



**June 2008**

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## Welcoming Our New 2008 NSMS Members

On behalf NSMS President Roosevelt, the NSMS Executive Committee and the NSMS Board of Directors, we like to thank all members who have proactively renewed their 2008 membership to the National Safety Management Society. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome the following new members to our Society:

- Adibe Chinedu, Site Engineer – Adibe Nigeria, Ltd. (Ogoja, Cross River State, Nigeria)
- **Edward Herbert**, Training/Safety Manager – Janitronics Facility Services (Albany, New York)
- **Oladeji A. Olowoeye**, Safety Officer – Agacox Nigeria, Ltd. Construction Company (Akure, Ondo State, Nigeria)
- **Paul Shelter**, (Santa Clarity, California)
- **Abdenago Trigueros**, VF Imagewear Honduras Division (Nashville, Tennessee)

We appreciate your interest in furthering your skills, knowledge and abilities in the management of safety and risks, as well as your interest to networking and professional development. Welcome again to NSMS!

## Election Ballots Forthcoming for NSMS Board of Directors Openings

Nominations have been received and we appreciate our members’ interest and commitment to help serve on the Board and contribute to the Society’s growth and needs of our membership. This leadership role is critical to help chart the strategic direction for our Society and address members’ professional development. The electronic ballots will be distributed to all current dues-paying members next month.

## **“NSMS Professional Development Conference” Deferred Until 2009**

With the limited availability of volunteers, conference facilities and guest speakers, the next NSMS Professional Development Conference will need to be pushed into 2009 calendar year. We are asking our membership to send us your thoughts as to meeting location. We want to make sure we have the right venue to bring as many attendees possible to benefit from the program information. This next conference is open to NSMS members, past members and other interested safety/risk management professionals/supervisors/managers/executives with the US and internationally, as well as students pursuing degrees in the field.

If you are interested in being part of the planning committee, please contact the NSMS Headquarters via email ([nsmsinc@yahoo.com](mailto:nsmsinc@yahoo.com)) and we will connect you with the core logistical team. If you are interested in speaking, submitting a technical, research or safety management paper, or sharing at our poster session, please contact:

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As an employer, recruiter or vendor, if you are interested in participating in our job fair and exhibition, please send an email to our corporate headquarters ([nsmsinc@yahoo.com](mailto:nsmsinc@yahoo.com)). Thank you.

### **SPECIAL ADVANCED ANNOUNCEMENT:**

**Planning is Underway . . .**

**NATIONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT SOCIETY  
Special Professional Development Program  
November 6, 2008 - New Orleans Hilton  
New Orleans, Louisiana**

**“Enhancing Safety Stewardship: Regulatory Update, Best Practices and Leadership Development”**

Please join the National Safety Management Society for a **1-Day Regional Safety Program** tentatively at the New Orleans Hilton. Based on interest and demand, this event is spearheaded by NSMS President Roosevelt Smith and is geared toward broadening the safety skills, knowledge and abilities of front line supervisors, managers and administrators in developing, implementing, evaluating and improving programs for worker safety, security, compliance and environmental protection in onshore and offshore oil and gas operations, as well as general industry. More details to come in the June 2008 issue of the *NSMS Safety Digest Newsletter*.

Conference Registration Fee: \$200 (includes lunch and program materials).

## **The NSMS “Blog” is Here**

Steve Geigle has created and launched the “NSMS Blog” on the NSMS website. It will allow members and others to post comments, remarks and initiate discussions about a variety of safety management topics and issues. You can participate in the Blog by going to the NSMS website (<http://nsms.us>) and look for the link on the home page along the left-hand column of navigation areas.

## **FREE ACCESS: Online Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM) Educational and Exam Preparation Reference Materials**

As a benefit for our current and future dues-paying members, NSMS is **permanently** offering free access to the Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM) preparation and educational materials. The online resources, created by NSMS member Steve Geigle, can be found at [www.cshmprep.com](http://www.cshmprep.com) and the only action an NSMS member needs to take is to email Steve requesting access from that website. You will need to include your current NSMS member number (found on your membership card and certificate). Once the number is verified, you will be granted a username and password to access the online reference materials. This is a great opportunity to brush up on your safety management and technical knowledge and prepare for a successful passing of the CSHM certification examination.

## **OSHA announces informal public hearing on proposed rule on Confined Spaces in Construction**

**WASHINGTON** -- The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced in the April 21 [Federal Register](#) that it will hold an informal public hearing to receive testimony and documentary evidence on the proposed rule for Confined Spaces in Construction. The hearing is scheduled for 10 a.m. on July 22, 2008, at the Department of Labor's Frances Perkins Building in Washington, D.C. If a second or third day is necessary, the hearing will begin at 9 a.m. on those days.

"The proposed rule is intended to address construction-specific issues as they relate to confined spaces and establish comprehensive procedures to protect employees," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Edwin G. Foulke, Jr. "This hearing will allow interested parties the opportunity to provide input on the proposed rule."

OSHA published the proposed Confined Spaces in Construction Standard on November 28, 2007 (72 FR 67351) and the public was given until February 28, 2008, to submit comments. Those who intend to present testimony at the hearing must notify OSHA in writing of their intention to do so no later than May 21, 2008. Parties who request more than 10 minutes for their presentations at the hearing and those who will present documentary evidence must provide the agency with copies of their full testimony and all documentary evidence no later than June 20, 2008.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthy workplace for their employees. OSHA's role is to promote the safety and health of America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual process improvement in workplace safety and health. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).

**Study: OSHA Penalties Small Compared With Other Violations** (By Kent Hoover, Washington Bureau Chief – Memphis Business Journal, May 8, 2008)

Federal penalties for workplace safety violations are miniscule compared with penalties for other regulatory violations, according to a new study by a Senate committee. The maximum civil fine the Occupational Safety and Health Administration can impose for safety violations is \$70,000, compared with maximum fines of \$325,000 that the Department of Commerce can impose for violations of the South Pacific Tuna Act and \$270,000 that the Environmental Protection Agency can impose for Clean Air Act violations, the study found.

"Protecting tuna fisheries is important, but so is safeguarding other workers' lives, and we need to raise OSHA's penalties if we hope to deter unsafe working conditions," said Sen. Edward Kennedy, D-Mass., who chairs the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

The report by Kennedy's committee found that the penalties OSHA actually collects for safety violations are much lower -- a median of only \$3,675 last year in cases where a worker was killed. For willful violations in fatality cases, the median final penalty was \$29,400, a 58 percent reduction from the fine initially sought by OSHA. The agency also lets many employers get away with not paying fines, according to the study. More than \$27 million in penalties in cases involving more than 600 fatalities remain unpaid, the study found.

