



ASSE NEWS



American Society of Safety Engineers – Colorado Chapter – May 2005

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NEXT MEETING:

DATE: TUESDAY – May 10, 2005

PLACE: Garcia's Mexican Restaurant
5050 S. Syracuse St., Denver, CO 80237

TIME: 11:00 Registration
11:30 a.m. Lunch
12:00 - 1:00 Program

DIRECTIONS:
I-25 to Belleview Rd. Exit
East on Belleview Rd. to Syracuse
North on Syracuse to Garcia's.

COST: \$15.00 with reservation by 5:00 P.M. Friday,
April 6th. \$20.00 at the door without a reservation.

**For Reservations call: 303-615-7588
Or Email: Bervin.Hall@Pinnacol.com**

SPEAKER: Bob VandePol
President – Crisis Care Networks

TOPIC: As a leader in your organization...
How will you respond to your employees after a tragedy ?

Business leaders often pinpoint a workplace tragedy (violence, employee fatality, catastrophic accident) as pivotal to the ongoing productivity of their work teams. Some identify how the incident launched a new sense of loyalty. Others bemoan the event as triggering a collective negative image and distrust of leadership.

Whereas effective leadership manages these risks by addressing the psychological undercurrent beneath them, not all business leaders have the training or expertise to do so.

Our speaker for May, Bob Vandepol, will provide an overview of the importance of responding properly and making counseling available to employees after such a tragedy. Bob and his company provide assistance to a variety of organizations and Bob himself has led hundreds of in-site interventions after traumatic events and was called into assist after the attacks on the World Trade Centers.

LOCAL NEWS:

The Northern Colorado (NoCo) Section of the Colorado Chapter is a reality. Their petition for forming the NoCo Section was unanimously approved by both the CO Chapter Executive Committee on March 1st; and ASSE's Region-II Operating Committee on March 4th. ASSE issued their **Certificate of Affiliation** on March 28th. They are a reality, but won't be up and functional until ASSE's next fiscal year, July 1 to June 30th 2005-2006.

NoCo Section Officers are:

Section Co-Chairperson:	Brian Moore	mooreb@ci.loveland.co.us
Section Co-Chairperson:	Bonnie King	bonnie.king@ars.usda.gov
Section Secretary/Treasurer:	Clyde Serna	clyde.serna@pinnacol.com

Watch for more announcements about the *new NoCo Section* in upcoming member e-mails, Chapter Newsletters and on the Chapter's website as this new and exciting service to our Northern Colorado members gets up and running

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Online Registration Now Available for Safety 2005, New Orleans

ASSE members can now register online for Safety 2005, the Society's annual Professional Development Conference and Exposition. Safety 2005 will feature more than 200 sessions, 300 exhibitors, special pre- and post-conference seminars, conference proceedings on CD, numerous networking events and more. Learn the latest strategies to expand your knowledge base and network with peers at the premiere SH&E event of the year.

UTAH CHAPTER ASSE ANNOUNCES

22nd Annual Utah Conference on Safety & Industrial Hygiene

Thursday October 6, 2005

Friday October 7, 2005

At

University of Utah Student Center

Contact Information:

Luz Dominguez
RMCOEH – University of Utah
391 Chipeta Way, Suite C
Salt Lake City, UT 84108
Phone: 801-581-4055
Fax: 801-585-5275

One day of selected short courses (Wednesday, October 5) will be offered prior to the 2-day general and concurrent session conference

Co-Sponsored by: ASSE, AIHA, Utah Safety Council, and The Rocky Mountain Center

NEW - JOB POSTINGS

EH&S

Responsible for planning, coordinating, and implementing plant safety, workers' compensation, health services and environmental programs. Maintain safe and healthy working conditions and recommends measures to reduce or eliminate industrial accidents and health hazards in compliance with OSHA.

Qualifications

Three (3) plus years of EH&S experience, particularly in a **Manufacturing** or Industrial environment. Experience in managing all State and Federal compliance issues, including a strong understanding of regulatory agencies such as EPA and OSHA. Experience with Workers' Compensations laws. Demonstrated health and safety program development and project management skills. Basic medical training including CPR and first-aid.

Education

BS in Environmental Engineering or Chemical Engineering, Occupational Safety or Health, Industrial Hygiene, or related fields required.

41K salary

Jennifer.clements@na.manpower.com

Loss Prevention Consultant

The Program for Sovereign Indian Nations [PSIN], which is a custom insurance program for Native American tribes, is seeking a candidate to provide Loss Control services to our accounts. Candidates should have a minimum of five years of safety/and or fire protection experience with insurance coverage knowledge. Experience with public entity risks, and the hospitality/gaming industry would be a plus. Preferred candidates will have above average presentation, writing, verbal, and computer skills. Prime responsibilities will include training presentations, writing and updating of risk management standards, site safety audits, and life safety/fire protection evaluations. This position entails extensive travel [50%] throughout the United States. Interested applicants should forward their resume, including salary expectations to: Phil Melody CSP P.E. Vice President Loss Control philm@cisinsgroup.com

Manufacturing Company-900 plus employees-Large Corporation

3 plus years as a Safety Manager in a Manufacturing Environment

Strong experience in the following: OSHA Regulations/Inspections, Accident Investigation, Job Safety Analysis, Safety Committees, People Skills, Presentation Skills, and Ability to Continue and Improve Safety Programs--Introduce New Safety Programs/Incentives, Budgets, Workman Compensation, Environmental Programs.

Will report to Complex General Manager

College Degree---Prefer in Safety Management

Salary: Base Upon Years of Experience-Open

Dan--if you need additional information, please let me know. I really appreciate your help and look forward to reviewing resumes. Have a good day.

Email Resumes:

Fran Boruff
BranCo Search, Inc.
PO Box 488, Niwot, CO 80544
303.652.8370
f.boruff@comcast.net

Loss Prevention Specialist Universal Underwriters Group

Universal Underwriters Group, a member of the Zurich Financial Services Group, specializes in commercial property and casualty insurance for the automotive market. Universal has built its reputation as the foremost insurer of auto related businesses through its commitment to providing better service and products to its customer. As a nationally recognized industry leader, Universal can offer you the opportunity to gain broad experience, to assume increasing responsibility and to grow personally, professionally and financially. Loss Prevention Specialist -Automotive This position will provide and coordinate consultative risk improvement service to larger accounts, and conduct underwriting hazard assessments on more complex prospective and written accounts. This is a home-based position located in the Denver, CO area and will also cover NM, NV, UT, ID, MT and WY. - The ideal applicant will have a 4-year degree in Industrial Safety or safety related area. - Applicants will have 3-5 years of experience in safety/loss prevention with a minimum of 2 years in the insurance industry. - We also require a strong technical background with a working knowledge of OSHA, NFPA, CDL, DOT, EPA standards and effective loss prevention practices in the automotive dealer and after-market industry. We offer a competitive salary/benefits package and the opportunity for professional advancement few can match. If you have the talent to ensure your success, please forward your resume to our corporate headquarters: Universal Underwriters Group Attn: UN/LPS-DEN, 7045 College Boulevard Overland Park, KS 66211; Fax: 913-469-3744. Visit our website at www.universalunderwriters.com EOE M/F Achieving Excellence Through Diversity.

Position Opening – “Safety Analyst”

Lennox International Inc. (LII)
2140 Lake Park Blvd., MS 4T
Richardson, TX 75080-2254
(Corporate office location)

Lennox International Inc., a worldwide leader in heating, air-conditioning, and refrigeration manufacturing and service, has an opening for a Safety Analyst in its corporate offices in Richardson. The position reports within the corporate safety department and provides support to the various business units of the company.

This is more than an administrative support position. The salary range mid point is in the low 40's, with annual bonus opportunity.

Position Description

Multi-faceted position as LII Safety Department liaison with its operating units.

Position requires strong computer and analytical skills – much of our reporting and analysis occurs through an interface with our insurance carrier's claims management database. Must be able to grasp understanding of the accident and claims data, the relationship between the associated measures, and be detail oriented to maintain accuracy in the data being reported. Primary computer skills needed include Microsoft Excel and Access. Knowledge of OSHA accident recordkeeping requirements is desirable.

Be able to support LII internally maintained software for accident data reporting and analysis, i.e., the skills stated above would transcend to this aspect of the job. Much of the requirements associated with this will involve analysis and reporting of the respective internally developed accident information.

Must have good organizational skills – will also be asked to monitor other safety practices (example: maintain database of required training deliverables). Must be dependable and able to work with limited supervision. Knowledge of Microsoft Word and PowerPoint needed to support the development of department presentations. Familiarity with Microsoft FrontPage would be helpful to assist the department with maintenance of a website.

