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HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER
APRIL 2015

National Stand-Down

Return to Work Program

Chain Sling Inspection

Captain Obvious

Backing Up Safety

Hazard Awareness

Work Safe. Live Safe. Stay Safe.

National Stand-Down

Preventing Falls in the Construction Industry

Falls are the top cause of fatalities and account for one-third of on the-job injury related deaths in the construction industry. Each year in the United States more than 200 construction workers are killed and over 10,000 are seriously injured by falls.

The National Fall Prevention Safety Stand-Down is an awareness campaign conceived by Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) to raise awareness about the severity of fall hazards and the importance of preventing them in the construction industry.

This voluntary event provides an opportunity for employers to talk with employees about fall hazards, protective methods, company safety policies, and site-specific goals/expectations.

How Can Your Company Participate?

In a construction setting, the term “safety stand-down” is used to describe a wide variety of activities where normal work is paused and employees focus on a particular safety issue. Take the time to participate in the May 4-15, 2015 Safety Stand-Down for Fall Prevention by providing one or more of the following “stand-down” moments:

- Provide an educational toolbox talk or a safety huddle where site-specific fall hazards and fall prevention is discussed. Topics might include ladder safety, fall protection equipment, scaffolds safety, falls from roofs, and rescue plans.
- Create an opportunity for employees to inspect their fall prevention equipment for damage and/or wear and tear. Remove any damaged equipment from circulation and provide new equipment if needed.
- Provide live demonstrations on the proper use of fall protection equipment, how to safely get on an off of construction equipment, or the best way to set-up and use ladders.

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Plan

- Every job should be approached with a careful plan to eliminate potential fall hazards and to optimize safe work practices. This should include evaluating the need for safety equipment.

Equip

- Before work begins, we must make certain everyone has the right equipment. Fall equipment can vary based upon site conditions and use. Remember: Fall protection is required at 6' in construction and 4' in general industry.

Train

- Employees who are exposed to potential fall hazards should be trained to recognize fall hazards, develop methods to minimize the hazards (i.e., the proper wear, use, inspection, care and maintenance of the fall protection system.)

To find out more about the Fall Prevention Safety Stand-Down and how to receive an OSHA Certificate of Participation, go to https://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown.

Sources:
http://stopconstructionfalls.com/
https://www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown/

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Return to Work Program

A Return to Work Program is designed to accommodate injured workers, modifying jobs to meet their capabilities and returning them to productive assets as quickly as possible. The goal of a return to work program is to accelerate an employee's return to work by addressing the physical, emotional, attitudinal, and environmental factors that otherwise inhibit a prompt return. A proactive program includes planned, coordinated, and supportive company-based interventions for assisting injured workers at the onset to return to work.

An overview of key components of a return to work program is outlined on the next page. You can also visit the Department of Labor website to learn more about helping injured works return to work.

Return-to-Work Toolkit for Employees & Employers - http://www.dol.gov/odep/return-to-work/

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Return to Work Program

Management Commitment

•Management must be committed to returning injured workers to productive roles. This commitment must be translated into specific responsibilities and accountabilities. Performance measures should be established to track the effectiveness of the program.

Job Profiles/Descriptions

•Job profiles or descriptions of existing jobs considered suitable for early return to work should be developed. A profile should define the job in terms of overall physical demands, motions required, environmental conditions, the number of times the job is performed per week, and its duration. Communications of these job profiles with the health care provider ahead of time can expedite the return to work process.

Job Modification

•Systematic analysis of specific jobs for the purpose of modifying them to accommodate the unique needs of the injured worker. Job modifications should be performed by individuals trained and skilled in ergonomic task analysis, engineering, safety and biomechanics. In most cases your managed care provider can assist in your job modification needs.

Communication of Return to Work Opportunities

•The presence of jobs that can accommodate injured workers and your return to work program should be communicated to your managed care provider, claims adjuster, and injured worker. In addition, regular contact with the injured worker, claims adjuster, and managed care provider should occur.