In addition, OSHA rarely uses its authority to seek criminal charges against employers. Even when it does, the maximum sentence for willful safety violations that result in a worker's death is only six months, compared with a maximum of 30 years for mail fraud.

Kennedy is pushing legislation to increase OSHA civil penalties and impose significant prison terms for the worst offenders. The committee's ranking Republican, Sen. Michael Enzi, R-Wyo., pushed his own legislation, which would provide employers with incentives to improve workplace safety.

OSHA's voluntary programs, drug-testing and state workers' compensation programs have all proved effective in reducing workplace injuries, he said. "Let's look at the best practices out there and determine if there are new ideas that can be translated to the federal level," Enzi said. He also pointed out that employers benefit from a safe workplace because they can't operate without their employees and they pay less for insurance if they follow good safety practices. Workplace fatalities, he added, have fallen to their lowest level since the federal government began collecting the data in 1992.

OSHA Administrator Edwin Foulke said the agency has been "quite successful" in improving workplace safety. "Injury and illness rates have continued to decline to record lows," Foulke said.

## **Protecting Our Young**

Remember what it felt like to be under 25 years old? Today's young workers are no different. They may think nothing can ever happen to them, but don't you believe it. In Canada, each day more than 40 workers under the age of 19 are hurt on the job. If you hire students or young workers, keep in mind that anyone who lacks experience and trained judgment is at particular risk of getting injured. Young workers rely on you for good advice, information and supervision and ultimately, for their safety.

**How an employer can help:** Ensuring the safety and health of young people in the workplace starts with having a good health and safety management system that protects everyone. Young workers may feel pressured and nervous, especially at a first job. They may want to please you and to not disappoint their parents. Being so focused on that objective - doing a great job - can lead them to work unsafely. One of the best things you can do as an employer is to make it clear that safety is the young worker's first priority, and that it's perfectly fine to ask questions.

**Assign suitable work.** Some tasks are better reserved for more experienced workers. Before you even hire, assess the job and what it entails. What hazards will the worker be exposed to? Will certain situations present new risks? Will the worker ever have to fetch something from a confined space, a hard-to-reach area or some other hazardous spot? Will the worker be welding or doing some other task that could injure the worker and others in the vicinity?

Avoid assigning tasks that require a high degree of skill, lengthy training or a great deal of responsibility. Do not expect a young person to work alone or perform critical or risky tasks, such as handling dangerous chemicals.

**Make time for training.** Before young people start work, they must receive effective health and safety orientation and training. This could include the company's health and safety policy, their personal responsibilities, hazards in their workplace, how to protect themselves starting day one, who to go to for advice and what to do if things seem unsafe.

Tell young workers not to perform any task until they have been trained to do it. Encourage the young worker to ask questions at any time, especially about safety. Demonstrate how to do each task the safe way, and do it more than once. Be accessible. Stick around, watch the worker do the task, and correct any mistakes. The young worker might feel pressured to get it right the first time, so you can help by being patient and repeating instructions and demonstrating procedures as often as necessary. Continue to monitor the worker.

**Provide appropriate safety equipment and PPE.** Provide hands-on training on the correct use of equipment. When you demonstrate how to do a task, remember to include safety features and control systems. The young worker should know to keep exit doors free from clutter, for example, and to make sure safety guards on machines stay on and equipment is turned off or disconnected after every shift where necessary.

Provide or ensure that the worker has all necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) such as safety shoes, hardhat or gloves, as the job requires. Make sure the young worker knows where to find it, how to use it, and how to care for it.

**Supervise.** Anyone supervising must have the knowledge, training or experience to organize work and its performance. Due to lack of understanding, a young worker may decide to make changes to the job in unexpected and possibly risky ways. Be sure that they are closely supervised, and stick to recognized and safe work procedures. Know the laws and regulations that apply to keeping workers safe on the job, and know what is hazardous - or could be - in the workplace.

**Tips for young workers:** If you are a young worker and are reading this, know that you also have responsibilities to stay safe on the job. If you're not getting the information you need, you can protect your own health and safety or even save your life by asking these questions:

- What are the physical demands of the job?
- Will I have to work very late at night or very early in the morning?
- Will I ever work alone?
- What kind of safety gear will I need to wear?
- Will there be noise? Chemicals? Other hazards?
- What safety training will I receive?
- When will I receive this training?
- Where are the first-aid supplies and fire extinguishers kept?
- Do you have a worker safety policy and an emergency plan?
- Can you give an example of how employee health and safety is important to your business?

Help make this a great summer and beyond. Make sure your young workers have a safe and positive work experience.

## **Hurricane Preparedness is in Your Hands** (By Cailey Bennett, Editorial Intern at Bongarde Media, June 3, 2008)

This week marks the official beginning of hurricane season; a period that experts are predicting will see well-above-average storm activity. Hurricanes can cause substantial property damage, not to mention the injuries and loss of life that accompany the huge storms. This devastation can be caused by high winds, tornadoes, storm surges and inland flooding. There are many steps that you and your workers can take to reduce the effects of a hurricane, both at home and in the workplace. In order to effectively protect themselves, your workers must know how to Prepare, Respond and Return.

## **Prepare**

Because hurricanes, and especially resulting tornadoes, don't give a lot of warning, preparation is crucial. Before any storm watches arise, be sure to:

- Determine if your home is built to withstand high-wind force and flooding. If so, and if you do not live in an evacuation zone, prepare your home with window coverings and reinforce your garage door. Designate an interior, windowless room as a "safe room" to wait out the storm.
- Get your family involved. Work together to establish an evacuation plan and make an emergency supply kit. Make sure everyone knows emergency phone numbers, and where to meet if separated.
- Trim weak branches from all trees, and use landscaping materials that cannot be picked up by strong winds.
- Research your company's hurricane response plans. Learn evacuation routes, and determine any responsibilities you may have in case of an emergency.
- Assess your home insurance. If you live in a flood zone, ensure that you are properly covered in case of a hurricane.
- Don't forget to prepare a pet plan. Special measures may need to be taken to protect your furry or winged friends.

## **Respond**

When a hurricane or tornado watch is issued and the winds begin to pick up, will you know what to do?

