Weekly Safety Meetings Premium Membership
Safety Training for the Construction Industry

The Campbell Agency
Volume 32 Issue 40 October 5, 2009

Fire Prevention Week

This year National Fire Prevention Week is being observed from October 4th to October 10th. The theme for 2009 is "Stay Fire Smart—Don't Get Burned." National Fire Prevention Week has its roots in the Great Chicago Fire of October 9, 1871. That tragic inferno killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures, and burned more than 2,000 acres in just 27 hours. President Woodrow Wilson issued the first Fire Prevention Day in 1920. Five years later, in 1925, President Calvin Coolidge proclaimed National Fire Prevention Week.

Fire prevention begins with you. Knowing the risks, hazards, and prevention steps will help you stay safe and not get burned. On the jobsite, consider the following steps to fire prevention:

- Store liquid, solid, and gaseous flammables properly and in the right containers.
- Eliminate sparks or flames and other forms of ignition when possible.
- Post a fire watch both during and after all welding and cutting operations.
- Let small engines cool down before refueling them.
- Don't use open fires for keeping warm or to dispose of scrap.
- Make sure spark arrestors are in place on small engine exhausts.
- Never use compressed oxygen to clean your work area or your clothes; anything that burns catches fire much easier in the presence of that much oxygen.
- Use gasoline as a fuel, not as a solvent or cleaner; never use a gasoline fire to warm or thaw materials or equipment.

Don't forget your family and your home. Sit down with your family and go over what to do in case of fire. Do you have an evacuation plan? Where is your meeting area outside the house? Do you have emergency phone numbers posted? Are all flammables stored properly? Where do you store camping fuel and the gasoline you use for the lawnmower? Are matches and lighters in safe places where your children and grandchildren can't reach them? Do you or any of your family members ever leave food cooking on the stove unattended? Do you have a fire extinguisher upstairs, downstairs, and in the garage? Are your smoke detectors in place? When was the last time you replaced their batteries?

Fire prevention is not complicated, but you have to pay attention and be diligent about noticing and eliminating fire hazards. Stay Fire Smart—Don't Get burned!

SAFETY REMINDER

If your clothes catch fire, remember: Stop, Drop, and Roll to put out the flames.

NOTES:

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Scaffolds and Fall Protection

Good scaffolds provide safe platforms on which to work. They take a lot of the risk out of working at heights, when they are used properly. There are different types of scaffolds, such as rolling scaffolds, swing stage suspended scaffolds, and tube and coupler or pole scaffolds; do you know which kind we use on this jobsite? All scaffolds must be erected and dismantled by a competent person. Always consider fall protection when your work requires you to use scaffolding.

Guardrails and scaffolding go hand in hand. If you're working more than 10 feet off the ground or floor, your scaffold platform must have guardrails that have top rails, mid rails, and toeboards. Occasionally, it may be necessary to remove guardrails—to load or unload materials for example—however, be sure to replace them promptly. Guardrails and toeboards prevent workers on the scaffolding from falling, and also provide safety for ground-level employees who might otherwise get hit by falling tools and materials.

If you work on a suspended scaffold, you need to use a fall arrest system as protection against the failure of the scaffold or its components. Your fall arrest system will usually consist of a full body harness, lanyard, rope grab, independent vertical lifeline, and an independent anchorage for the lifeline.

- The **full body harness** is a system designed to spread the energy of a fall across the shoulders, thighs, and buttocks. A well-designed harness permits prolonged worker suspension after a fall without restricting blood flow; a poorly-designed harness can save your life in a fall, but might cause internal injuries while you're waiting to be pulled back up to safety.
- A **lanyard** connects the safety harness to the rope grab on the lifeline. Lanyards should be made of 5/8" nylon rope or nylon webbing.
- **Rope grabs** contain a cam device that locks onto a lifeline when there is a hard tug on the lanyard. Make sure that rope grabs are properly connected to lifelines so the cam will work correctly.
- **Independent vertical lifelines** should be used for each worker on the suspended scaffold. **Do not** use scaffold suspension lines as lifelines, and do not attach lifelines to any part of the scaffold.
- **Anchorage points** are independent points on structures where lifelines are securely attached. These points must be able to support a force of at least 5,000 pounds. **Remember, your fall protection system is only as good as its anchorage.**

Proper fall protection is required for safe scaffold work. Whether you're on the scaffold all day, or just for a minute, always make sure you're protected.