Changing Needs

•Following the successful early return of an injured worker, review the job modifications with the worker to assure they meet his/her needs. Communicate any problems with your management team and insurance carrier. Work with your managed care provider and worker to move them to full production status in their assigned jobs as quickly as possible.

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Chain Sling Inspection

Recommendation: Daily or before each shift. Inspections shall be conducted by a competent person designated by the employer.

Periodic Inspection**:** OSHA specifies that all alloy steel chain slings shall have a thorough periodic inspection by a competent person at least once every 12 months. These inspections must be recorded and maintained for each individual sling. The inspection should be based on the following:

- Frequency of sling use
- Severity of service conditions
- Nature of lifts
- Experience gained on service life of slings used in similar circumstances.

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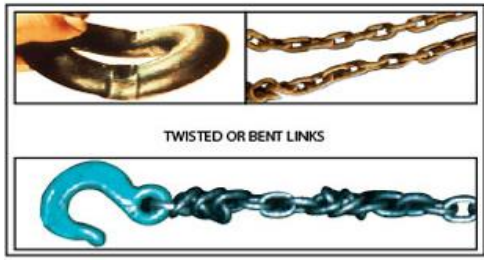
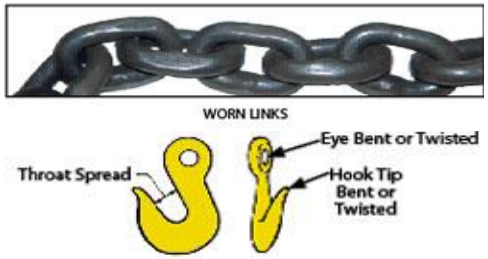
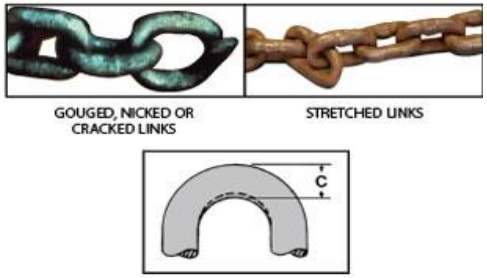
Chain Sling Inspection (Cont.)

Inspection

1. Clean chain prior to inspection, to more easily see damage or defects.
2. Hang chain vertically if practical, for preliminary inspection. Measure reach accurately (bearing point of masterlink to bearing point of hook). Check this length against reach shown on tag. If the "inspected" length is greater than that shown on tag, there is a possibility that the sling has been subjected to overloading or excessive wear.
3. Make a link-by-link inspection of the chain slings for:
   a. Excessive wear – If the wear on any portion of any link exceeds the allowable wear shown by manufacturer, remove the sling from service.
   b. Twisted, bent, gouged, nicked, worn or elongated links.
   c. Cracks in the weld area of any portion of the link. Transverse markings are the most dangerous.
   d. Severe corrosion.
   e. Check masterlinks and hooks for all of the above mentioned faults; hooks especially for excessive throat opening. Slings showing any of the damage described above should immediately be removed from service and returned to the manufacturer for repair.







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Why is it that safety professionals are getting heckled when we provide reminders on basic safety information and then go into a facility to conduct a mock-OSHA audit and find the same type of potential hazards or non-compliance items over and over again? Each month we feature a "Captain Obvious" photo to share simple safety reminders that are found on jobsites every day.

Corrective Actions

Use only trigger locks that are manufactured as part of the power tool and inspect to ensure they are properly used. Power tools may be equipped with trigger locks if they can also be shut off in a single motion using the same finger(s). OSHA recommends constant control switches that have to be held down for the tool to operate. Train personnel on safe operations of power tools.

FINDING

Zip Lock Used to Lock Down a Trigger

Photo courtesy of safetyservices.com

Operating Controls and Switches – click on the power tool for a list of hand-held power tools that must be equipped with a constant-pressure switch or control that shuts off the power when pressure is released.