- Board up windows, secure outdoor objects and check your emergency supplies.
- Obey officials. If you are told to evacuate, do so immediately. And don't return home until you are given the all-clear. Also, tune into emergency broadcasts and heed all warnings given.
- If evacuating, remember to take necessary prescriptions and money with you.
- Expect slow travel. Traffic will be congested, and some roads may be unfit for driving due to debris or flooding.
- If at work, take shelter in a small room on a low floor.

## **Return**

Returning to your home and workplace after a hurricane is very hazardous. Take these protective measures when restoring order:

- Never return to a building unless you have been given permission to do so.
- Stay clear of downed power lines and trees, only removing them if you are properly trained.
- Be wary of spills or hazardous material leakages. These can happen both in the workplace and at home.
- Watch for structural damage to entryways, floors or ceilings.
- Block entry to dangerous confined spaces created by structural damage or toxic spills.

## **Conclusion**

The worst hurricane tragedies occur when there is a lack of education. Reduce the risk of disaster for your workers by teaching them how to safely prepare, respond and return.

## **How to Communicate with Your CEO**

To cultivate a successful relationship with your boss or CEO has always been the ultimate goal and ongoing challenge. You can't build a relationship with the boss, or anybody else for that matter, unless you get a chance to talk to the person. That's not as simple as it sounds. After all, CEOs are typically in their own space-physically and mentally - and hard to reach.

The good news: A survey of 150 senior executives from Fortune 1000 companies offers some insight on how CEOs communicate with the people in their organization. The findings:

- **71:** The percentage that rely on e-mail most often (as compared to 27% five years ago)
- **14:** The percentage that rely on in-person/face-to-face conversations most often (as compared to 24% five years ago)
- **13:** The percentage that rely on telephone conversations most often (as compared to 48% five years ago)

## **Management Success: An Action Plan for Your First 100 Days of**

**Employment** (By Lauryn Franzoni – Vice President and Executive Editor of ExecuNet's Center for Executive Careers, May 9, 2008 – SafetyXChange)

It's a principle that applies to any person who assumes a new position of leadership, whether it's the President of the United States taking the oath of office or a safety professional just hired (or promoted to) the position of EHS Director: Those first 100 days are crucial. Here's some help to ensure that your first 100 days make and don't break you.

### **What's at Stake in the First 100 Days**

Remember the line from that old commercial: You don't get a second chance to make a first impression. What's true of dandruff shampoos is equally true of management. In fact, even more so. You get just one shot to make a positive initial impression on your new bosses and subordinates. The impressions you make in those first 100 days will go a long way to determining your ultimate success in integrating into the fabric, culture and social dynamic of the organization.

And it's not just your own success on the line. Others in the organization have a personal stake in your ultimate success. That includes the people who recruited or promoted you and those who you manage. If you hit the ground running, their stock will rise; if you crash and burn, you'll take them down with you.

### **The Obstacles to Success**

Unfortunately, just because you got the job doesn't mean that you will master the first 100 days once you assume it. It doesn't matter how closely you match the requirements of the position or how well you interviewed for it. Doing a job requires a different set of skills from obtaining it.

Yes, executive-level job candidate, you have a serious vested interest in executive on-boarding. That's because while a lot of companies do a good job attracting, recruiting and hiring outstanding executives, many fail to successfully integrate them into their organizational culture. That often leads to a resignation or a bad start that ends in an awkward and costly firing - and comes back to haunt both you and the recruiter, regardless of how well you think you performed in your first months in the new role.

### **Some Pointers**

Here's some advice on achieving success in your first 100 days on the job from George Bradt's book, *The New Leader's 100-Day Action Plan: How To Take Charge, Build Your Team, And Get Immediate Results* (Wiley, 2006):

You should ask the recruiter and others within the employer organization for their assessment of key stakeholders in your performance - at some point before your official start date. Also, you should assume your duties only after you've mapped out how you will spend your time achieving goals on your first day, during your first few weeks, and throughout your first 100 days on the job. Identifying early wins is critical to your success in the role.

Ask those involved in your recruitment or promotion about how much discretion you'll have in mobilizing your team. What authority will you be granted to support people who are in the right role and performing well and to reassign people who are in the wrong role.

Be prepared for inevitable surprises. That means taking stock of when something beyond your control is major and enduring, which should force you to revisit your early leadership strategy. Or understanding that the change is just a temporary obstacle, which may call for you to revisit the tactical approach to executing a new strategy.

### **Conclusion**

In the end, Bradt suggests, that successful executive on-boarding is about asking for feedback from all sides to help you gauge the early impressions you've made on a new employer organization, and chart some course corrections in your behavior if required to buy you more time to succeed. The book includes downloadable forms to make on-boarding effective and instructive for leaders at every level.

And remember, better to ask for feedback and support than to push ahead without a full view (including the views of others) and risk a messy and perhaps involuntary transition.

## **Safety Not a High Priority for Many European Bosses**

New research reveals that a large number of bosses put other business concerns ahead of worker safety, according to their staff. When asked to rank their boss's business priorities, 31 per cent felt that keeping customers and clients happy was their boss's top concern. A further 26 per cent believe their boss sees getting work done on time as most important, while another 23 per cent say making money is the main goal of their employer. Only seven per cent said that making sure employees are not hurt or made ill by their work was their boss's main priority.

The YouGov survey commissioned by the Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), Europe's largest health and safety professional body, found that 56 per cent of employees felt health and safety was important to their boss, although 14 per cent felt it was not. Over two-thirds (67 per cent) of employees surveyed said they felt health and safety either saved lives or meant people didn't get ill or hurt at work and the majority don't think it's about red tape, silly European laws or stopping people getting on with their lives!

Lord McKenzie, Minister responsible for Health and Safety, said that health and safety was something all employers needed to take seriously: "There is a strong business case for responsible health and safety at work and some employers clearly fail to take seriously the risks that many of their employees face each day. "The government considers that the amount of workplace accidents and illness caused by work is unacceptable. We are committed to tackling the toll of workplace ill-health, injury and death and call on all employers to ensure that their workforce stays healthy."

Ray Hurst, the president of IOSH, commented:

"These workers views suggest that there's still a minority of employers out there who simply don't give a damn about their staff. There are some who still think it's okay to cut corners and put their staff at risk, and that's not acceptable. While the vast majority of bosses do take health and safety seriously, workers feel some do not. "Those who think like that are wrong. The consequences of serious accidents, in which people may be killed or maimed, can affect workers, their families and bosses for the rest of their lives. And of course, there are also the legal and business effects, such as facing the full force of the law, the damage to reputation, the loss of business and increased insurance costs.

