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Consider This

HEALTH & SAFETY NEWSLETTER
OCTOBER 2014

OSHA Expands Requirements for Reporting Fatalities & Injuries

Inspect the Hard Hat!

Don't' Overlook Workplace Violence Indicators

Captain Obvious

Compliance Isn't Good Enough

Let's Focus on Eyes!

Work Safe. Live Safe. Stay Safe.

OSHA Expands Requirements for Reporting Fatalities and Injuries

A final rule announced Sept. 11, 2014, requires employers to notify OSHA when an employee is killed on the job or suffers a work-related hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye. The rule, which also updates the list of employers partially exempt from OSHA record-keeping requirements, will go into effect on Jan. 1, 2015 for workplaces under federal OSHA jurisdiction.

Under the revised rule, employers will be required to notify OSHA of work-related fatalities within eight hours, and work-related in-patient hospitalizations, amputations or losses of an eye within 24 hours. Previously, OSHA's regulations required an employer to report only work-related fatalities and in-patient hospitalizations of three or more employees. Reporting single hospitalizations, amputations, or loss of an eye was not required under the previous rule.

Employers can report these events by telephone to the nearest OSHA Area Office during normal business hours or the 24-hour OSHA hotline 1-800-321-OSHA [6742], or electronically through a new tool which will be released soon and accessible at www.osha.gov/report_online.

Click **here** to view the OSHA FactSheet

Source: OSHA Newsletter, September 15, 2014 · Volume 13, Issue 18

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Inspect the Hard Hat!

The hard hat is one of the most recognizable pieces of safety equipment in the industrial workplace. Unfortunately, this common piece of personal protective equipment (PPE) is a forgotten item of an inspection, maintenance, or replacement program.

The durable exterior of the rugged-looking hard hat often times makes it easy to overlook its safety and can mask the need for replacement. Hard hats must be replaced when they can no longer provide the protection intended, and sometimes this can be difficult to detect. Workers who use gloves on a regular basis can obviously see (and feel) the need for new gloves; wear and tear is readily apparent. Conversely, many workers may be wearing a hard hat well past its useful life without even knowing it. In every organization where workers wear head protection on the job, a regular hard hat replacement program should be clearly defined and implemented.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) does not specify the service life of a hard hat, and there is no standard expiration time frame for hard hats. The hard hat manufacturer can recommend a replacement guideline for its products, but hard hat life span may vary significantly based upon the conditions at each work site. Ultimately, an employer is responsible for defining a responsive and appropriate solution for hard hat service life issues.

In order to ensure hard hats are safe, employers and employees alike should use the following practices:

- ❑ Inspect hats regularly
- ❑ Check hard hats for signs of damage such as dents, gouges, cracks, scrapes, or holes.
- ❑ Inspect the inside suspension for fraying, cuts, tears, and dirt.
- ❑ Examine the shell for fading or chalkiness, as these could be signs of aging.
- ❑ Check the inside of the hat for the manufacture date. It's also a good idea to use a permanent marker to record the date the hat was placed into use. This will be different from the manufacture date, and may be important information in case of an injury or accident.

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Inspect the Hard Hat! (cont.)

Hard Hat Care

To maximize the safety of hard hats, the following steps should be taken:

- Clean hard hats with soapy water; don't use cleaning products because they may have chemicals that could damage the hat.
- Keep hats out of the sun when not being used
- If replacing the hats' suspension, use only products from the same company that made the hat.
- Don't paint hard hats. Paints can contain chemicals that will damage the hat.

A Common Question: Can Labels Be Placed On Hard Hats?

ANSI Z89.1 does not restrict the application of hard hat labels. Labels may be applied to hard hats to the extent that they do not interfere with the ability to inspect the hard hat for cracks or other damage. Hard hat labels and stickers are commonly used to identify the employer, and may at times are used to identify the trade, union membership or project, as well as to provide the name of the employee using the hard hat.