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Backing Up Safety

A leading cause of accidents for all vehicles, including construction machinery, is backing and reverse motion. A backover incident occurs when a backing vehicle strikes a worker who is standing, walking, or kneeling behind the vehicle. These incidents can be prevented.

How do Backover Incidents Occur?

- Drivers unable to see workers in their blind spots.
- Workers are unable to hear backup alarms because of other worksite noises or because the alarms are not functioning.
- A spotter assisting one truck may not see another truck behind him.
- Workers riding on vehicles may fall off and get backed over.
- Drivers may assume that the area is clear and not look in the direction of travel.

What can be Done to Prevent Backover Incidents?

- Spotters
- Video cameras with in-vehicle display monitors
- Proximity detection devices
- Tag-based systems worn by workers
- Internal traffic control plans
- Training

Let's focus on the most commonly used solution – Spotters

Spotters are a proven method of protecting employees on foot behind vehicles with an obstructed view, but spotters themselves can be at risk for injury or even death. Employers can implement the following actions to help keep spotters safe:

- Ensure that spotters and drivers agree on hand signals before backing up.
- Instruct spotters to always maintain visual contact with the driver while the vehicle is backing.
- Instruct drivers to stop backing immediately if they lose sight of the spotter.
- Not give spotters additional duties while they are acting as spotters.
- Instruct spotters not to use personal mobile phones, personal headphones, or other items which could pose a distraction during spotting activities.
- Provide spotters with high-visibility clothing, especially during night operations.

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Suggested Spotting Signals

Photos courtesy of https://www.osha.gov/doc/topics/backover/spotter.html

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Hazard Awareness: Is my Company Aware of or Overlooking the Same Hazards?

Untrained worker suffers fatal electrocution - Furniture manufacturer fails to protect employee from electrical hazard

A 46-year-old maintenance worker was fatally electrocuted as he disconnected wiring on a saw at the company's facility. He was a husband and father who enjoyed pleasures like family boating trips, camping and stock-car racing.

Investigators from the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration responded to the scene after his death and found the furniture upholstery manufacturer in violation of nine safety standards, one of which could have prevented the tragedy. The company's failure to provide electrical safety training, as required, was among the violations. If they had, the maintenance worker would have known the equipment he worked with was still "live" and contained enough electricity to kill him.

OSHA issued a citation for not marking circuit breakers to indicate what they control in the circuit-breaker box. A repeated violation exists when an employer previously has been cited for the same or a similar violation of a standard, regulation, rule or order at any facility in federal enforcement states within the last five years. The agency cited the furniture manufacturer in May 2011 for this same violation.

Inspectors also found seven serious violations, including failing to ensure that employees were trained and qualified to perform electrical work; exposing workers to amputations and struck-by hazards by operating dangerous machines without protection; not ensuring the electrical disconnect switch could not be turned back on before performing work; and exposing employees to electrical shock and burns due to unmarked ground conductors. Another violation was cited for allowing damaged wiring on a fan.

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Hazard Awareness: Is my Company Aware of or Overlooking the Same Hazards? (Continued)

A serious violation occurs when there is substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a hazard about which the employer knew or should have known.

As a company owner, member of corporate management, supervisor, department manager, safety manager or an employee – you may read this tragic account and ponder the inexcusable actions of this company; could your company be in the same situation as this furniture manufacturer?

Are you aware of any of the following:

- Unguarded or improperly guarded machines or equipment
- Unlabeled circuit breakers
- Inadequate safety training
- Damaged or unsafe wiring practices
- Missing lockout/tagout procedures.

If you are not sure where to start, contact EHS Support today for a free consultation.

If you can say a definite, "Yes," immediate action needs to be taken with hazard assessments, work practice observations, employee feedback and interaction and the implementation of corrective actions.

Source: https://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=27504

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Contact Monica Meyer at Monica.Meyer@ehs-support.com today to learn more about how we can help you manage your health and safety risks.