Ability to develop and maintain good working relationships with operating site personnel is needed to be successful in this position. Must be responsive in meeting respective needs and be able to exercise tact in verbal and written communications. Periodically you may be asked to visit operating locations to support the initiatives of the department.

Please respond in confidence to: jim.resenic@lennoxintl.com
(or mail to Jim Resenic at address shown above)

Lennox International is an equal opportunity employer.

Workplace Safety Coordinator

Kaiser Permanente of Colorado is seeking an experienced professional to assist in the investigation, tracking and trending and prevention of workplace injuries within a labor management partnership environment. The Workplace Safety Coordinator will collaborate with labor partners and stakeholders to develop and implement injury prevention programs, strategies and training programs that promote safe behaviors, address hazards, unsafe behaviors and near misses, that are determined to be the root cause of work related injury/illness. Qualified candidates must have a Bachelor's degree in healthcare, safety, environmental health, applied sciences or related area. Two years of progressive accident investigation experience required. Previous workers compensation experience preferred. Certification with ASSE (American Society of Safety Engineers) preferred.

Kaiser Permanente offers competitive salaries and exceptional benefits. Please submit your resume online at: jobs.kaiserpermanente.org. For more information, please call 303-338-3951. EOE/AA Employer.

KAISER PERMANENTE

jobs.kaiserpermanente.org

OWENS-ILLINOIS GLASS CONTAINERS NORTH AMERICA

OWENS-ILLINOIS

O-I is the world's largest manufacturer of glass packaging products. ***We currently have an opening for an Environmental Health and Safety Administrator.*** Responsible for leading the compliance efforts at the new glass manufacturing plant located in Windsor, Colorado.

REQUIRMENTS:

- AAS degree in Environmental Engineering or Occupational Safety and Health, or related fields required, B.S. degree preferred.
- 3+ years of Environmental or Health & Safety experience in a manufacturing or industrial environment ***preferred.***
- Experienced with all State and Federal compliance issues, including RCRA standards as well as EPA, OSHA, Workers' Compensation, CWA, Title V and DOT.
- Experience with Federal, State, and Local Workers' Compensation law.
- Demonstrated Health and Safety program development and project management skills.

Competitive salary and benefit package available.

If interested in applying, send resume and salary history to:

Owens-Illinois
P.O. Box 596
Windsor, CO 80550
Patricia.jones@us.o-i.com
(970) 686-2842
EOE

Safety Coordinator for Denver Public Schools Bond Program

My name is David Peterson, and we are managing the current \$310m bond program for Denver Public Schools. They have asked us to put together a Safety Program for the Bond Program and have tasked us with the responsibility of looking for someone to be part of our consultant team (Heery International/AMI Mechanical/Empire Construction) that would head up that Safety Program. This person would have to have the experience to head such a program, teach orientation classes, be bilingual (English/Spanish), be a good communicator, and if possible, have "school" construction experience (but not required). Do you know of anyone that may fit that description and may be interested in such a

position?? If so, please forward any names and numbers to my attention, or give them my name and number so they contact me. Thank you for your assistance.

Take care

David Peterson

Rocky Mountain Area Manager
Heery International. Inc.
(o) 303.572.7922
(c) 303.880.5486

New EHS Position Available

Title: Environmental, Health and Safety Specialist
Degree required: BS/MS Safety Engineering or related; with ASP/CSP certification
Years: 3-5 years of EHS experience within manufacturing; position is heavier Safety than Environmental
Salary: \$60,000-\$70,000 plus bonus
Location: Fort Collins/Denver, CO area

Our client, a Fortune 500 organization and industry leader, is looking to hire an EHS professional, to be the sole EHS professional for a medium-sized, non-union manufacturing plant. Reporting to the Manufacturing Manager, will be responsible for all EHS issues for the site, including: EHS compliance and audits, EHS program implementation and improvement, training, accident reduction, machine guarding, waste water, storm water, reporting, IH sampling, etc.

To be considered for this position, you must meet the following requirements:

- BS degree in Safety, Industrial Engineering or related, with a minimum of three years of EHS experience
- Must have a strong safety background, as well as environmental experience within manufacturing
- Excellent communication skills, team player
- Bi-lingual in Spanish and English languages preferred

Our client offers a competitive salary, excellent benefits and relocation package, and future growth within the organization, for the right candidate. If you are interested in this opportunity and have the necessary requirements, then please forward an updated resume and salary history to:

Bethany Brevard Harned
Principal EHS / HR Recruiting Specialist
bethany@professionaloutlook.com

Please visit www.professionaloutlook.com for additional EHS / HR /

SEMA recruiting for Project Safety Manager

Need a CSP with at least 5 years of construction safety experience including safety program development, OSHA 500 training certified, and accident investigation and reporting knowledge. Project is anticipated to last approx. 3 years with potential for continued employment with the company. Salary is dependent on qualifications. Position includes a vehicle and compensation package including 401(k), health, dental & vision insurance. Send a resume and salary requirements to:

SEMA Construction
7353 S. Eagle St.
Centennial, CO 80112
(303) 627-2626 Fax
Attn: Safety Department

Field Safety Specialist

Job Description: Reporting to the Corporate Safety Manager, the Field Safety Specialist provides support to Labor Ready Branch Managers to assist them in achieving their goal to reduce work related injuries. Support includes both training in safety and OSHA related matters, and analysis involving customer specific loss experience and recommendations regarding worksite safety practices.

Responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Act as a field consultant and resource for customer specific safety issues.
- Conduct routinely scheduled visits to branches to evaluate and discuss customer related safety issues.
- Develop specific customer loss information for use in evaluating loss experience.
- Provide Branch/District Manager with direction regarding OSHA Regulations pertaining to specific or general customer worksite safety issues.
- Accompany Branch Managers on worksite safety inspections and instruct them on the use of inspection forms and in conducting inspection.
- Review lag time reports with Branch Managers to assist them in improving the timeliness of claim reporting.
- Work in conjunction with Labor Ready Claim Coordinators to improve the use of light duty for workers with light duty restrictions.
- Ensure compliance with all aspects of Labor Ready Injury and Illness Prevention program, and provide reports to the Director of Risk Management regarding activities.

An IDEAL Field Safety Specialist will have the following skills and/or characteristics:

- Minimum of 2yrs of College Education or equivalent experience. 4yr degree preferred.
- Completed minimum of OSHA basic safety training or similar program, or other related experience with safety. Professional designation (ARM, ASP, OHST, CSP) desirable but not mandatory.
- Experience in working with OSHA regulations, safety, training, or worker's compensation.
- Experience with multiple location organizations, branch level operating management, and multiple layers of management.
- Ability to understand and communicate health and safety regulations both state and federal.
- Ability to communicate effectively both orally and written in English.
- Able to work on his/her own with little daily direct supervisor
- Computer proficient.
- Current valid driver's license.
- Able to travel regularly.

Labor Ready provides an excellent benefit package that includes, Competitive annual salary, Opportunity for Advancement (based on performance), 401K, Stock (NYSE) Purchase Program, Educational Reimbursement, Business Allowance and a Comprehensive Medical/Dental Program.

To apply for this position, you must submit your resume, cover letter, and salary requirement to:

Email: jobs@laborready.com

Fax: 877-750-9834

Time Warner Telecom looking for a Manager, Contingency Planning & Safety

Location: Time Warner Telecom – Littleton, CO

Reference:

External Posting Date:

Hiring Manager: Valerie Clark

Job Description:

JOB SUMMARY:

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS:

Work with corporate departments and in the field to identify, document and make recommendations to minimize risks to Time Warner Telecom resources and facilities. Identify and document the business impacts due to a disruption of service. Develop, deploy, test and assist in maintaining disaster recovery plans within Time Warner Telecom and work in Corporate Risk Management to refine disaster recovery strategies. Assist in the continued development of the company's safety program. Conduct annual reviews to ensure

that all disaster recovery plans and related documents are current. Develop and provide related training to Executive Management, City Management and staff, and the NOC. During a disaster situation, work with the internal and external recovery management teams to facilitate the recovery of a failed entity.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS:

Four-year degree with courses in administration, telecommunications, environmental science or equivalent experience. A minimum of three years experience in developing, deploying, testing and maintaining contingency plans. Minimum of three years experience with networks and data center functionality and/or telecommunications' central offices. Additional requirements include knowledge of word processing tools, site surveys, and risk and business impact analysis experience. Professional designations, experience in quality improvement, process management and project management are desired. Strong leadership qualities and presentation skills a must.

