

# SAFETY / OSHA UPDATE

A Newsletter from High Safety Consulting Services, Ltd.

Information on Safety & Health in Your Workplace



**OCTOBER 2006**

## **THE MACABRE**

Lancaster County saw the recent school violence event that took the lives of young Amish students. I was saddened and sickened as the details of this event unfolded. A few observations I had about this event from a safety management perspective: (1) The crisis communication by the State Police spokesperson was superb. He clearly answered questions; delineated what he could say and not say; remained focused and conveyed compassion and competence. (2) Any investigation into the causes and preventative measures for this event will have limited value. The Amish community has not traditionally focused on prevention. We have seen this resulting in fatal farm injuries to children on Amish farms. In a way this goes against "having faith in God" to protect, oversee and "His will be done". As a result prevention measures in Amish schools will not change much. Thankfully this type of misguided and displaced anger does not occur frequently.

What positive aspects could we gain from such a horrid event? Understanding risk signs of a potential "melt-down" by an individual may be helpful. Co-workers of the attacker noted that his de-meaner had recently changed -- a sign of a potential problem. Many schools re-focused their efforts to assure a safe school. Don't forget that violence in the workplace continues to be the third most common cause of workplace death! OSHA doesn't have a regulation on workplace violence, but your company should have workplace violence programs in place including workplace violence prevention planning. Workplace violence prevention is a culmination of many different elements including policy, education, physical security controls and enforcement.

## **HALLOWEEN, HOUDINI AND HAZCOM**

I hope you had an enjoyable Halloween. Our house is always decked out with decorations. Frankly -- more than I like -- but I'm not in charge of that department! There is a lot of controversy over Halloween and some choose not to celebrate the day because of its supposed connection to evil. I respect this -- there are various opinions as to the origin of Halloween as well. A good summary of various opinions can be found at: <http://www.halloweenmagazine.com/history.htm>. -- Including challenges to the "traditional" lore of the origin of the holiday.

As a kid, I enjoyed doing magic and Halloween was a time that connected to magic in several ways, but perhaps most significantly -- It represented the day of death of Harry Houdini. Houdini died from peritonitis which may have been aggravated by an unexpected blow to the abdomen by a young man who wanted see if Houdini could take abdominal hits as he demonstrated in stage shows. Today, I occasionally dig out a trick at the pleading of my kids...Most magic involves very simple techniques which create an illusion of impossibility while engaging the observers' interest and curiosity. This was a good beginning to my role as a safety trainer and consultant. Adding drama and interest to a presentation is important, but with safety not always easy to do. If you want to spice up your training programs here are a few pointers and tricks I learned (by mistake) over the past 20 years:

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- 1) Relax. Many people get very tense prior to delivering a presentation. Some of this tension is good – It helps you add energy. Too much tension will ruin the presentation. Consider you are talking to a bunch of friends. Be yourself...imagine your audience as a few friends you are having over to watch a game, have a beer, play cards or whatever it is you do to have fun.
- 2) Use Humor. This comes naturally for some. My youngest is always cracking me up with one-liners he lets fly. If you are not a natural, consider using a “joke” that relates to the subject area. A cartoon might help do the trick. I once did a complete Hazcom training using cartoon images.
- 3) Involve the Group. The easiest way to do this is to ask questions. Questions can be right or wrong – but the best questions involve opinion. When someone answers the question...try to show value in their answer even if it is wrong. I try to relate their answer to the subject matter in some way. By the way, if your group is more than 40 persons – forget the questions – they won’t answer them. Also wait for answers when you ask a question. It takes longer for a group to answer than an individual. Questions aren’t answered for four reasons: 1) They don’t know the answer; 2) The answer is too obvious for them to answer; 3) The group is too big; or 4) They are sleeping already. Use activities, demonstrations and discussions to engage the group.
- 4) Make it Pertinent: The topic has to relate to the learner. I’ve taught classes for companies who have employees attending that shouldn’t be in the class because the course content doesn’t relate to their job. I lose them fast! Explain how the material relates to the learner and why it is important.

### **SLIP-RESISTANCE STANDARDS SLIP AWAY**

In September ASTM 1679 and ASTM 1677 were dropped from the books as test methods. The issues were several: 1) These standards are proprietary that require the use of specific equipment. This is a violation of the ASTM rules. 2) The flooring companies don’t want these standards because they properly assess the risk of a slip and fall accident. The ASTM F-13 Committee is floating a draft standard which will address Variable Angle Tribometers which will include all devices of this type of operation. The draft standard has a lot of issues and it will take time to get into the proper form to pass but should eventually put the Mark II and English XL test methods back on the books. In the meantime, these are the very best ways to assess a slip-hazard risk. Progressive companies like [ALGRIP 2000™](#) continue to seek out methods that will best evaluate their products. The NFPA 1901 for fire apparatus still specifies MARK II and English XL testing. If you are “into” the slippery world – and want to understand this better, let me know.