"Most people questioned in these surveys are quite clear that health and safety is important to them. It's time all bosses started to treat health and safety with the importance it deserves. Everyone should appreciate that without health and safety, people can and do get seriously hurt or killed at work."

## **Review Urges Aggressive MRSA Screening for Health Workers** (U.S. News and World Report, June 8, 2008)

Study finds that even good adherence to infection control did not entirely prevent transmission. In hospitals and other health-care facilities with endemic methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA), aggressive screening of health-care workers should be combined with other measures to help reduce infection rates, new research suggests.

The Swiss and South African authors, who reviewed data from 169 studies of 33,318 health-care workers in 37 countries, found that 4.6 percent of the workers carried MRSA, and, of these, 5.1 percent had clinical MRSA infections.

"Poor infection control practices were implicated in both acquisition and transmission of MRSA by personnel, but even good adherence to infection control -- including masks and hand hygiene -- did not entirely prevent transmission of MRSA from heavily colonized staff to patients," they wrote.

A recent review of MRSA outbreaks suggested that health-care worker screening should focus on those with symptoms of MRSA infection, but this approach would likely miss a large number of MRSA-infected workers with no symptoms, the review authors said.

"Screening of infected health-care workers only will likely miss a large number of asymptomatic personnel capable of transmitting MRSA to patients, since staphylococcal carriage is mainly dependent on whether the person is a nasal carrier (of MRSA)... Our search revealed 18 studies with proven, and 26 studies with likely, transmission to patients from (health-care workers) who were not clinically infected with MRSA," the authors wrote.

Screening of health-care workers should be conducted "irrespective of the presence of risk factors or pus-producing infections as part of pre-employment examination, or [especially during large MRSA outbreaks] even periodically and unannounced before a work shift," they said.

In addition, nose and throat samples should be taken with separate swabs, since MRSA eradication therapy differs depending on the location of the MRSA, the authors recommended.

They acknowledged that cost makes MRSA screening unfeasible in many health-care facilities but noted that close health-care worker surveillance is conducted in regions -- such as Scandinavia, the Netherlands and Western Australia -- with low MRSA prevalence.

"We recommend screening of health care workers during outbreak investigations and during early stages of an institutional epidemic when MRSA prevalence is still low or when a new MRSA strain is propagating rapidly. In settings with endemic MRSA or limited resources, priority should be given to staff in high risk units such as intensive care units, burn units, or surgical wards," the review authors wrote.

The review was expected to be published in the May issue of the *The Lancet Infectious Diseases*.

**More information:** The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has more about [MRSA in health-care settings](#).

## **CDC: U.S. Death Rate Highest For Hispanic Workers; Large Numbers in California**

According to a just-released report by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the death rate for Hispanic workers in the United States in the last decade and a half has tracked higher than for any other ethnic group. And more recently, California has experienced a significant percentage of these fatalities.

In an analysis of workplace fatality statistics from 1992-2006, CDC's Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR) found that 11,303 Hispanic workers died from work-related injuries during the 15-year period. MMWR says the death rate for this group of workers decreased in rate over that time, but at 5.0 per 100,000 workers, was still "consistently higher" than the rate for all U.S. workers (4.0).

In the five-year period from 2003-2006, the highest number of Hispanic fatalities in any state was in California, at 713, followed by Texas, at 687. The California rate for that period was 3.7 and most common "fatal event" was a fall to a lower level. The construction industry experienced the highest percentage of fatalities, at 27%. Foreign-born Hispanic workers comprised 71% of the California Hispanic workforce during that period.

### **Organizational Challenges: When the HR Director You Report to Doesn't Understand Safety** (By John Bruce, HEI ACH, Corporate Safety Officer for Aurora Health Care – Wisconsin)

Sometimes safety directors find themselves in the situation of having to report to an HR director who is blissfully unaware of safety. If you're one of them, don't despair. There may still be hope. Note: This article applies not just to HR directors but other persons within an organization that a safety director might have to report to.

#### **The Problem of the Uninformed HR Director**

I'm not suggesting that all HR directors are completely uninformed about safety. I'm currently taking an HR Generalist certification program. The course work does cover safety topics such as OSHA and workers' compensation. But it can be troubling when safety directors report to HR directors regarding safety issues and that it's the latter rather than the former who decide what safety-related policies, procedures and practices the organization should adopt.

I guess it's not uncommon for people to be placed in charge of subjects about which they have little or no knowledge. Some teachers work for a principal who has spent little, if any, time in the classroom; and brand new second lieutenants get put in charge of a platoon of battle-tested soldiers or marines. But the fact that other professionals face the same challenge isn't much consolation if a safety director feels that the HR director's authority over safety may be harmful to the organization.

## **Two Ways to Handle the Uninformed HR Director**

What can you do if you find yourself in this situation? It depends on what kind of person the HR director is. Let's examine your options based on a couple of hypothetical HR directors.

### **Scenario 1:** HR Directors Who Admit Their Ignorance About Safety

The best case scenario is to have an HR director who is somewhat progressive and admits openly that he or she knows very little about safety. In this case, your first step is to arrange a meeting to discuss what you do and review your job description.

Bringing all your diplomatic skills to play may enable you to function with some degree of autonomy, while assuring the HR director that you have no intention of doing an end run around his or her authority and that your intent is to make the HR director's job easier while fulfilling your own responsibilities. To that end, emphasize your willingness to cooperate and clarify any issues that may present a concern.

### **Scenario 2:** HR Directors Who Think They Know Safety But Don't

At the other end of the spectrum, you may encounter the rare but difficult beast: the HR director who doesn't know anything about safety but is unwilling to admit it, or worse, knows just enough to be dangerous. This person may even know a few words of "safety lingo," but misuses or mispronounces them. A good analogy is the boss in *Dilbert* whose lack of knowledge does not deter him. In extreme cases, the HR director may be a megalomaniac and micromanager who questions every action, decision and purchase and impedes you in your work.

Dealing with this kind of HR director is a handful. It requires an artful balance of diplomacy, ego nourishment and reality. Telling the person that he or she lacks knowledge is not advisable — although it may be tempting. Instead consider discussing what your work entails including legal requirements and follow up your discussion with a written summary.