SKILLS KNOWLEDGE AND ABILITIES:

Excellent communication skills are required. Address all internal and external issues relative to disaster recovery. This position is required to comply with disaster recovery expectations driven by the company and major customers. This position is required to understand, support and comply with requirements imposed on the corporation by the Federal government and State PSC/PUC's, including OSHA and the EPA. This includes defining, developing, and maintaining the associated process flows as well as maintaining joint recovery strategies. This position supports marketing during the RFP process and responds to any issues regarding disaster recovery. This position is also periodically asked to review and provide feedback on vendor/perspective vendor disaster recovery plans.

PHYSICAL REQUIREMENT / WORK ENVIRONMENT:

The Physical demands described here are representative of those that must be met by the employee to successfully perform the essential functions of the job. Must have excellent verbal and written communication skills, and be comfortable with face-to-face and over the phone meetings with audiences ranging from upper management to field personnel. Must have ability to process written information accurately in order to follow directions and delegate direction to others. Must be able to retain and document information accurately in order to follow directions and provide direction to others. Must be able to operate effectively under pressure, within required time lines and balance multiple projects concurrently. Ability to work flexible hours to ensure meeting internal and external customer expectations. Strong analytical ability is a must. Must be able to operate a PC proficiently.

Equal Employment Opportunity

It is the policy of the company to afford equal opportunities to all applicants and employees regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, non-disqualifying disability or status as a disabled or Vietnam era veteran.

NEWS

Ergonomics: Workplace Risk Assessment Strategies -

Workplace injuries due to repetitive motion cost employers an estimated \$2.8 billion in 2002, according to the latest data from the Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index.

If that figure isn't enough to convince you of the importance of developing an ergonomics component in your safety program, consider that repetitive motion was the fourth-leading cause of on-the-job injuries in 2002 and 2001, according to the Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety.

In what will be the first in a continuing series on ergonomics, Occupationalhazards.com asked ergonomics expert Paul Adams, Ph.D., PE, CSP, CPE, a senior consultant with Ann Arbor, Mich.-based Applied Safety and Ergonomics Inc., to provide an introduction to the risks associated with repetitive motion and to offer an overview of some risk assessment strategies. Adams' background includes 6 years as the safety engineering and ergonomics leader for Toledo, Ohio-based fiberglass materials maker Owens-Corning.

For starters, Adams breaks all injuries into two categories: acute trauma and cumulative trauma.

Acute trauma refers to injuries that most people would associate with an accident: a worker getting his or her leg caught in a machine, an injury resulting from falling through an unguarded roof opening or "when a chandelier falls on your head," as Adams puts it.

Repetitive stress injuries fall into the category of cumulative trauma, which refers to the breaking down of the body's soft tissues as a result of many factors, including excessive force, repetitive motion, bad posture, vibration, temperature and personal traits such as diabetes, obesity and prior injury, according to Adams.

"When you have a combination of these risk factors come together, that's when a person is most at risk for developing cumulative trauma disorders," Adams said.

As for the factors that safety managers can most easily control -- those in the workplace -- the first step in trying to minimize those factors is to identify the jobs and work tasks that might contribute to cumulative trauma disorders. To do that Adams offers several strategies:

1. **Look for patterns.** The more obvious red flags are jobs that have a pattern of injuries associated with cumulative trauma. (OSHA recommends reviewing and analyzing OSHA 300 logs and other injury and illness records to find such patterns.) But Adams also recommends looking closely at jobs or tasks associated with high turnover, absenteeism or complaints. "Those are some of the early warning signs," he said.

2. **Analyze the job tasks for potential ergonomic risks.** The risks inherent in some job tasks should be fairly obvious -- for example, jobs that require the use of vibrating power tools such as jackhammers, power hammers, chainsaws, sanders, grinders and drills can expose workers to the risk of hand-arm vibration syndrome or Raynaud's syndrome. Material handling types of tasks often present a high risk of back strains. In general, OSHA recommends looking closely at jobs that involve:

- Awkward postures;
- Forceful lifting, pushing or pulling;
- Prolonged repetitive motion;
- Contact stress; and
- Vibration.

3. **Talk to your workers.** OSHA's suggestions include conducting symptom surveys and employee questionnaires. Adams adds, "You also can ask people what are the hardest jobs out there. Typically that's a good place to start."

4. **Look at your industry.** Which job tasks within your industry are associated with a high number of cumulative trauma-related injuries? "If other companies in the same industry have ergonomic-related problems, then it is possible these potential problems are also your concern," OSHA says on its Web page dedicated to ergonomics.

5. **Use risk assessment tools.** When it comes to the risk assessment tools that are out there, Adams cautions that it's not a perfect science but rather "the best we can do" based on the research that's been done to this point on ergonomics. Still, these tools can give safety managers a better idea of the ergonomic risks associated with particular jobs. Some helpful tools include:

- [Applications Manual for the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation](#), which contains a complete description of all terms in the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation with several sample calculations.
- [Liberty Mutual Manual Materials Handling Tables](#), which can be used to perform ergonomic assessments of lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling and carrying tasks.
- *Lessons for Lifting and Moving Materials*, by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, which provides pertinent information for safety professionals and manufacturing supervisors on back anatomy, back injuries and methods to avoid the risks of back injury. A checklist, *Lifting Hazard Assessment Worksheet*, based on the 1991 Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation, completed with a score of 6 or higher means the lift is unsafe. The guidebook is part of the Washington state agency's offering of analysis tools that can be found at <http://www.lni.wa.gov/Safety/Topics/Ergonomics/ServicesResources/Tools/default.asp>.
- [Analysis tools by the University of Southern Florida](#). The Web site provides a clearinghouse of ergonomics tools, including the Rodgers Muscle Fatigue Assessment, the Rapid Entire Body Assessment, the American Conference of Governmental Hygienists' threshold limit values for vibration and several of the tools already mentioned here.
- [OSHA's ergonomics Web page](#), which in addition to listing risk assessment tools, has a wealth of information, resources and links on the subject of cumulative trauma disorders.

Successful Safety Welds Good Communication, Employee Involvement and Management Support -

The most important safety tool is the human mind. A successful welding safety program requires not only a complete understanding of welding equipment and processes, but a collaborative, human approach to safety in the workplace.

by Mike Pankratz and Dane Dorn

To a greater extent now, successful safety management calls for humanized techniques and tools to realize safety goals, even as automation becomes increasingly familiar to welding practices. This article covers a proactive approach to some major machine and worker safety concerns, as well as some common welding safety issues.

Hands-On Safety

First and foremost, any successful welding safety program makes every effort to prevent injuries. Programs further rely on compliance with OSHA regulations, keeping worker's compensation costs low and, of course, knowledgeable, well-trained employees. More and more, achieving safety in the workplace also requires proactive management and employee support. Particularly for a large company, employee involvement in the creation and application of safety procedures is directly related to job satisfaction and a safe workplace. When given the opportunity to provide valuable input about their work, employees are generally more satisfied with their jobs, and in turn, help ensure safety compliance and lower worker's compensation costs.

Given that employee dissatisfaction is the number one reason why workers' compensation claims are made, maintaining a safe, satisfied workforce has taken precedence for safety managers. A small fabricator can use the safety philosophies and programs from larger companies as benchmarks for developing quality safety procedures and retaining skilled employees.

To lower workers' compensation costs and increase job satisfaction, company-wide safety programs are being developed to increase employee involvement in key objectives of the company, including welding safety goals. This practice needs to extend across company divisions, business units or plants. In fact, plant performance can include evaluation of monthly workers' compensation claims, lost-time injuries and the development of safety projects. Such a program holds workers accountable for not only their own safety, but for the safety of people around them.

Effectively sharing good safety projects can be a challenge for a large manufacturer with multiple locations. To overcome this problem, safety representatives from different locations should meet on a regular basis to bring new ideas to the program. When brought to the table, even a small idea from one location has a big impact on another.

Currently, two major machine and worker safety issues – an aging workforce and repetitive motion – are being addressed by some manufacturers through the development of monthly safety projects. Ergonomics, health and wellness sessions, in-house medical staffing and emergency response plans are just some of the ways companies can address major safety issues.

Ergonomics

An aging workforce and repetitive motion issues make eliminating physical labor a priority. Many welders have been working in the industry for 20 years or more, often working with the same machines, repeating the same motions. Over time, repetition has a cumulative effect on tendons, ligaments and muscles, making it difficult to grip objects and creating potentially hazardous conditions. To alleviate these problems, cumulative strength moves, material handling and constant motion should be minimized or eliminated. For example, implementing hydraulic or pneumatic presses that decrease the amount of physical exertion – like swinging a hammer - reduces manual labor and repetitive motion, making the job easier and more comfortable.