### **ANOTHER HEADS UP!**

We keep finding people in various settings using methylene chloride without understanding what they have. If you have a coating operation, spraying operation, solvents or glues, check for this stuff. OSHA has regulated the heck out of it and it is a dangerous product to be using. If you are using it, you must conduct air monitoring and have a comprehensive chemical management program in place which includes various and extensive control measures (like using lead or asbestos). We can set you up, but better yet – buy a new product. Just make sure the new one isn’t worse! High Safety also offers a chemical checking service wherein we review all your products in use and determine if any have high-level health or regulatory risks. Once these products are identified we determine if they are being properly managed. This is a very important service if you want to be assured that your co-workers won’t be developing cancer or have lung disease 30 years from now. Somehow occupational disease doesn’t get the same respect as an amputation, yet there are 50,000 deaths per year due to occupational exposures and only 5,700 deaths from traumatic causes.

### **TREND TO THE PEN?**

Engineering News Record (ENR) reported in their October 23, 2006 issue that Massachusetts is currently considering a bill that would make willful OSHA violations a felony! While criminal liability can be used in death cases where willful violations exist under OSHA rules, this would reach a new level of exposure for companies. Supervisors, managers and owners could face jail time without having a fatal case, and where a fatal event occurs, the charge would be manslaughter. This type of prosecution has also occurred in the past with the most famous case in Illinois (the film recovery case), but this would codify and bolster the Massachusetts’ ability to create some real heart-ache for bad actors. This is interesting because Massachusetts is a federal OSHA state...I would have expected CAL-OSHA to pull this out before a non-state OSHA program! Massachusetts must just be used to

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leading the way with safety and health. (They had the first factory inspections in 1867, the first machine guarding law in 1877, and the first workers' compensation law in 1911.) I suspect this new one won't fly...But if it does it will set interesting precedence.

### **AND THE RAINS CAME...**

Due to inclement weather such as heavy rains over the past six months, mold contamination has become a problem and has affected many building owners. Extensive mold growth can cause various types of health effects, consisting of allergic responses for the typical healthy person, to severe reactions to people who have mold allergies or other issues such as compromised immune systems. Once mold is discovered, it should be evaluated to determine if it is in a very small area, or is more extensive throughout the building. If mold growth is found to be extensive, then a professional with mold experience should be consulted to determine the extent of the contamination; whether or not adjacent areas are affected; and the HVAC systems impacted. These are very important issues that building owners need to be aware when faced with mold contamination.

High Safety is proud to have two individuals who specialize in mold and indoor air quality issues. Lisa Krug is certified as an indoor air quality professional (CIAQP) through the Association of Energy Engineers (AEE), and Dominick DiMichael is a certified industrial hygienist (CIH) through the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA). Both of these designations represent professional competence in matters involving biological contamination.

### **WHAT'S HAPPENING AT HIGH SAFETY**

I'm happy to announce that High Safety continues to grow. In October we added Christopher Bittner which I noted in my last update. We also added Greg Brosey to our team. Greg worked as a Safety & Security Manager with Burnham Corporation for 15 years. I went through the MS program with him at IUP and knew that he was an all-around good guy. We are happy to have Greg and Chris join our team.

### **SPECIAL DEAL FOR NEWSLETTER SIGN-UPS**

We have boxes full of OSHA standards dated 2006. Since we are just around the corner from 2007, I am offering a year-end, close-out sale on these standards. Construction standards are normally \$35 – Available from now until the end of the year at \$10 each! General Industry standards are normally \$45 – Available now for just \$12. Shipping and taxes will be added to these prices. This is well BELOW our cost! If you are looking to up-grade your AED to the new technology, contact us for information on pricing and available systems. If you are still working in a facility that isn't heart safe – Christmas is a great time to show your co-workers that you care and nothing says that better than an AED!

### **OTHER UPCOMING PROGRAMS OFFERED BY HSCSL**

[OSHA 30 Hour Class for Construction](#). (November 13 – 16, 2006) If you are new to the safety and health field, if you want to brush up on the OSHA rules, or if you are responsible as a manager or supervisor to assure safety on a job site, this course is a MUST. This course WILL provide value to you or you get your money back! -- Click on the link to learn more about this program or call for our brochure. TIME IS RUNNING OUT – so don't walk – run to the phone – (Wait... is that safe?).

[Electrical Safety, Lockout Tagout Requirements & NFPA 70E](#). (December 4, 2006) This program is intended for maintenance personnel, safety and loss-control personnel, as well as managers and supervisors who may have employees that have exposure to electrical hazards in their workplace.

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

**REGISTER FOR THESE AND OTHER PROGRAM ON OUR WEBSITE  
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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