Weekly Safety Meetings
Safety Training for the Construction Industry
Standard Subscription

COMPANY NAME: _____

Volume 33 Issue 14 April 5, 2010

Work Zone Safety Awareness

Each April, the Federal Highway Administration organizes events that bring attention to work zone safety. This year's National Work Zone Safety Awareness Week is being held from April 19th through the 23rd. The aim of the national campaign is to reduce work zone fatalities and injuries.

Work zone transportation accidents are common. Over the course of your career you may have witnessed one or more of the following incidents: a motor vehicle accident, a worker being struck by a moving vehicle, a flagger jumping to safety, or a piece of paving equipment damaged by a motorist. The motoring public often views work zones as annoyances that slow them down and make them late. Many drivers aren't paying attention to the road and instead are sending text messages, making phone calls, drinking coffee, eating, or just trying to speed through the work zone. Your safety and the safety of your co-workers is always at risk when you're working around traffic.

When you are in a work zone, always prepare for the unexpected and never assume that drivers see you. Avoid making drivers encounter sudden changes or unexpected driving conditions. As you're doing your job, be careful to pay close attention to the moving traffic. If you work with your back to the traffic, make sure you and your spotter can communicate clearly. If you are working as a flagger, stand in the shoulder; never stand in a lane with moving traffic. Always wear high-visibility clothing to make it harder for anyone to miss seeing you.

Then, when it's time to go home, and it's your turn to be the motorist driving through a work zone, make sure you follow these work zone driving safety tips:

- **Stay Alert:** Dedicate your full attention to the roadway and be aware of your surroundings.
- **Pay Attention:** Signs and flaggers save lives.
- **Turn on Your Headlights:** Workers and other motorists need to be able to see you.
- **Don't Tailgate and Don't Speed:** Allow ample space between your vehicle and the car in front of you. Note the posted speed limits in and around the work zone.
- **Keep Up With Traffic Flow:** Don't change lanes in the work zone.
- **Minimize Distractions:** Avoid changing radio stations or using your mobile communication device when driving in a work zone.
- **Expect the Unexpected:** Keep an eye out for workers and their equipment. Be prepared to take action quickly.
- **Be Patient:** Remember, the work being done should make driving easier in the future.

If possible, avoid work zones by finding an alternate route.

SAFETY REMINDER

Keep caution in the forefront of your mind when your work keeps you on the road.

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SPECIAL TOPICS /EMPLOYEE SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS/NOTES:

S.A.F.E. CARDS® PLANNED FOR THIS WEEK:

REVIEWED MSDS # SUBJECT:

MEETING DOCUMENTATION:

JOB NAME:

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Solvents

A solvent is a substance used to dissolve or dilute another substance. The most common solvent is simple water. In construction, we use solvents for cleaning and degreasing; they may be in glues and lubricants; they're used in paints, coatings, and sealants. Many substances on the jobsite can only be diluted or cleaned with toxic chemicals that can also dissolve other substances like skin. Solvents present many hazards for anyone who uses them or works near them.

Solvents can enter your body in three ways:

1. **Inhalation.** Many solvents evaporate quickly. If you inhale the airborne fumes, gases, or vapors, they can then pass into your bloodstream.
2. **Ingestion.** If you don't follow proper hygiene when working with solvents, you may ingest solvents by eating, drinking, or smoking with contaminated hands.
3. **Skin absorption.** Solvents can also enter your body directly through your skin when you come into contact with them.

The health effects of solvents depend on the solvent, the length and type of exposure, and the amount of solvent that enters your body. But keep in mind that a single exposure can be deadly. Exposures can result in acute (immediate or short-term) problems such as nausea, headaches, drowsiness, dizziness, and dry or cracked skin. Exposures may also cause chronic (long-term) conditions like cancer, brain and nervous system disorders, liver damage, kidney damage, and infertility.

Protect yourself from the hazards of solvents by:

- Knowing what chemicals you are using.
- Reading the Material Safety Data Sheet carefully before beginning your work.
- Understanding the health effects of the substances you work with.
- Knowing what to do in case of a spill.
- Substituting less-dangerous products for the harmful solvents you use.
- Wearing and using proper personal protective equipment. This can include protective clothing, gloves, eye protection, boots, and respiratory protection.
- Making sure your work area has lots of ventilation with plenty of fresh air.
- Avoiding skin contact with any solvent.
- Practicing good hygiene after you work with a solvent.
- Storing solvents as indicated in their MSDSs.
- Making sure that solvents are properly labeled.
- Knowing how to dispose of the chemical safely.