Minimizing discomfort and injury often means improving the ergonomics of a welding workspace, or simply giving workers the tools to redesign their own workstations. It's a joint effort; individuals recommend tools to satisfy their specific needs and preferences, and management provides the support for acquiring the tools. The workstation is fit to the individual, not the individual to the workstation, making the job as comfortable as possible.

There are a number of ways to make production jobs safe and comfortable. Carts, lift tables, hoists, cranes, rotating fixtures, presses and, wherever possible, automation can eliminate heavy lifting and repetitive movement. Yet automation addresses safety concerns only to a point and presents other safety challenges, such as guarding robots with light curtains. From a repetitive motion and strength standpoint, automation will continue to increase for higher volume jobs, making some jobs easier and safer.

Simpler, less expensive tools in the long term include ergonomic mats, adjustable chairs and tables, and welding positioners/grippers. The long-term costs cannot be over-emphasized. For example, a positioner/gripper may cost \$5,000. That pales in comparison to the costs of lost productivity and an injury claim if a welder is out of work for a month with an injury that could have been prevented with the right equipment. Implementing simple comfort upgrades can go a long way.

An ergonomically designed workspace speeds material flow by eliminating the double-handling of parts. Individually designed workstations ensure that only the appropriate materials move in and out as quickly as possible, as well as reduce the amount of material around the weld area. Leading causes of workplace injuries include slips, trips and falls, and clutter is a primary cause. In short, good housekeeping and a well-designed, ergonomic workstation improve safety.

Health and Wellness

The success of ergonomics in manufacturing may have indirectly produced another safety trend, one that demonstrates a positive link between safety and healthy employees. Workers' compensation costs present a primary challenge to safety personnel because they don't add anything to the bottom line, they only subtract from it. In other words, workers' compensation costs can, at best, be zero. Conversely, encouraging health and wellness among employees may well contribute to the bottom line through better productivity. With healthcare costs rising, safety managers are addressing this potential.

The idea that a healthy workplace is a safe workplace may not be new, but only recently has the idea been actively applied to the manufacturing workforce. For example, beginning the day with stretching and exercise programs allows workers to loosen up, enjoy time with coworkers and begin the workday fully alert. As part of safety education, companies can offer health and wellness sessions that cover a variety of worthwhile topics, such as stress, cancer, weight management and diabetes. While management can't control health and wellness outside the workplace, they can encourage a healthy, thus safer, work environment.

Onsite Medical Help

Another innovative approach to workplace safety is in-house medical staffing. Onsite doctors and nurses treat simple strains and sprains before serious injuries occur, such as treating numb fingers before it blooms into Carpel Tunnel Syndrome. While expensive, onsite medical personnel keep workers' compensation claims down, illness rates low and, even more importantly, encourage employees to take responsibility for medical treatment and seek it earlier.

Emergency Response

Emergency response plans have evolved into emergency "action" plans, indicating a down-to-business safety mindset. Procedures are skillfully honed, communicated and practiced so that everyone is prepared for an emergency before it happens. Management can appoint and train a key contact from each business area to take quick action when called upon. Like clockwork, all personnel act, whether it means instigating an emergency procedure or dialing 911. These plans ensure that there are trained people in every area of the facility.

An effective emergency action plan also involves having the right safety equipment available. This requires multiple efforts to research health and safety issues and come up with innovative solutions. At Miller Electric, safety committee members were faced with how to address medical research data on cardiac arrest that stated survival rates drop 10 percent every minute a patient goes without treatment. As a result, Miller invested in 11 defibrillators in February, 2004. Just 3 months later, two Miller "first responders" (safety-trained personnel) saved a vendor's life when he had a heart attack while visiting Miller. The price tag on the defibrillator became a non-issue compared to saving a life. Looking ahead, the urgency for cardiac arrest treatment will make defibrillators as common as fire extinguishers someday.

Industry-Specific Safety

As a result of rigorous safety management programs, personal protective equipment policies should become second nature. Safety projects develop by taking standard policies into account and create positive peer pressure in the plant to adhere to safety policies. Handbooks further emphasize personal protective equipment policies and along with managers, who enforce compliance in each unit. As a result, injuries diminish.

PPE needs differ depending on the employer and the industry. At Miller Electric, personal protective equipment policies include items that should be worn in weld areas:

- Flame-resistant gloves
- Safety glasses with side shields
- Welding helmet
- Apron or lab coat
- Steel-toed shoes
- Long-sleeved shirt
- Flame-resistant clothing

The American Welding Society and OSHA offer guidelines on the proper personal protective equipment, including what welders should wear in specific environments. With all equipment, be sure to read and follow the safety information in the operator's manual or contact the manufacturing company when in doubt.

Lacerations are another common cause of injuries, but safety managers don't always point to carelessness as the cause. Employees need to wear gloves for certain operations, such as handling sheet metal, cut metal or other sharp objects. However, gloves can also create a hazard if they can be caught in machinery, such as a rotating spindle. It's a judgment call that should be made by the safety department or committee.

For the welding operator, companies are increasingly investing in auto-darkening helmets, particularly for tack and short welds. The nature of the welding means that operators are more prone to let safety slide and close their eyes to "shield" them from the arc because

they become tired of having to raise and lower their hoods. An auto-darkening helmet eliminates the need to raise the hood because the operator can see the weldment and reposition the torch before striking an arc. After striking an arc, the lens darkens 1/20,000th of a second. For that fraction of a second, the eye may detect brightness, but harmful rays can't get through the UV protective lens.

As PPE changes, so do OSHA regulations. High on OSHA's priority list are respiratory standards, hazard communication, chemical labeling, machine guarding and lock-out/tag-out, to name a handful. When sound safety programs are in place, OSHA compliance shouldn't be a major concern, because the company will already be in compliance. Safety managers understand the importance of keeping up with changes so they can design a safer work environment and eliminate safety problems. Further, OSHA's Volunteer Protection Program, by partnering with companies, offers one way for businesses to remain informed about safety, meet safety requirements and ultimately avoid their inspection list.

The most important method for preventing safety violations is proper training. A seasoned workforce, while it brings up aging and motion issues, has a distinct advantage in terms of safety-related knowledge and skill. In companies where welders turn every 2 to 3 years, effective training is a much larger issue. Any welding safety or certification program should include thorough training on proper safety practices.

Responsibility

Managers can go to great lengths to put safety policies in place, but if policies aren't followed, some type of disciplinary action must be taken. Disciplinary action typically depends on the infraction and the employee's record, but more and more employees are being held accountable for safety through their merit. In other words, employees not only need to follow the rules, but must demonstrate that they are taking an active role in setting the rules. Barring acceptable performance, employee compensation may be negatively affected.

Managers should be held accountable for safety within their business areas. It is the manager's responsibility to make sure employees abide by safety policies and procedures and carry out disciplinary action when appropriate. Safety managers should hold meetings on a regular basis to not only emphasize safety, but the importance of employee participation in meeting safety objectives. Additionally, managers must demonstrate their support for new ideas and ultimately make decisions that are right for the employee and the company.

Earning a Healthy Return on Investment at DaimlerChrysler - 04/13/2005

How do you save millions on health care, cut absenteeism and increase productivity? An ambitious, award-winning health promotion program is doing it for DaimlerChrysler.

by James L. Nash

It's no secret that employers are trying hard to cut their health care bills. Many companies have shifted costs to employees and used managed care to restrict access to physicians. But organizations also are discovering there are limits – and even drawbacks – to saving money through cuts in the supply of health care.

A growing number of companies have found they can save money and improve productivity by attacking the demand for health care, through programs aimed at preventing employees from getting sick in the first place.

Last year, DaimlerChrysler won the Department of Health and Human Services' "Innovation in Prevention Award," a recognition intended to highlight organizations that are promoting healthy lifestyles.

How does the Auburn Hills, Mich., automaker's program work? And is there a connection between health promotion and more traditional health and safety protection?

Defining Success

DaimlerChrysler, in conjunction with the United Auto Workers (UAW), started its National Wellness Program (NWP) in 1985 and it has been growing ever since, according to Kate Kohn-Parrott, director of integrated health care and disability for DaimlerChrysler.

"We see a drop in health care expenditures of \$6 to \$8 million a year," says Kohn-Parrott. "We also believe the program decreases absenteeism, 'presenteeism' and workers' compensation costs, while improving productivity, but we can't directly measure this." Presenteeism refers to the problem of employees who show up for work, but aren't fully "present" or productive.