You might also consider offering to present an overview of safety including some history and philosophy, the role of OSHA and other regulatory agencies and how safety affects the bottom line. Direct your presentation to all managers and supervisors so the HR director doesn't feel singled out. If possible, consider making this presentation at your organization's monthly management meetings.

Another source of support could come from both your workers' compensation and property insurance carriers. Ask if their loss control representatives would be willing to meet with you and your boss to go over loss reports, the services that they offer and the like. An added bonus to this strategy is that the information may add to the HR director's knowledge and serve to reassure him or her that you do indeed know what you are doing. This in turn may cause the boss to loosen the stifling grip on you.

## **Conclusion**

I know these ideas may look good on paper. But will they work in real life? They might, but there's no guarantee. What I do know is that the success of you and your safety program will to a large degree depend on your effectiveness in enlisting the HR director's support. Even if the person doesn't have a lot of knowledge on the topic of workplace safety, try to do all that you can to make that person aware of its importance.

# **Health and Safety Best Practices: How to Implement a Fleet Safety Program**

(By John Bruce, HEI ACH, Corporate Safety Officer for Aurora Health Care – Wisconsin)

If your company has vehicles - whether in the hundreds or just a single van or pickup truck - you are at risk. At stake is not just safety and liability for property damage and personal injury but your company's reputation. After all, even if you don't have an accident, people in your community might think twice about doing business with your company if they see one of your vehicles being driven unsafely. One of the keys to managing these risks is to implement a comprehensive fleet safety program. This is relatively easy to create and requires less effort than you might think. This series of articles will show you how to do it.

## **The Components of a Fleet Safety Program**

There are two basic approaches to implementing a program. One is to find a workable model and adapt it to the needs of your organization. Your insurance carrier may have a model you can use. The alternative is to build your own program from scratch.

Whichever route you go, there are some key components your program should contain:

- Driver selection criteria
- Company's expectations of drivers
- Responsibilities of drivers and supervisors
- Driver orientation and training
- Disciplinary action for inappropriate operation of a motor vehicle

### Driver Record Checks

This is a critical portion of the fleet safety program. You must check the driving record of every employee who drives or may drive a company owned or leased motor vehicle. You should conduct driver record checks:

- When checking job application references
- Prior to making an offer of employment
- When a current employee transfers to a driving position
- When a current position is revised to include driving
- At least once a year on a regular basis to ensure the ongoing quality of your fleet

Most state motor vehicle departments will provide driver record checks to employers, for a nominal fee. You may also be able to negotiate with your fleet insurance carrier to do the checks for you as part of your premium costs.

A third option is to spend some extra money to hire an outside company to perform the check. In my experience, I have found that the information provided by such companies is not always as current or accurate as that provided by your motor vehicle department. Also, since the reports generated by the private company are covered under the Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA), employees must sign a disclosure and release form authorizing the check. You don't need FCRA authorization to get this information directly from the state.

## Assessing the Results

With a formal fleet safety program, you can use drivers' records to select safe drivers to hire. Granted, a person may have a good record and still not be a stellar driver, just someone who hasn't been caught yet. But this is usually not the case. Once you've hired employees, you can use the program to monitor their driving and identify areas for improvement and, if necessary, impose disciplinary action. In either case, here are some suggested criteria for assessing the results of drivers' records checks:

***Acceptable:*** In general, an acceptable candidate may have these moving violations:

- No more than two in the past 12 months;
- No more than three in the past 24 months; or
- No more than four in the past 36 months.

***Probationary Status:*** Candidates may be hired on a probationary status, with their records re-checked every four to six months, if their records show one incident in the past 12 months of:

- Excessive speed
- An at-fault accident, or
- An accident involving lane, following, sign or signal violations

***Unacceptable:*** Candidates with two or more of the above violations should not be hired into a position requiring the operation of a motor vehicle. Nor should any candidate whose record shows one or more of the following in the past 12 months:

- Operating under the influence of alcohol/controlled substance
- Fleeing and eluding
- Hit and run
- Leaving the scene of an accident
- Personal injury/fatal at-fault accident
- Reckless driving
- Driving without a license

There are other violations or circumstances that may prevent hiring or place the current employee into a probationary status.

When determining eligibility, remember to take into account extenuating circumstances. For example, a temporary suspension for failure to pay forfeiture probably would not affect a candidate's eligibility - but driving on that suspended license might. One last note about selection criteria: Candidates under 25 years of age should be scrutinized carefully. Restrict drivers in this age group to no more than ten percent of the total number of drivers in your fleet. Drivers younger than 18 years of age should not be hired at all.

## Defensive Driving & Other Education

Each driver in your fleet should take a safe driving course within six months of being hired or immediately on the implementation of the fleet safety program. The course can be:

- One of the numerous driving courses available, including the National Safety Council Defensive Driving course;
- A program you develop in-house; or
- A program offered by or through your fleet insurance carrier. Often insurance companies outsource the driver training to other companies that will provide the training in a classroom setting or online.

After the initial training, drivers should receive periodic brief refreshers which may include:

- Short discussions;
- Memos;
- Payroll stuffers; and/or
- Newsletter articles.

Drivers who have previously completed a defensive driving course or similar class may be exempt from the initial training, but still should participate in the refreshers. Be sure to document the training and all refreshers.

## Vehicle Orientation

Employees must be familiar with the vehicle(s) they will be operating. The orientation to the vehicle should include any of its unique characteristics and features, such as:

- Anti-lock brakes;
- Remote control mirrors;
- Seatbelt and head restraint adjustments; and
- Anti-theft devices.

Vehicles with diesel engines also have unique characteristics. You should also point out the location of the MSDS binder.

Orientations should be provided to:

- Any employee who's assigned to a different vehicle; and
- All employees whenever new vehicles are added to the fleet.