SAFETY REMINDER

Keep lanyards as short as possible to limit fall distance. Rig them so you'll never free fall more than six feet.

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What Are Crane Inspectors Looking For?

The crane inspector just showed up on the jobsite. Are you prepared? Do you know specifically what the inspector will be looking for or looking at? Let's consider some of the aspects of a crane inspection— whether it's conducted by an official inspector or by you, an interested employee.

A crane inspection is conducted for your benefit. It's intended to catch any deficiencies and to correct anything about a crane that can expose you to unnecessary dangers. When you see crane inspectors, remember that they're here to ensure your safety. Their inspections can help prevent crane accidents and deadly crane collapses.

Cranes are governed by OSHA Standard 1926.550 and sometimes local regulations. Inspectors make sure that the standard requirements are being met. But crane operators and employees who work with the crane every day provide the most important safety inspections. If you notice anything amiss with the crane, report it to your supervisor immediately. Your sharp eyes provide the first defense against accidents. Following is a list of things you should always be doing or looking out for. Some items on the list might not be on an official crane inspection, but everything listed is important for your safety and the safety of your co-workers.

- Make sure the manufacturer's operating and maintenance manuals are available.
- Make sure that the load chart is available to the operator and the boom angle indicator is visible.
- Use tag lines to control loads—not your hands.
- Use standard hand signals or radios for communication between spotters and operators.
- Protect or guard the swing radius with barricades or caution tape. Make it a "No Entry Zone."
- Check boom stops and jib stops to make sure they are working properly.
- Make sure the crane is operating a safe distance away from all power lines.
- Guard all moving components such as gears, chains, and reciprocating or rotating parts.
- Tell your supervisor if any part of the crane—like chains, sprockets, cables, or sheaves—looks worn or needs to be replaced.
- Make sure mobile cranes are stable. Ground conditions can vary over the jobsite. Make sure the ground will support the combined weight of the crane and the load.

An official crane inspector will evaluate all the working systems of the crane and will write up a report. If you see something wrong, you don't need to take the time to write up a report, instead report it to your supervisor immediately. You don't want your next lift to be your last.

SAFETY REMINDER

It isn't human nature to look up. Train yourself to look up and see dangers like suspended loads, power lines, and falling object hazards.

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Heart Attack

Heart attacks continue to be one of the leading causes of death in the United States. Heart attacks can and do happen on the job. If a co-worker has a heart attack, call 911 and get professional help immediately. Here are three things to think about regarding heart attacks.

1) Know the risk factors and take care of your heart. Many risk factors contribute to poor heart health. Some risk factors are uncontrollable—including old age, a family history of heart disease, and race—but many risk factors are controllable. Talk to your doctor for more information. Your choices can control the following risk factors:

- Smoking
- High LDL, or "bad" cholesterol and low HDL, or "good" cholesterol.
- High blood pressure.
- Physical inactivity.
- Obesity.
- Diabetes.
- High C-reactive protein levels (detected with a blood test).
- Stress levels.

2) Know the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. Sometimes heart attacks are dramatic. More often, however, they begin slowly, with mild pain and discomfort. Be alert if you or a co-worker experience the following symptoms:

- **Chest discomfort.** Most heart attacks involve discomfort in the center of the chest that feels like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness, or pain. These sensations last more than a few minutes, or they may go away and come back.
- **Discomfort in other areas of the upper body.** Symptoms can include pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw, or stomach.
- **Shortness of breath.**
- **Other signs.** These may include breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea, or lightheadedness.

3) Become certified in CPR and AED use. Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) provides artificial circulation and breathing to a person whose heart and lungs have stopped functioning. When you perform CPR, you alternate externally compressing the heart with mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. The goal is to either get the heart going again or to stabilize the person until paramedics arrive. An AED (automated external defibrillator) can treat sudden cardiac arrest through defibrillation—the application of electrical therapy which helps the heart to reestablish an effective rhythm. AEDs are common in malls, airports, and offices. You can learn how to use an AED and how to administer CPR through your local Red Cross chapter or fire department.

SAFETY REMINDER

Lose your spare tire. Extra weight stresses your heart.

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