Improved morale appears to be another hard-to-measure benefit of the program. "After we started it, there was a spark in people's eyes they didn't have before," asserts Kohn-Parrott.

Kohn-Parrott explains that DaimlerChrysler does not provide the NWP itself, but contracts with three suppliers of wellness programs.

Of the three wellness program providers, StayWell Co. is by far the largest, with programs in 28 of the automaker's 36 sites. StayWell's national headquarters are in Yardley, Pa. The Wellness Institute of America in Southfield, Mich., and HealthyLife of Farmington Hills, Mich., are the other two providers.

Joan Bassing, national director of program management for StayWell, explains why health promotion is a growing business.

"If you think about HMOs, the whole goal was to restrict access and control costs," she says. "Everyone has done as much as they can on that end, but no one has touched the ultimate reason people go to the physician in the first place."

Bassing contends that aside from accidents and family history, a person's behavior is the largest driver of illness. "So all these companies that have tried everything else are saying, 'We need to educate the employees, empower them to take care of themselves, and hold them accountable for their own health.'"

By way of explanation about holding people accountable, Bassing predicts that in the future, the best health plans with the lowest premiums will go to those who avoid diseases and who only go to the doctor when they need to. In fact, the two basic components to the StayWell approach are based on this premise. First, workers are encouraged to eat well, exercise and do everything possible to stay healthy. Second, StayWell has a "self-care program" that gives people the tools they need to avoid going to the doctor unless it is truly necessary.

Ultimately, StayWell and the other program providers have the same mission as traditional safety and health protection professionals: changing human behavior. "We're evaluated on how well we help employees to make a behavior change that results in health care cost reductions, improved productivity and reduced absenteeism," says Bassing.

Program Elements

The health risk assessment, a behavior lifestyle survey, is the "foundation of our program," says Debbie Brandt, StayWell's program manager for the DaimlerChrysler account. It allows the health promotion professionals to do target marketing based on the needs of particular individuals or a specific site.

"After you've filled out the survey, if we see you live a sedentary lifestyle, use tobacco or have lots of stress, then I'd say, 'You might need some help, so let me send you an invitation to one of our follow-up programs based on your risk areas,'" explains Brandt.

StayWell has a call center with experts in behavior modification. "A registered dietician may call those who have a bad diet, or an exercise physiologist calls people who don't exercise to discuss how to change that behavior," says Bassing.

Brandt points out that she doesn't rely only on health risk assessment data to drive her program.

"DaimlerChrysler gets the disability information, so we incorporate the highest work-related risk areas into our program plans for individual worksites," she says.

It is here that health promotion overlaps with traditional environmental, health and safety protection. The level of cooperation varies from site to site; Brandt singles out ergonomics as the most fruitful area to integrate her work with occupational health and safety professionals.

"There are all kinds of scenarios where they work together," agrees Cyndy Parker, RN, DaimlerChrysler's care management manager. "Wellness providers often work with our health and safety professionals to do ergonomics, back programs, fitness testing and an individualized exercise program." One cooperative program between StayWell and DaimlerChrysler's traditional health and safety staff involves workers who go to the company's occupational health clinics with a work-related concern.

"Even if it's just a headache, we coordinate with the wellness people to get education on how to manage blood pressure if it's high," says Parker.

Third-Party Advantages

Although there are opportunities for cooperation between EHS staff and health promotion, StayWell insists that it's a sound investment for organizations to hire dedicated specialists.

"Companies usually just take an occupational health nurse and say, 'In addition to your regular job, put on a wellness hat and do wellness things,'" Bassing says. What's wrong with that? "Ask an occupational nurse who is already overworked," she replies. While some nurses might love prevention work and embrace it, others could find it a burden.

Second, if each occupational nurse runs an ad hoc program at a particular facility, the program might be customized for local issues but it could miss the big picture. "The way to get where you want to go as a corporation is by taking your cost data, designing a program around it, and then evaluating the delivery of the program," asserts Bassing. "What I see when they assign this to occupational health nurses is they end up evaluating the program only on participation and satisfaction indicators." While those are important measures, what's crucial is helping workers to make a behavior change that will cut costs and improve productivity – and that's how DaimlerChrysler evaluates StayWell.

"Because we know we spend a lot of money on cardiac issues, diabetes, asthma, lower back and mental health, we say these are the areas where we need to assist our employees to help reduce our health care costs," says Kohn-Parrott. The company also looks at disability data for each plant, according to Parker.

Third, to be successful, health promoters must have expertise in several fields that could be beyond many occupational health nurses, for example:

- Marketing and communications;
- Workshop or event organization;
- Health behavior modification.

Finally, Kohn-Parrott says employees are more likely to share their personal medical information with a third-party health provider than with their employer. "This is a private relationship between employees and wellness providers," she says. "We have no access to the individual information." DaimlerChrysler does see the aggregated data, however.

"Some companies will start a wellness program and run it through their HR department," adds Brandt. "But this could hurt participation because of confidentiality concerns – people worry they will be fired if their cholesterol is high."

Turnkey Wellness

"It is by far the most comprehensive program we deliver and the most 'turnkey,'" says Bassing, when asked how the DaimlerChrysler program differs from other StayWell accounts. "They ask us to do everything, from soup to nuts."

One distinctive feature of the program is that StayWell has an onsite person for all DaimlerChrysler facilities with at least 500 employees. Plants with 2,500 workers have two wellness specialists and the number climbs to three at worksites with 5,000 employees.

"That's unique," comments Brandt. "It gives us the opportunity to offer the full range of programs, instead of just doing a campaign."

A second advantage of the onsite presence is it makes it possible for the health promoter to develop a personal rapport with the workers whose behavior she is trying to change.

"It definitely helps to change behaviors when you have established a relationship with the person," says Brandt. People are more likely to share their health concerns with someone whom they trust.

Moreover, part of a wellness provider's job is to discern the depth of a person's inner commitment to change. StayWell prides itself on mastering the research data on the various stages a person goes through in giving up smoking or taking up exercise. Personal rapport is crucial in determining whether, and how much, the worker is ready to change.

"Knowing there's someone there to follow up with them is a motivational factor as well," says Brandt.

Susan Crabtree, benefits coordinator for UAW's DaimlerChrysler department, offers a third benefit to having wellness professionals onsite. Crabtree worked at a plant 3 years ago and she says she made use of the weight loss and exercise program. "I liked the convenience of it being right where I was working," she explains. "They have 'lunch and learn,' so they get the information to you and I don't have to go somewhere else after I get off."

In fact, the only criticism from workers Crabtree hears about the program seems to underscore the value of DaimlerChrysler's distinctive onsite approach.

"The only complaints I ever hear," she says, "is that it's still hard to find time because of the work schedule. Some workers are so tired when they get a break it's hard to walk anywhere." Crabtree explains that since breaks last only 12 minutes and lunches are a half hour long, it can be hard for workers to meet with wellness professionals even if they are onsite. It is especially challenging to reach night shift workers, she added.

"But even if we only reach 70 percent [of our membership], that's better than nothing," Crabtree says.

Return on Investment

"We have phenomenal cooperation with the UAW," says Kohn-Parrott. Union participation appears to be an essential component of the wellness program's success. One measure of this is the level of participation in the health risk assessment. It stands at 41 percent annually and is rising every year, according to Kohn-Parrott.

Bassing says the participation rate is 75 percent on a 3-year basis, just shy of the goal of 80 percent.

Until now, the company has used only minimal "carrots," such as T-shirts for those who complete the health risk assessment. There are no "sticks"; the program is completely voluntary. DaimlerChrysler also has offered up to \$150 to employees who promised to move to healthy behaviors – not smoking, for example. The problem with this was that too many workers qualified for the money without really changing their behavior, says Kohn-Parrott.

But now, convinced that the wellness program is saving the company real money, Kohn-Parrott plans to bump up the incentives – and the requirements. "We will give workers \$120 credit on their insurance premium if they take the HRA and another \$120 if they have a glucose, blood pressure and cholesterol check once a year," she says. While DaimlerChrysler has 80,000 employees, because of collective bargaining agreements, the more ambitious incentive plan applies only to the 20,000 workers who don't belong to the UAW. But company officials expect the incentives to boost participation among these workers to 80 percent.

DaimlerChrysler's program is not cheap and companies without a wellness program may be skeptical about whether investing in it will pay off. The fact that DaimlerChrysler is willing to put still more money on the table (up to \$1.8 million) is one sign the company is convinced the program is cutting costs.

"We're excited employees can earn \$240 a year to help offset health care premiums – that means we're offering \$90 more in incentives and we expect to save double that," says Kohn-Parrott. "We think that's an excellent return on investment."