## Company Expectations

Of course, you expect your drivers to handle their vehicles safely. But to be clear, your fleet safety program should outline these expectations. Your drivers should understand that you expect them to:

- **Conduct regular vehicle safety inspections** per department policy, keep the vehicle in good operating condition, and report any mechanical or equipment problems to their supervisor.
- **Practice defensive driving** and courtesy to prevent accidents and traffic violations.
- **Observe all the rules of the road**, including the use of turn signals, yielding the right of way, adhering to speed limits and maintaining safe following distance.
- **Use headlights** (not parking lights) during times of reduced visibility, such as snow, rain, drizzle, fog and twilight.
- **Allow only authorized persons** to operate or ride in vehicles.
- **Never use the vehicles for personal use** (e.g., hauling furniture, driving children to school, shopping, etc.).
- **Never pick up hitchhikers.**
- **Never leave the vehicle unattended** with the key in the ignition and/or the motor running.
- **Always lock the vehicle** when it's unattended.
- **Use seatbelts** at all times and ensure that passengers do so as well.
- **Report to the supervisor** immediately any moving violations, accidents or changes in license status.
- **Never drive under the influence** of alcohol or drugs. If medication is prescribed, the doctor or pharmacist should confirm that it will not affect the ability to drive. The same is true of over-the-counter medications, such as cold remedies containing antihistamine, which can cause drowsiness.
- **Avoid using a cell phone** while driving. If it is necessary to use the phone, pull safely off the road, make the call and then safely resume driving. Hands-free devices have limited value in reducing the distractions associated with phone use while driving.
- **Review and be familiar with** the MSDSs provided in the vehicle for all chemicals present including fuel, lubricants, coolant, brake and power steering fluid, windshield washer fluid, transmission fluid and battery acid along with any de-icing and cleaning products kept in the vehicle.

## Supervisor Obligations

Supervisors play an essential role in carrying out a fleet safety program. For a program to work, supervisors must

- Ensure that employees are familiar with and adhere to all aspects of the fleet safety program
- Maintain a list of all current drivers and their drivers' license numbers
- Conduct an annual review of all drivers' records
- Familiarize employees with new vehicles and ensure that they are aware of and understand any unique features of the vehicles
- Investigate accidents involving department vehicles
- Ensure that employees attend all required driver education programs, including refreshers.

## Disciplinary and Other Policies

You must have a disciplinary policy to take action against employees who commit violations of the fleet safety program. Where applicable, other policies may have bearing on the situation. These may include policies on:

- Drug and alcohol use
- Motor vehicle accidents, or
- Unacceptable driving records.

You may also want to consider including a provision in your disciplinary policy that requires employees who commit violations to attend a course designed to improve individual driving skills. Of course, this should be used only for violations and employees that don't warrant immediate termination.

## Policies Regarding Personal Vehicles

A policy should also address employee use of personal vehicles. Generally, employees should not use their personal vehicles to do company business if there is a motor vehicle available in operating condition that isn't being used. But occasionally, employees may have to use their personal vehicles to perform their duties. To reduce the potential for accidents, injuries and liability, employees should follow the same practices as outlined for the operation of company-owned vehicles. In addition, your program should outline these particulars:

***Insurance*** Employees who expect to drive their personal vehicles for company business must show that they have automobile insurance in force. They should maintain at least the state-mandated minimum liability coverage, but should be urged to carry a higher liability level along with collision and comprehensive coverage.

***Accidents*** In the event of an accident involving an employee's personal vehicle, the employee should

- Follow their insurance carrier's procedures for reporting the accident and obtaining information
- File an Incident Report with the supervisor, and
- If injured, file an Employee Injury Report according to the company's policy.

***Mileage claims*** Your plan should address whether employees are to claim mileage from their federal income taxes or to be reimbursed by the employer at the prevailing IRS rate. Thus deductibles and claims for vehicle damage that are not covered by the employee's insurance policy are the responsibility of the employee. The thought here is that the mileage deduction/allowance is intended to cover most if not all expenses involved in the operation of an automobile. Any exceptions may be considered on a case-by-case basis and should be careful not to set a precedent.

## Conclusion

Employees who operate a motor vehicle for your company should be seen not only as a driver but also as a company representative. Therefore, employees must make a conscious effort to drive courteously, maintain alertness and obey all traffic laws and rules of the road. Making sure they do will help your drivers stay safe and enhance the image of your organization.

## **Return to Work: Three Assumptions Not to Make** (By Ken Henry, The Reed Group – Canada, Safety Exchange, June 4, 2008)

All of us have an interest in getting injured employees back to work as soon as possible. Although, physically, employees must heal at their own rate, we as safety professionals are in a position to speed up the return to work process. But we often miss our chance to do so. More often than not, these missed opportunities are the results of false assumptions that many of us make.

Here are three of the most common false assumptions that I see safety professionals make. How many are *you* guilty of making?

### **Assumption 1:** I Can Count on the Doctor's Recommendations

Recommending a return to work schedule and appropriate work accommodations requires an understanding of the employee's medical condition (and mental state). It also requires knowledge about your workplace and processes. Although you can count on the doctors to have the former, you can't assume they have the latter. And since doctors may not understand how your business operates, the return to work schedule and accommodations they recommend might be completely unrealistic. For example, a doctor who's never seen how a warehouse operates is apt to make false assumptions about the demands of a warehouse worker's job.

**Lesson:** Create a job description for the doctor. List not just the regular duties of the position but alternate and light duties. Send it to the employee's doctor or have the employee give it to the doctor himself. I have also found that taking photos of job stations and of the steps involved in job processes results in much sounder recommendations.

### **Assumption 2:** I Can't Do Anything to Speed Up the Claims Process

Opening a claim, gathering information from the parties and adjudication all take time. It generally takes carriers about three weeks to start reviewing claims. But most of the employee injuries safety professionals deal with are relatively minor and involve less than three weeks of disability leave in total! What this means is that administrative delays in processing the claim tend to prolong the employee's absence.

**Lesson:** Taking a proactive approach to the claims process can cut lost time. Establish open communications with the carrier right at the start and stay in touch at every stage of the process, including right after the employee visits the doctor. Create a file for each claim to store notes and related documents. Actively participating in the claims process often leads to opportunities to save time, money and grief.

### **Assumption 3:** Employees Shouldn't Return to Work Until They're 100 Percent

This may be the worst assumption of all. So often you hear safety professionals say "we don't want you back until you're 100 percent." This sounds nice. But, let's face it, 100 percent fitness is an unrealistic expectation even for workers who *aren't* disabled. So this kind of statement and attitude tends to prolong the recovery process.

**Lesson:** Push for an early return that involves restricted duties. Bring employees back to work not when they're 100 percent but when they're medically capable of working. "Healing time is always longer than disability duration time", states workplace disability expert Dr. Presley Reed, Editor in Chief of *The Medical Disability Advisor; 5th Edition*. Waiting until an employee is 100 percent fit will result in longer disability duration times and higher premiums.

