. It is really the risk we want to control therein reducing the outcome of the risks – accidents. Don't write off accidents to "noise" unless you are sure you've done a very effective job in accident investigation. Even the best accident investigations I've seen are lacking in depth. (We will be offering an accident investigation course this year if you have a few supervisors that need to hone their skills – most do).

Finally, I believe there is an aspect we need to consider as business persons...Reducing risk has to be done cost-effectively based on potential severity. It may sound harsh to say it's all about the money – but every organization has a finite level of resources. Reducing the probability of a "daily living risk" may not be cost-effective. In my example above, where an individual walks into a wall (I've done it!)...We could choose to install padding on all the facility walls to reduce the probability of injury, should this occur again. Is this a good use of loss control dollars? – Probably not. We would be better off expending these dollars on reducing a different risk. Best wishes to everyone for a Safe, Accident-Free, Minimal-Risk 2007!

DO THIS FIRST

If you just got the safety person's job (or maybe you've been in the role for a few years) I strongly suggest that you do this first: Take a 30-Hour OSHA class. I suggest this not because we offer these (well – maybe that is part of it), but because I believe it will help provide you with the basic understanding you need to do your job. When I started in safety over twenty years ago, I had a degree in business and two safety courses under my belt. I was an EMT and I knew I wanted to work in the safety field (I figured this out in my senior year of college). That was it. I basically knew nothing. Two years later I took the OSHA 30 Hour course at the OSHA Training Institute in Chicago, Illinois. (You had to travel in those days to find these things!) Immediately I had wished I had taken this program on day one of obtaining employment in the safety and health field. I also find that many students who have taken a safety curriculum are not receiving the in-depth understanding that is needed and provided by the OSHA 30-hour class. I also find seasoned safety professionals who also find great benefit in an OSHA 30-hour program in updating their knowledge and skills. We will be releasing our 2007 course schedule soon. Currently we have two OSHA 30-hour courses for construction scheduled to run through the Associated Builders & Contractors (ABC). If you are an ABC member you get a fabulous discount. If you are not a member don't fret - you can register on-line at our web-site and still receive a nice discounted rate from the general public pricing!

OSHA 300 LOG SUMMARY DUE

Just a reminder, that if you are covered by OSHA - not a state or municipal employer - you should be summarizing the OSHA log so that you can post the Summary on February 1, 2007. A few key points: Make sure the highest ranking company official at your location signs this form. (Usually this isn't the person completing the form). Make sure you include work hours. Make sure your totals add up. You should only have one column checked for each accident based on the most severe condition of the case. – In order of: fatality, lost-time, restricted/transferred, Other. Post the summary form not the log form. The summary will remain posted until April 30. If you need help, call us.

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WE DO THAT!

This is my answer to most inquiries regarding services we offer. Just a reminder that we do: bacterial and fungal investigations, remediation plans, proactive air monitoring, chemical sampling, ergonomic reviews, non-ionizing radiation assessments, hazwoper site plans, on-site construction monitoring for projects, slip-testing, noise monitoring, program development, on-site training, train-the-trainer programs, safety culture surveys, safety management assessments, safety committee organization and support, First aid & CPR classes, AED sales and placement, emergency response team development and training, fire extinguisher training, Defensive Driving programs, OSHA citation and compliance assistance, accident investigations, expert witnessing, OSHA-based facility reviews, risk cost allocation system designs, OSHA 10 and 30 hour programs, safety philosophy development, risk communication planning, general liability reviews, MSDS management and just about everything else to do with safety & industrial hygiene.

[To see our complete list of courses offered at our facility see our website.](#)

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WE DO CUSTOMIZED TRAINING AT YOUR SITE OR OURS**

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



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