Preaching or Teaching: The Use of Narrative in Safety Training - 04/13/2005

Narrative – storytelling – can be an effective way to impart useful safety and health information to employees without insulting them or putting them to sleep.

by Sandy Smith

When I turned 16, I signed up for a driver's education class at my high school. We had hours of classroom education, hours of simulator training and a few scarce minutes of hands-on time behind the wheel of a car. All of it was boring and forgettable, except for the time spent behind the wheel. That's because Mr. Kelly, the driver's ed teacher, was a screamer, and he scared me a little bit.

Then, the final day of class, we watched a movie, a docudrama that was based on a true event. We saw four high school friends, all our age and dressed like us, getting ready for the prom. "Judy" was the driver, blond and blue-eyed, just like me. Judy decided to brush her hair while driving, got distracted and caused a terrible crash that killed two of her friends and seriously injured herself and the other occupant of the car. The filmmakers interviewed the real Judy, who was slowly recovering from her physical injuries but would never recover from her emotional trauma.

To this day, when I'm driving, I don't fiddle with my hair, my makeup or anything else in the car.

That film utilized storytelling to capture my attention. As a result, I remember it to this day and chose to drive in a safe manner.

All of which proves the point of Elaine Cullen, Ph.D., CMSP: Narrative is an effective tool to help educate employees.

"We are storytellers in this country. There is an oral tradition among what I call the skilled blue collar workers: miners, foundry workers, construction workers, deep sea fishermen, the military. You learn by working with someone who knows how to do your job. You are an apprentice. You are mentored. And one of the ways they mentor you is by telling you stories," says Cullen, who is chief of Health Communication at NIOSH's Spokane Research Laboratory and an award-winning filmmaker.

For the past 6 years, Cullen has researched the use of narrative in training for miners, a group that arguably receives some of the most intensive safety training in the country. New underground miners receive 40 hours of safety training. Surface miners receive 24 hours of safety training. And every miner receives 8 hours of refresher training every year.

"The miners hate it," says Cullen. "They call it 'safety jail.' They go because they have to go and they don't pay attention."

Seven years ago, Cullen was asked to come up with better training techniques. What she found, by talking to miners, is that many of them effectively use stories and narrative to teach younger miners safe behavior. "All of them know someone or know of someone who has paid dearly for a moment of inattention," notes Cullen. She adds that when an experienced miner sees a new hire doing something really stupid, he often steps in and says, "Let me tell you a story. I had a new hand do something like that before ... " and he goes on to detail some negative consequence ranging from injury to death. Sometimes the stories are true, sometimes they're not. But they're always effective, says Cullen.

"The kid doesn't have to defend his behavior because no one was talking about his behavior. He learns that he was lucky not to be injured and that not everyone is so lucky and the next time, he could be on the wrong end of the equation," she notes.

Stories, she adds, provide powerful tools that straight instruction does not. They offer a way to organize information. Stories are remembered long after questions in a textbook are forgotten. In

Deaths show dangers of household chemicals

JOE MANDAK

Associated Press

PITTSBURGH - Two jail inmates assigned to a maintenance crew died over the weekend from inhaling toxic fumes after mixing cleaning products, and advocates were left repeating common-sense mantras they say are all too commonly ignored. Don't mix cleaning products. Wash your hands carefully after using each product. And read product warning labels and instructions.

"I think there is an awful lot of presumption that adults are reading the labels when they're not," said Nancy Bock, vice president of education for The Soap and Detergent Association, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit trade group.

While poisonings involving household cleaning products are relatively common, accidental fatalities are not, said Chris Falk, spokesman for the American Association of Poison Control Centers.

In 2003, nearly 2.4 million people called poison centers after coming in contact with toxic substances by swallowing, breathing or touching them. About 225,000 of those calls involved household cleaning products, second only to poisonings from painkillers, including aspirin and acetaminophen.

Twenty-one people died from household cleaning products that year - the most recent for which statistics are available. Fourteen of those were suicides, most involving drain or toilet cleaners, and one was a malicious poisoning. The other six were accidents.

Allegheny County Jail Warden Ramon Rustin said the county lockup has a policy detailing how to clean the jail and how much cleaning material to use. He wasn't sure, however, what information was shared with inmates on cleaning crews and said that is one focus of an internal investigation. Jail officials are still trying to determine exactly what products mixed to cause the deadly fumes.

Amy Sartori, 31, of Pittsburgh, and Valeriya Whetsell, 50, of Wilkinsburg, died. Several other inmates had symptoms of dizziness and shortness of breath and coughed up blood.

Ginette Walker Vinski, program coordinator for the Pennsylvania Resources Council, a nonprofit environmental group with offices in Pittsburgh, said chlorine-based cleaners are especially hazardous.

"Bleach is the main culprit," Walker Vinski said. "You never want to mix bleach with ammonia. You never want to mix bleach with acids." Even vinegar, which is commonly dissolved in water to clean windows, can unleash poisonous chlorine gas if it's mixed with bleach.

"If you start to feel dizzy, or you start to feel shortness of breath or coughing, stop what you're doing, get some ventilation, go outside and take a breath of fresh air," Walker Vinski said.

The council advocates using more environmentally friendly cleaners using borax, liquid soap or vinegar.

Walker Vinski said using household cleaners correctly is only half the battle; disposing of them properly is the other. Groups and agencies around the state have household hazardous waste pickup days where people can dispose of cleaning chemicals and other household hazards ranging from old gasoline to oil-based paints.

Bock, whose group represents 105 cleaning-product manufacturers, said mixing homemade cleaners can be dangerous if a person doesn't understand the science behind the substances he is using. Further, she said commercial product labels must list instructions for treating people exposed to the chemicals, as well as a toll-free help line.

There is agreement, however, on how to use household cleaners safely.

"It's really easy to identify potentially hazardous waste," Walker Vinski said. "The labels will say 'toxic,' 'caution' or 'warning.' If an item is used the way it's meant to be used, it should be generally safe."

Jury Awards Popcorn Worker \$15 Million - 04/01/2005

A jury has awarded \$15 million in damages to a former employee of Gilster-Mary Lee Corp. and his wife on the grounds that the man suffered irreparable lung damage from breathing in butter flavoring fumes at the company's microwave popcorn factory in Jasper, Mo.

A lawsuit filed by Richard Brand, a former maintenance worker at the Gilster-Mary Lee plant, and his wife, Lana, against the makers of the butter flavoring -- New York-based International Flavor and Fragrances Inc. and its subsidiary, Bush Boake Allen Inc. -- claimed that butter flavoring chemicals produced by the two companies were hazardous and that the defendants failed to warn plant workers of the dangers of inhaling the fumes.

Richard Brand contends that he developed a rare and irreversible lung disease called bronchiolitis obliterans -- also known as Popcorn Packer's Lung -- from exposure to diacetyl, a chemical in the butter flavoring sold by the defendants to Gilster-Mary Lee.

A jury in the Circuit Court of Jasper awarded Richard Brand \$12 million and Lana Brand \$3 million following a 2-week trial.

Richard Brand is one of 30 current and former workers at the Gilster-Mary Lee plant in Jasper to sue the two manufacturers of the butter flavoring.

In March 2004, a Missouri jury awarded \$20 million to Eric Peoples, a former Jasper popcorn worker, and his wife, Cassandra, for lung damages he suffered while working at the Jasper plant. As Peoples -- who said he eventually he will require a double-lung transplant -- was deemed to be suffering the gravest health problems, his was the first lawsuit to be heard.

The Brands' lawsuit was the sixth of 27 lawsuits filed by the 30 workers to go to trial, according to the *Joplin Globe* in Missouri.

The Brands' lawyers argued that the two companies were aware of the health risks of inhaling diacetyl and neglected to warn the Jasper plant about those hazards. The defense team contended that the flavoring manufacturers warned the plant -- it claimed that MSDS on the flavoring products advised users to provide proper ventilation and wear safety gear -- but the popcorn plant failed to implement those safety protections for its workers.

The defense team also asserted that there is a lack of scientific evidence linking the diacetyl in butter flavoring to bronchiolitis obliterans.

In May 2000, eight former Jasper popcorn workers were diagnosed with bronchiolitis obliterans, although no cause was identified at the time. In 2002, NIOSH researchers said they suspected diacetyl might be the culprit.

A NIOSH study published in 2002 suggested there was a strong relationship between cumulative exposure to diacetyl and lung problems. NIOSH researchers evaluated 117 Gilster-Mary Lee popcorn workers and found that workers had 2 1/2 times the expected rates of chronic cough and shortness of breath and twice the expected rates of physician-diagnosed asthma and chronic bronchitis.