Quick Tips:

- Labels should be at least ¾ inch from the edge of the hat to reduce the chance of it acting as a conductor.
- Stickers should not cover large areas of the hat, which could make difficult to inspect.
- Stickers can't cover any of the manufacturers' labels or markings.

Source: OSHA Personal Protective Equipment Publication, OSHA 3151-12R 2003
http://ohsonline.com/Articles/2007/03/Wearing-a-Hard-Hat-is-Only-Half-the-Job.aspx

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Don’t Overlook Workplace Violence Indicators

Nearly 2 million American workers report having been victims of workplace violence each year. Unfortunately, many more cases go unreported. The truth is, workplace violence can strike anywhere, anytime, and no one is immune. If you notice some of the following indicators in a co-worker, talk to your supervisor or Human Resources manager about what you are noticing.

How can workplace violence hazards be reduced?

In most workplaces where risk factors can be identified, the risk of assault can be minimized if employers take appropriate precautions. One of the best protections employers can offer their workers is to establish a zero-tolerance policy toward workplace violence. This policy should cover all workers, clients, visitors, contractors, and anyone else who may come in contact with company personnel.

What are some warning signs for organizations?

Studies have also shown that workplace violence often occurs in "Unhealthy" organizations. Fortunately, we can do something about this problem.

- Issues and employee morale seem ignored even though management may say they care about employees.
- Supervisors spend most of their time reacting to crises rather than planning for smooth operations.
- Too quick to fire employees rather than trying to help them correct problems to succeed.
- Poor communication. Staff never know what to expect or why major decisions are made (isolated/ignored).
- One-way communication (top down). Staff uncomfortable expressing concerns since upward communication is ignored or not encouraged.
- Top management never takes the blame for crises. Always placing blame on subordinates.
- Difficult employees are ignored or transferred rather than dealt with.
- Hiring supervisors are not encouraged to conduct background checks or verify prior work performance or behavioral problems.
- Acts of violence, threats, name-calling are ignored.
- Treating employees who are laid off or fired without dignity or compassion.
- There are more supervisors and managers with an unfair and authoritarian management style than those with a fair, respectful, "teamwork" management style.

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Don’t Overlook Workplace Violence Indicators

Levels of Workplace Violence

Level One
May be okay, but pay attention

- Refuses to cooperate with immediate supervisor
- Spreads rumors and gossip
- Argues with co-workers frequently
- Short-tempered with clients or customers
- Yelling on the phone or behind closed doors
- Shows signs of drug or alcohol abuse
- Speech is full of swear words
- Makes unwanted and inappropriate sexual comments
- Negative changes in behavior, performance, appearance, attendance
- Difficulty coping with major life change

Level Two
May be in trouble, pay close attention

- Argues increasingly with customers, vendors, co-workers, management
- Stops obeying basic company policies/rules
- Sabotages equipment or steals property for revenge
- Vague threats or references to a plan to "end all the problems"
- Talks about wanting to hurt co-workers or management
- Talks about publicized incidences of workplace violence
- Sees themselves as victims of management and blames them for problems
- Shows new or increased fascination with weapons

Level Three
Immediate referral to management and call police in extreme situation

- Repeated threats of suicide
- Repeated threats to harm or humiliate co-workers or managers
- Repeated fist fights, shoving, or destruction of property
- Shows weapons or threats to use them to get point across
- Talks openly about wanting to hurt co-workers or management

Sources: https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/workplaceviolence/
http://www.ncdhhs.gov/humanresources/violence/warning.html

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CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Exit routes and doors must be properly labeled and maintained. Proper labels include signs that read "EXIT" or "TO EXIT" in plain legible letters, and maintained with adequate lighting. Doors or passages along the exit route that are not exits and do not lead to exits must be marked as "NOT AN EXIT" or labeled such that their non-exit purpose is obvious (e.g., store room, office, etc.).