### **Conclusion**

The secret to a speedy return to work is to establish open communications with the employee, doctor and carrier right at the outset and to remain proactive throughout the recovery and claims adjudication process. Above all, you need to steer clear of the false assumptions that make the return to work longer, costlier and more frustrating than it has to be.

## **What's Your Decision: Is Company Responsible for Worker's Failure to Follow Safety Rules?**

**The Scenario:** An Alabama construction worker is electrocuted while installing power lines along a highway. He wasn't wearing PPE, even though he had been trained and repeatedly warned to use PPE when working with power lines. OSHA cites the company for failing to prevent the victim from approaching exposed energized parts without PPE. The company appeals.

**Question:** Is the company guilty?

**Answer:** No. The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission says the company did everything possible to protect the worker and isn't to blame for his "unpreventable misconduct" [*Secretary of Labor v. Davis H. Elliott Const. Co., Inc.*, OSHRC Docket No. 04-0836, June 1, 2005].

## **Lessons Learned: Criminal Charges In Hershey Amputation Case**

Cal/OSHA citations for alleged willful violations against a candy facility in Oakdale have led to criminal charges, as the Stanislaus County District Attorney announces a felony complaint against Hershey Chocolate and Confectionery Corp. in the March 2007 amputation of a worker's arm.

Erica Domen, 32, was cleaning a batter-sifting machine during a late-night shift when a fellow worker accidentally activated the machine. A crucial switch failed and Domen's arm was taken off at the shoulder by a rotating paddle. According to Cal/OSHA, the sifter machines become gummed up with dough during operations and need to be cleaned periodically. When a control panel is open during the cleaning, the machine is not supposed to be functional, but a switch that prevents activation failed.

Last August, California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) cited the company for an alleged willful violation of the state's lockout/tagout standard, General Industry Safety Orders §3314, for allowing the Comomill machine to be cleaned without instituting a hazardous energy control program, and for failing to ensure tags were placed on its power source and accident prevention signs posted.

The Division alleged that sanitation employees had been specifically told not to lock or tag out the machine. "The employees are trained by the employer to only turn the Comomill off at the breaker box," the citation states. DOSH has proposed \$140,000 in penalties in the case, which is now on hold until the criminal case is resolved.

The Cal/OSHA citations are the basis for the criminal complaint. The firm faces fines of up to \$1.5 million for each count if convicted. There was no information available at press time on whether any Hershey employees are being charged. Hershey closed the plant this January and moved production to Mexico.

## **Lessons Learned: Southern California District Attorney Charges Crane Operator In Deadly '06 Incident**

A crane operator is facing felony manslaughter charges from a December 2006 incident in Upland that killed a worker and two motorists. San Bernardino County District Attorney's Specialized Prosecution Unit filed charges against Joseph Dimaano, 33, of Menifee under Penal Code §192(b) for involuntary manslaughter and Labor Code §6425, for negligent killing of a co-worker. Dimaano was operating a crane the night of Dec. 6, 2006, that was suspending a power pole six feet over a roadway and a few feet off the ground when an 80-year-old motorist slammed into the 75-foot-long pole. The collision killed a lineman who was guiding the other end and the driver, who was killed instantly when the car's roof was sheared off. His wife died several weeks later.

Dimaano, who is scheduled for arraignment April 22, and the deceased co-worker, David Wayne Jenkins, both worked for Pouk and Steinle, which had subcontracted with Southern California Edison to replace power poles in the San Bernardino County town. The D.A.'s office said Dimaano "lost control" of the pole.

Cal/OSHA cited Pouk and Steinle last year for four alleged serious violations and almost \$50,000 in proposed penalties in connection with the incident. The Division alleges that the company failed to train new employees on hazards and safety precautions, did not provide traffic-control devices, did not ensure that employees at the site were wearing reflective clothing and the operation did not use tag or restraint lines while hoisting the pole.

## **Lessons Learned: Labor Commissioner Moves Against Labor Contractor In Heat Illness Case**

The California Labor Commissioner has begun proceedings to revoke the farm labor contractor license for Maria De Los Angeles Colunga, operator of Merced Farm Labor Contractor (MFLC), the employer of a 17-year-old girl who died May 16 after suffering heat illness.

The basis for the revocation move is the contractor's alleged failure to correct previous safety deficiencies related to heat illness. In 2006, the Division of Occupational Safety and Health cited MFLC for violations of the state's heat illness prevention standard and the Injury and Illness Prevention Program related to heat illness. The Labor Commissioner also charges the employer provide false information on its license application.

MFLC also is the target of investigations by DOSH and the Economic and Employment Enforcement Coalition, who are working with the San Joaquin County District Attorney's office in the wake of the death. Additional allegations could be added when the criminal and civil investigations are completed. In the meantime, authorities are working to ensure other employees of the labor contractor are "being treated in full compliance with California's labor and safety laws," the governor's office said.

### **Background Information of Incident That Triggered Labor Commissioner Actions**

Information emerging from the incident points to the need for employers of outdoor workers at remote locations to ensure they have well-defined emergency procedures in place. Maria Isabel Vasquez Jimenez, an undocumented immigrant who had just arrived in the United States and started working just days before in a Farmington vineyard, became ill May 14 after toiling about eight hours pruning vineyards. She died two days later.

While acclimation to the hot conditions appears to have been a factor in the incident, the employer's possible lack of emergency procedures might have played a bigger role. Len Welsh, chief of California's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH) said during a conference call to "debrief" employers and interested parties on illness cases triggered by the recent heat wave, said emergency response in the incident was "very bad." While declining to provide details on DOSH's investigation, he added, "A lot of the allegations are not pretty."

Newspaper reports in the Lodi area have quoted Jimenez's boyfriend and an uncle as saying the employer, Merced Farm Labor, released the young woman into his custody after she complained of dizziness and collapsed. They boyfriend alleged the contractor did not summon emergency responders. He drove her to a market, where he tried to revive her, then took her to a clinic. Jimenez eventually was transported to a hospital, but did not recover.

"There was a long time from when she was overcome to when she got to a hospital," Welsh said. "It's very sad. It does appear to be a situation that was totally preventable."

Employers should have well-defined emergency procedures for outdoor workers who could be exposed to heat, he said, including clear instructions – in English – to ensure emergency responders can easily find the crew. "That all has to be worked out in advance," Welsh stated, adding that his "gut feeling" is that if an employer has an effective emergency response procedure, a stricken worker's chances of recovery from heat illness is "pretty good."