Following the NIOSH investigation, Gilster-Mary Lee, which is not named in the lawsuits, remodeled the plant and said it ordered workers to wear respirators.

- Josh Cable

ASSE NEWS

Primary belt laws reduce driver death rates by seven percent

Safety belt use laws in only 21 states and the District of Columbia are primary, meaning police may stop vehicles solely for belt law violations. In most states, law enforcement for belt use is secondary, so police cannot stop vehicles for this infraction alone. In a new study, the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety (IIHS) found that when states strengthen their laws from secondary enforcement to primary, driver death rates decline by an estimated seven percent. Institute senior vice president Susan Ferguson said, "Where primary laws are in effect, drivers are more likely to buckle up because the perception is that they're going to be pulled over if they don't."

The most recent national observational survey conducted in 2004 by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that belt use rates averaged 84% in primary states compared with 73% in secondary states. A number of observational studies have shown that shifting from secondary to primary laws boosts safety belt use, but the Institute's is the first study to evaluate the effect of this shift on traffic deaths. IIHS examined driver fatality data during 1989–2003 in 10 jurisdictions where secondary laws were amended to primary. Researchers compared these data with data in states where the laws remained secondary.

One indication that the primary laws led to higher belt use comes from rates among fatally injured drivers. In 1989, before any of the laws were changed, belt use rates among fatally injured drivers were similar — about 20 percent — in both groups of states. By 2003, the rates had risen to 47 percent in states that switched to primary laws, compared with 36

percent in the secondary states. The annual rate of passenger vehicle driver deaths per mile of travel declined in both groups of states, but it declined more in the states that changed to primary enforcement. Taking into account the timing of the change in each state and other factors that could have affected crash rates, primary laws were associated with a seven percent reduction in death rates.

Ferguson points out that during the study period "many states participated in special 'Click It or Ticket' safety belt enforcement campaigns. The enhanced enforcement began earlier in the primary states so it's important to note that changes in belt use laws along with the increased enforcement led to the decrease in fatalities." Based on the reduction in driver death rates, it's estimated that 2,990 lives have been saved in the study states because of the tougher safety belt laws. "If the 28 states that still have secondary laws were to switch to primary enforcement, about 700 lives would be saved each year. And if legislators in these states had enacted primary laws to begin with, more than 5,000 lives could have been saved since 1996," Ferguson says.

REGULATORY NEWS

CDC Proposes Staff Cuts For NIOSH - 04/22/2005

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have decided to eliminate more than 13 percent of the maximum number of full-time positions (FTEs) at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) next year.

The cuts, contained in the administration's 2006 proposed NIOSH budget, reduce the agency's maximum number of FTEs from 1435 to 1246. Despite the proposed work force reduction, NIOSH's 2006 proposed budget of \$285.9 million is essentially unchanged from this year's \$286 million.

The relationship between NIOSH and CDC has become a subject of controversy ever since the administration proposed a reorganization plan that critics charged would have undermined NIOSH's independent status. Last year, Congress attached a rider to an appropriation bill funding CDC that prevented the administration's reorganization from affecting NIOSH. As a result, unlike other agencies within CDC, NIOSH Director John Howard continues to report directly to the director of CDC. It remains to be seen, however, whether Congress will keep the rider on the 2006 appropriation bill.

Two of the most prominent workplace health and safety professional organizations, the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) and the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), have suggested that NIOSH should not be part of CDC.

"CDC does not have the capability to effectively oversee both the increased national focus on public health requirements and the numerous occupational health challenges this country is facing," according to Donna Doganiero, president of the American Industrial Hygiene Association. Doganiero's comments were contained in a March 31 letter to Rep. Ralph Regula, R-Ohio. Regula chairs the House appropriations subcommittee for the Department of Health and Human Services, which contains CDC.

In a March 8 letter to CDC Director Julie Gerberding, ASSE President Gene Barfield criticized CDC's 2004 report on the state of CDC for failing to devote appropriate attention to workplace safety and health issues. Barfield enclosed with his letter ASSE's position statement calling on Congress to consider relocating NIOSH as an independent agency within the Department of Labor.

Currently NIOSH has only 1,300 FTEs, far below its 1,435 ceiling, according to a NIOSH spokesperson. Even so, the new ceiling would mean eliminating more than 50 NIOSH positions. In addition, the lower CDC ceiling would prevent NIOSH from having the flexibility to hire more staff should increased funding become available. In the past, Congress has regularly appropriated more money to NIOSH than the Bush administration has proposed.

It is not clear which positions would be eliminated should CDC's proposal be accepted. A spokesperson indicated that since 2002, NIOSH has already lost 50 "business services support" positions to CDC.

Texas Leveling Company Cited After Fatal House Collapse - 04/19/2005

OSHA has cited an Austin, Texas-based house leveling company for alleged violations of safety standards, following the investigation of a fatal accident that occurred last December.

Austin House Leveling & Soil Stabilization Inc., which employs about 12 workers, was cited by OSHA's Austin area office for seven alleged serious safety violations and issued \$14,700 in proposed fines stemming from the accident.

OSHA's investigation began Dec. 28 when a 100-year-old house undergoing renovations by the company shifted and collapsed on workers, killing one and injuring another.

OSHA's John Miles, regional administrator in Dallas, said the accident could have been prevented if the company had followed proper construction standards and trained employees to recognize hazards.

The alleged serious violations were issued for failing to train employees, failing to require hard hats, improper use of jacks and failing to follow OSHA's excavation standards, including those which require support for structures adjacent to excavations.

Focusing on Construction Safety in Texas

As part of a special emphasis initiative, the OSHA regional office in Dallas has implemented an outreach program to address and improve job safety and health in the residential construction industry in Texas.

"An important objective of this special emphasis program is to reduce work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses among the large Hispanic workforce in the state's residential construction industry," Miles said.

OSHA's seven area offices throughout Texas will focus their resources on local factors that have contributed to serious injuries or fatalities. Other program objectives include motivating workers and employers to emphasize safety; encouraging the involvement of employees in analyzing and eliminating hazards; and establishing sound safety and health programs in English and Spanish that cover the full range of work practices used by local companies.

Lawsuits Likely in Aftermath of BP Refinery Blast - 04/14/2005

While investigators now believe that the March 23 BP refinery explosion was preceded by a geyser of flammable chemicals in the area where the blast occurred, it's highly likely that the aftermath will include a flood of litigation.

The legal maneuverings started as early as the day after the explosion -- which killed 15 contractors and injured about 100 at BP Amoco's 1,200-acre refinery in Texas City, Texas -- when attorneys representing several of the victims filed for a temporary restraining order asking emergency workers and other officials to preserve evidence that might offer clues to the cause of the explosion.

Six days later, Galveston County District Court Judge Susan Criss issued a ruling allowing an investigation team hired by the Houston-based Ammons Law Firm to have access to the explosion site to ensure that crucial evidence is documented, with the stipulation that the team doesn't interfere with the ongoing investigations of federal and local authorities.

The move likely will be just the first round of legal action taken against BP.

Attorney Rob Ammons, whose law firm filed for the temporary restraining order at the request of another firm representing some of the victims, says he is representing more than 60 workers -- all of them contractors -- who were injured or killed during the explosion.

While it could be months before CSB officials reach any definitive conclusions about the cause of the March 23 blast, Ammons said it's not necessary to wait until then to take legal action against BP, because, he asserts, it's not necessary to understand the technical aspects of what went wrong to determine that BP was negligent.

"They blew up the plant," Ammons said of BP. "That's a pretty good indication that somebody did something wrong."

Ammons said that most of his clients were working on the ultracracker unit -- and not the isomerization unit that was the epicenter of the explosion -- when the blast occurred. BP has confirmed that most of those who perished were in a mobile trailer planning turnaround work on the ultracracker unit. The proximity of such mobile trailers to ground zero of the blast is something CSB investigators say they're analyzing.

"Not only were my clients not working on the [isomerization] unit when it blew up, but they didn't have any idea what was going on in that unit," Ammons said. "It was all under BP Amoco's control. BP Amoco is responsible for where they put the trailers they're meeting in. BP Amoco is responsible for turning the valves for starting their unit and pushing buttons and monitoring what's going on in the 'isom' unit.

"Most of these workers were there for the ultracracker unit -- they were non-essential. BP did not notify them and allowed them to be in the zone of danger when this 'isom' unit started up" after several weeks of maintenance.