FINDING

Improperly marked exit (or non-exit)

Photo Courtesy of ASSE Professional Safety http://www.asse.org/professionalsafety/safety-photo-gallery.php

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What Can Take You From Good To Great?

When companies properly prepare for safety, compliance is a key factor in the foundation of the safety process. All too often compliance is where the process stops. Compliance with governmental safety standards should be considered a minimum baseline requirement.

Progressive companies that truly care about the safety and health of their employees can see beyond the governmental requirements and shift the emphasis from compliance to risk. Are the risks acceptable and as low as reasonably practicable at the level of compliance? If you can answer yes, then you can stop and periodically monitor. If you answer no, then you need to go beyond compliance.

EHS Support health and safety professionals understand that settling for anything less than the best is opening up that door for a potential injury, illness or death. Let us help you discover best practices, develop specific policies and procedures, redefine your culture, conduct invigorating training sessions or provide risk management assessments and solutions.

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Let's Focus on Eyes!

As a way to highlight October as **Eye Injury Prevention Month**, sponsored by the American Academy of Ophthalmology, let's review some facts and tips about eye injury and eye protection as well as an employer's responsibilities for providing employees with adequate eye protection.

Eye Injury and Protection

- About 300,000 Americans visit the emergency room each year due to workplace eye injury and eye injury is one of the leading causes of visual impairment in the United States.
- Out of all eye injuries sustained on the job, 40 percent happen in the fields of manufacturing, construction and mining.
- According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, an estimated 90 percent of eye injuries are preventable with the use of proper eye protection!

Employers Responsibilities for Eye Protection

- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires that employers pay for and provide employees with non-specialized, non-prescription eye protection.
- Employers are not required to pay for prescription safety eyewear such as "regular" safety glasses with prescription lenses. Only if the eye protection is a non-standard "specialty" item (i.e., prescription eyeglass inserts for full-face respirators) must an employer cover expenses.
- OSHA also requires that protective eye gear meet or be equivalent to standards developed by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) – specifically ANSI Standard Z87.1-1989.

Do you see employees not wearing safety glasses in areas where they are required? Are regular prescription glasses being worn as safety glasses? Are managers not enforcing the PPE Policy? Retrain all personnel and hold people accountable for their own safety!

Take the necessary steps to protect yourself or your employees from on-the-job hazards that can cause damaging or blinding eye injuries. These eyes are the only ones we have

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Newspaper Headline:
"Three Workers Fatally Injured after Oil Tank Explosion"

Unfortunately, the headline above is not only tragic, it's true. The story comes from a real account of a hot work related incident that occurred in Norphlet, Arkansas. The fatal explosion happened while workers were performing welding operations to dissemble a tank. Sparks ignited vapors inside the tank causing the fatal explosion. The incident investigation revealed the root cause of the accident was the *failure to monitor flammable vapors inside the tank*.

What is Hot Work?

Hot work is defined as any burning, cutting, welding or other operation capable of initiating fires or explosions.

How can hot work incidents be avoided?

1. Create a hot work safety program and provide employees with adequate training. Develop a written plan specific to your facility and educate employees through training and exercises.
2. Evaluate proper safety equipment to perform hot work tasks or respond to emergencies. Do employees have the proper combustible gas testing equipment? Are fire extinguishers or sprinkler systems on-hand and/or in working order?
3. Develop safe work practices for hot work activities (i.e., require distance between hot work and combustibles/ignitables, perform air monitoring for hazardous vapors, implement lock-out tag-out policies).
4. Assign additional personnel (fire watch) to guard against fire while hot work is being performed. Fire watchers are required whenever welding or cutting is performed in locations where anything greater than a minor fire might develop.

Sources: http://www.csb.gov/csb-deploys-team-to-el-dorado-arkansas-to-investigate-fatal-hot-work-explosion/
http://ohsonline.com/Articles/2008/12/Hot-Work-Right.aspx

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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.