## **A Brief History of Workers' Compensation**

(By Ken Henry, The Reed Group – Canada, The SafetyXChange)

**Before 1855:** Employees can't sue employers for workplace injuries

**1855:** Georgia becomes the first state to enact a law letting employees sue employers for negligence or omission

**1855-1907:** 26 more states pass laws similar to Georgia's

**1908:** President Roosevelt signs the Federal Employers Act granting railroad workers limited rights to sue employers

**1910:** New York becomes the first state in the U.S. to adopt a partial workers' comp law. The state's high court strikes down the law as unconstitutional a year later

**1910:** Ontario Chief Justice Sir William Ralph Meredith writes a report recommending a workers' comp scheme for Ontario

**1911:** Wisconsin becomes the first U.S. state to enact a true workers' comp law

**1912-1921:** 43 more states adopt workers' comp laws

**1914:** Ontario becomes the first Canadian province to enact a workers' comp law

**1915-25:** All Canadian provinces and the federal government adopt workers' comp laws

**1948:** All U.S. states have workers' comp laws



## **Safety Training – “Free E-Course Helps Healthcare Providers Recognize and Prevent Occupational Cancer “**

At work and at home, people are exposed to more hazardous substances than they might be aware of. When exposure to a hazard leads to a diagnosis of cancer, it can be difficult to determine what caused the illness. Nobody knows exactly the degree to which the workplace is responsible, but in Canada we do know that more than one out of every three people will develop cancer in their lifetime, and that one in four will die.

Whether the cancer is caused by exposure to a carcinogen at work (occupational cancer) or by exposure in the environment (environmental cancer) - the carcinogens are the same. Radon, which is traditionally considered an "occupational" carcinogen that has caused lung cancer in uranium miners, can leak into the basements of some homes and cause lung cancer in people living in the house. On the other hand, tobacco smoke - traditionally thought of as an "environmental" carcinogen - is now known to have caused lung cancer in people who have worked in smoky bars and restaurants.

To help healthcare professionals better understand occupational or environmental carcinogens and their role in disease, the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) has launched a new e-course: *Occupational and Environmental Cancer: Recognition and Prevention*. The course is a collaborative project of CCOHS, with members of the National Committee on Environment and Occupational Exposures (NCEOE), and with funding by the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer (CPAC) through the Primary Prevention Action Group (PP-AG). The course is offered free of charge and can be viewed on the CCOHS website.

The e-course is intended for doctors, medical specialists, nurses, nurse practitioners and other healthcare providers or anyone with an interest in recognizing and preventing occupational and environmental cancer.

In about 90 minutes the e-course teaches participants which agents cause cancer and what can be done to recognize occupational or environmental cancer in a person with past exposures. More importantly, advice is provided on how to prevent cancer in those with current or ongoing exposures. The course contains authoritative lists of these cancer-causing substances, searchable by chemical, by occupation or by where the cancer is located on the patient's body. Healthcare providers will learn how to conduct and interpret an exposure history and follow up on their conclusions. The course also includes case studies about people who were exposed to radon or asbestos, and provides advice on how to address the issue of "cancer clusters".

*Occupational and Environmental Cancer: Recognition and Prevention* meets the same strict standards as all CCOHS courses. Representatives from labor, business and government have ensured the content and approach are unbiased, credible and technically accurate. To view this free e-course, please visit the CCOHS website at [www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/prevent\\_cancer/](http://www.ccohs.ca/products/courses/prevent_cancer/).

**Safety Training Strategies – “Get Comfortable for Safety”** (by Jackie Hernandez from Elementis Chromium) [from "Safety Stuff" by Richard Hawk Inc.]

I spiced up our monthly safety meeting by starting with these questions: 'How committed are you to safety? Are you willing to get uncomfortable for Safety?'

Then I gave everyone a chance to tell about the most uncomfortable/inconvenient things they do for safety. Wearing extra PPE, having to tell contractors to put on their PPE, taking extra steps to do things correctly, etc.

Then I asked the REAL Questions: 'How committed are you to Safety? Are you willing to get COMFORTABLE for safety?'

The meeting topic was on office ergonomics and about getting comfortable at your desk in ways that will help you avoid injuries.

**Safety Training Strategies – “Flour Hands”** (by Jennifer Everett from Iowa 80 Group)  
[from "Safety Stuff" by Richard Hawk Inc.]

I work for a large truck stop in Central North Carolina. I began holding safety meetings in December of 2006, for our truck stop. Shortly after starting, I read your book *Spice It Up! 52 Easy ways Turn Your Safety Meetings From Bland to Grand*. Our safety meetings haven't been the same since. I recently completed your *Best Of Safety Stuff* and, newly energized, I went about setting up a meeting regarding hand washing. Here's my idea:

I first got the attendee's minds going with a question about the 10 most dangerous weapons. After we agreed that our fingers and thumbs were our most dangerous weapons, I wanted to drive home the idea that proper hand washing is the most effective way to prevent spread of disease. I had the last few people to arrive at the meeting stand and place their hands in a vat of flour.

We then watched as they went through a series of activities to simulate workplace tasks done everyday, i.e. knocking on a door, opening a door, picking up the telephone, borrowing a pen from a co-worker, shaking hands, and finally patting themselves on the back. After a series of laughs, I had the "volunteers" reveal their hands to everyone. Many of them were surprised to see that the volunteers' hands were relatively clean and everyone and everything else was coated in flour.

**Safety Tidbits** (from "Safety Stuff" by Richard Hawk Inc. <http://www.richardhawking.com>)

- The Titanic was running at 22 knots (about 25 mph) when it hit the iceberg.
- When Harper Lee won the 1961 Pulitzer Prize for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, she broke out in hives.
- People most often killed during bank robberies: The robbers.
- *Streptomycin*, an antibiotic, was discovered in fungus found in a chicken's throat.
- Number one cause of burglar alarm activation in the U.S.: Owner error. (Burglaries are 7th.)
- Meteorologists' definition for drizzle: "No more than 14 drops per square foot per second."
- In Belgrade, Montana, Glenn Sorlie, editor of the *High Country Independent Press*, died of a staph infection on a Tuesday. His widow waited until Thursday to report the death to authorities so that his weekly paper could publish his obituary before the *Bozeman Daily Chronicle*. She explained, "He wouldn't want to get scooped on his own death."