Workers represented by Ammons are suffering from injuries ranging from shattered bones to "catastrophic major orthopedic injuries" to broken backs, he says. Whenever the lawsuits are filed, victims of the blast will be seeking redress for lost wages/future earning capacity, medical expenses, physical suffering and mental anguish.

Ammons would not say how much his clients will be seeking in damages -- OCCUPATIONALHAZARDS.COM has documented several recent cases in which injured workers have been awarded millions of dollars in damages -- but he did say that "every verdict sends a message to try to deter companies from unsafe conduct in the future."

"Certainly when you have someone who's been catastrophically injured or killed and that person is completely innocent of any wrongdoing, it makes for a very compelling case against the wrongdoer," Ammons said.

Insulation Maker Fined \$134,750 by OSHA

A Cohoes, N.Y., insulation manufacturer's alleged failure to safeguard workers against a wide range of safety and health hazards has resulted in \$134,750 in proposed penalties from OSHA.

OSHA says it began its inspection of Shelter Enterprises Inc.'s plant on Aug. 23, 2004, after learning that three employees had been hurt in a scaffolding accident at the facility Aug. 21.

The inspection, according to the agency, found that employees had not received training in the use of forklift trucks and were exposed to possible injury from the accidental startup of machinery during maintenance. This was due to the lack of specific procedures for safely shutting down the machines and locking out their power sources before working on them and lack of training in these procedures, according to OSHA.

OSHA also alleges that its inspection found that Shelter Enterprises did not have a hazard communication program to inform and train employees about the chemicals with which they worked.

The company was cited for a total of 18 alleged willful, serious and other-than-serious violations of health and safety standards.

The company was issued three willful citations with a proposed penalty of \$115,500 for the aforementioned alleged violations. OSHA defines a willful violation as one committed with an intentional disregard of or plain indifference to the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and regulations.

OSHA also issued 12 serious citations to the company with a total proposed penalty of \$19,250. A serious citation is issued when death or serious physical harm are likely to result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

Alleged violations warranting serious citations included:

- Using an improper platform on the forks of a forklift
- Modifying a forklift without the manufacturer's approval
- Allowing employees' arms and legs to extend outside the running lines of the forklift and unstable loads on the forklift
- Fall hazards from incomplete standard railings and lack of a fall arrest system while loading flatbed trucks
- An unsecured door at the freight elevator
- Lack of bonding and grounding of flammable liquids
- Lack of directional exit signs
- Obstruction in the exit access
- Lack of machine guarding.

- OSHA Readies Confined Space Standard for Construction - 04/05/2005

With OSHA set to issue a proposed standard for confined spaces in construction, the rule's space classifications may continue to raise concerns.

by Patrick A. Hand

This month, OSHA is scheduled to issue a proposed rule designed to protect construction workers from hazards associated with confined spaces. Compliance with the proposed rule is expected to save 6 lives and prevent 880 injuries annually.

This effort is a milestone in OSHA's plan to fulfill its 1994 agreement with the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) to produce a confined space standard for the construction industry. The agreement was part of a settlement that resulted from litigation between USWA and OSHA regarding the 1994 proposed Confined Space Standard for General Industry.

The development of the standard began in 1994 when OSHA turned to the Advisory Committee for Construction Safety and Health (ACCSH) for advice. ACCSH responded by establishing a work group that provided recommendations for a standard.

OSHA gathered feedback from stakeholders in 1999 and 2000 at meetings with construction industry representatives held across the country. The result was a draft proposed standard for confined spaces in construction.

The agency convened a Small Business Advocacy Review Panel on Sept. 26, 2003, to solicit comments about the draft proposal from potentially affected small entity representatives (SERs). In October 2003, several of the SERs provided comments to the panel regarding the draft proposal. OSHA now anticipates issuing the proposed standard this month.

Flexible Standard Can be Confusing

Compared to OSHA's Permit-Required Confined Space Standard for General Industry (29 CFR 1910.146), the draft proposed standard for the construction industry attempts to give employers more flexibility by increasing the number of space classifications. The classifications in the draft proposed standard include:

- Hazardous enclosed spaces,
- Isolated hazard confined spaces,
- Controlled atmosphere confined spaces and
- Permit-required confined spaces.

Flexibility is critical at construction sites, which are dynamic and constantly evolving. Greater flexibility, however, can increase the likelihood of misinterpreting the various provisions and definitions of the standard. The OSHA Website, <http://www.osha.gov>, posts more than 100 letters of interpretation regarding the general industry standard, which many SERs believe is much easier to understand than the draft proposed standard for construction.

In providing advice to industrial clients, I recall the endless hours of pouring over the preamble to the general industry final rule, compliance directives and letters of interpretation, to be confident in classifying the many different types of spaces and their associated hazards at industrial sites. Construction companies undoubtedly will need to consider technical training for their project managers and supervisors on the difficult task of applying the new provisions to existing company practices.

The Draft Proposed Standard

The draft proposed standard requires construction employers to first determine if any "hazardous enclosed spaces" or "confined spaces" are present at the site. For construction companies, this could require periodic surveillance of their sites or an anticipation process during the design and planning phase. For multi-employer worksites, the draft proposed standard requires a "controlling employer" to dictate how spaces are classified and entries are made at the site, a provision that many SERs found objectionable.

The draft proposed standard defines a "hazardous enclosed space" as a space that:

- Is large enough and so arranged that an employee can bodily enter it and perform assigned work,
- Has unrestricted means of entry and exit and
- Contains a hazardous atmosphere due to insufficient ventilation.

A "confined space" is defined as a space that has all of the following characteristics:

- Is large enough and so arranged that an employee can bodily enter and perform assigned work,
- Has limited or restricted means of entry or exit and
- Is not designed for continuous human occupancy.

If employees are required to enter "hazardous enclosed spaces" at the site, the employer may be responsible for providing air monitoring, engineering controls and personal protective equipment as necessary. Generally speaking, the least stringent requirements apply to "hazardous enclosed spaces" and the most stringent requirements apply to "confined spaces."

If employees are required to enter "confined spaces," the employer must determine if there are any actual or potential hazards associated with the space. If hazards are identified, the employer must classify the space as one of three classifications, depending on how the hazards are controlled.

If the hazard in the space is blocked or isolated, the space is classified as an "isolated-hazard confined space." If isolating the hazard is not feasible and the only hazard is an atmospheric one that can be controlled by ventilation, the space is classified as a "controlled-atmosphere confined space." When ventilation alone is not sufficient to control the hazard, or when ventilation to control the hazard is not feasible, then the employer must classify the space as a "permit-required confined space."

What will the Proposed Standard Look Like?

If the proposed standard reflects comments submitted by the SERs, then the proposal will mirror the 12-year old general industry counterpart. SERs commented that construction companies that work at industrial sites are already familiar with the requirements of the general industry standard. If the proposal is much like its draft version, construction companies will have difficulty complying with the standard.

Several SERs stated that they struggled to understand the definitions in the draft proposal as they applied to real-world situations. One stated that an overall problem with the draft proposal was that it left too much up to interpretation. Others described the draft as "cumbersome and not user-friendly."

An example of the confusion expressed by the SERs is the definition of a "hazardous enclosed space." One commenter asked how a space can be both enclosed and have unrestricted means of entry and exit.

Construction safety professionals across the country may soon get their chance at reviewing the proposed standard and providing OSHA with their own comments and experiences. OSHA remains firm in its decade-old commitment to produce a standard that protects construction workers from the hazards associated with confined spaces.

Patrick A. Hand, CIH, is a senior consultant with Clayton Group Service's OHS practice working in its New York regional office. He has more than 20 years of industrial hygiene, safety and construction experience. Hand has performed consulting services for clients in the utilities, petrochemical, manufacturing, automotive, real estate and insurance industries, including site safety audits and program development services, workplace evaluations, indoor air quality and employee training.

- Patrick Hand

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Ergoweb Inc.

www.ergoweb.com

Injury Control Resource Information Network,

University of Pittsburgh

www.injurycontrol.com

International Safety Equipment Assn.

www.safetysiteequipment.org

National Fire Protection Assn.

www.nfpa.org

National Highway Transportation Safety Administration

www.nhtsa.dot.gov

National Safety Council

www.nsc.org

Professional Development Unit

www.uksafety.net

Public Entity Risk Institute

www.riskinstitute.org

The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents

www.rospa.com

U.K. Health and Safety Executive

www.hse.gov.uk

U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov

U.S. Department of Justice, Americans with Disabilities Act

www.usdoj.gov/crt/ada

Vermont Safety Information Resources Inc.

www.hazard.com

WorkCare

www.osh.net

Workers Compensation Research Institute

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