SAFETY REMINDER

If your eyes come into contact with a solvent, flush them with water for at least 15 minutes and seek medical attention as soon as possible.

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Eye Protection

Sawdust, cement dust, metal shards; none of these look especially dangerous but if some of these particles fly into your eyes, you can experience eye irritation, serious pain, injury, or—in the worst cases—even blindness. As a construction worker, you should always wear eye protection. Every day 2,000 workers sustain job-related eye injuries that require medical treatment. Too many of these eye injuries occur on jobsites just like this one.

One of the first things you should do every day is assess the hazards of the work you will be doing. This will help you select the proper and necessary eye protection. Most employers will require that you wear safety glasses on the job at all times. However, some of your tasks may call for added protection from safety goggles, face shields, or a combination of these.

Safety glasses are designed to shield you from impact hazards such as flying fragments, large chips, and particles.

Safety goggles are designed to fit the face immediately surrounding the eyes and form a protective seal around the eyes. They prevent objects or chemical splashes from entering under or around the goggles.

Welding shields and goggles are designed to filter radiant energy and to protect your eyes from hot slag.

Each type of eye and face protection equipment is designed for a particular hazard. When you select your eye and face protection, make sure you consider the types and degrees of hazards you will be facing.

Following is a list of hazards and a recommended form of eye and face protection for each:

- **Drilling overhead** (impact hazard): wear safety glasses and consider a face shield.
- **Applying curing compound** (chemical hazard): wear safety glasses or chemical goggles or both.
- **Operating a circular saw** (impact hazard): wear safety glasses.
- **Using a pressure washer** (particle and chemical hazards): wear safety glasses and face shield.
- **Using a cutting torch** (optical radiation and particle hazards): wear cutting/welding goggles.
- **Welding steel pipe** (optical radiation): wear safety glasses and a welding shield.

Always make sure that the eye and face protection you choose is comfortable to wear. The number one reason construction workers neglect to wear their eye protection is because they say that it's too uncomfortable. The simple solution for this complaint is to select face and eye protection that is a good fit so that you will wear it and protect your vision.

SAFETY REMINDER

Safety glasses work only when you wear them. They don't protect your eyes when they're hanging from a cord around your neck, sitting on the dash of your truck, or forgotten in your toolbox.

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Aerial Lifts

If you watch the news, you have probably noticed an increase in the number of fatalities involving aerial lifts in the last couple of years. One of these high-profile cases occurred in downtown Boston last year when a lift became unstable and fell over into an open-air book market. One worker was killed and the other injured; no shoppers were hurt. Another accident happened in Philadelphia: a lift toppled over, a worker was killed, and passers-by were injured. These two incidents are in addition to the many involving aerial lifts that come into contact with energized power lines.

The most common causes of aerial lift fatalities are tip-overs, collapses, electrocutions, and falls. **Keep the following list of safety tips in mind every time you operate an aerial lift:**

- Never operate a lift unless you are a trained and experienced lift operator.
- Perform a complete inspection of the machine each day before you begin your work.
- Check all upper and lower controls before raising the lift.
- Ensure that all tires are in good condition and properly inflated.
- Establish exclusion zones to prevent workers and bystanders from standing, walking, or working under the lift.
- Position the lift on a level and stable surface.
- If the lift has outriggers or extendable wheels, use them to increase the stability of the lift.
- Set brakes and use wheel chocks when working on an incline.
- Wear a body harness with a lanyard attached to the boom or basket so you aren't accidently ejected from or pulled out of the basket.
- Always follow the manufacturer's directions when you move or drive the lift.
- Be alert! Always keep your attention in the direction of travel.
- Look for and avoid overhead power lines.
- Clean off any oil, mud, grease, snow, or ice from your footwear and from the platform deck.
- Do not sit or stand on the mid or top rails of the basket. Keep your feet firmly planted on the aerial lift deck.
- Never position yourself between the rail of the basket and overhead hazards like joists or beams.
- Never override hydraulic, mechanical, or electrical safety devices.
- Never disable the foot switch.
- Do not place heavy loads or loose materials on the lift platform.
- Never exceed the manufacturer's load limits for the equipment.

SAFETY REMINDER

Don't operate a lift if instruction placards are missing.

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