

The Safety & Health Advisor

Winter 2007



General Safety

Winter Safety – Injury Prevention

A major winter storm can be lethal. Preparing for cold weather conditions and responding to them effectively can reduce the dangers caused by winter storms. OSHA has developed some emergency preparedness guidelines to help employees and employers better prepare for inclement winter weather. Their listing of frequently asked questions will help you better understand how winter storms may affect employee health and safety. For more information, see www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/winterstorms.html.

There is also an extensive list of other available references at the bottom of the web page link on related topics such as winter driving safety from the National Safety Council and winter weather safety awareness from the National Weather Service, including OSHA's Cold Stress card. This publication can be viewed at www.osha.gov/Publications/osha3156.pdf.

Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA) Update

In October 2006, the Massachusetts Department of Industrial Accidents (DIA) launched its inaugural edition of its public newsletter called "The Workers' Compensation Forum". The newsletter is designed to be a source of news, information and discussion about the DIA and workers' comp. To obtain a free subscription you can be asked to be placed on the mailing list by emailing them at Info2@dia.state.ma.us. The first edition may be viewed at www.mass.gov/dia/Forum/Inaugural-Edition.pdf.

One important item of interest in the newsletter is the announcement that the DIA safety grant process for FY 2008 has recently begun. The DIA administers an occupational safety and health education and training program (safety grant) to help Massachusetts employers reduce workplace injuries by funding safety training that focuses on prevention.

According to the DIA, they have awarded 180 grants over the past four (4) years for a total of \$3.2 million

Highlights in this Issue

- ❖ Winter Safety and DIA Updates,
- ❖ Spotlight Section – Pandemic Flu Resources
- ❖ Healthcare – VNA Focus Group Recap, NIOSH Guide on Safe Lifting, Calculating ROI on safe patient handling initiatives
- ❖ Industrial & Construction – ARC Flash and Electrical Hazards, OSHA - National Emphasis Program on Amputations Features Major Changes

dollars with training provided to over 60,000 participants. In the most recent year FY 2007 there were two rounds of grants made available. The DIA received 84 applications and granted all but 11 of them. The grants were primarily for ergonomic based training followed closely by training about hazardous materials.

Grant guidelines and application forms are available through the DIA website at www.mass.gov/dia/Safety/ with an application deadline sometime in early March 2007 with funds being made available to qualified and selected applicants sometime after July 1, 2007.

Pandemic Flu Online Resources

In November 2006 The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) unveiled new safety and health guidance that alerts employees and employers about the hazards of occupational exposure to avian influenza from infected birds, or "avian flu". An OSHA Guidance Update on Protecting Employees from Avian Flu Viruses provides practical recommendations on ways to avoid infection, as well as other important resource information on the topic. It's available in English and Spanish by visiting the "In Focus" section on the home page of OSHA's Web site at www.osha.gov/.

The materials describe practical tips, such as hand washing and the use of proper protective equipment, for preventing illness. The update also provides separate recommendations for poultry employees and those who handle other animals, and for laboratory employees, healthcare personnel, food handlers, travelers, and U.S. employees stationed abroad. The primary focus is on good hygiene, including use of gloves and hand washing, as well as respiratory protection for those who work with infected animals or individuals.

For more information on federal activities on avian flu and pandemic flu, please see www.pandemicflu.gov/. This site has a business & industry planning section that includes a business planning checklist and information for employees on protective measures.

Healthcare

The Safety & Health Advisor

Winter 2007

VNA Focus Group Meeting

On October 26, 2006, Atlantic Charter facilitated the second focus group meeting for its Visiting Nurse Association insured's, hosted by the Brockton VNA. Topics covered included "Legal Considerations for Workers' Compensation", which was led by Anne Clark, Esq. – Sallop & Weisman, P.C. and Janice Moquin, Assistant Claims Manager "Motor Vehicle Safety" led by Neal Freedman, Safety and Health Manager and concluded with a safety and health Jeopardy game coordinated by Margie Lobaton, Senior Safety and Health Consultant.

The majority of the meeting addressed the legal considerations topic with many questions and good participation by all. The Jeopardy game covered motor vehicle safety as well as two (2) topics from the inaugural meeting in April 2006, which were workstation ergonomics and workplace violence.



Neal Freedman speaks with VNA meeting participants

Safe Lifting and Moving of Nursing Home Residents

This guide is intended for nursing home owners, administrators, nurse managers, safety and health professionals, and workers who are interested in establishing a safe resident lifting program. Research conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), the Veterans' Health Administration (VHA), and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee has shown that safe resident lifting programs that incorporate mechanical lifting equipment can protect workers from injury, reduce workers' compensation costs, and improve the quality of care delivered to residents. This guide also presents a business case to show that the investment in lifting equipment and training can be recovered through

reduced workers' compensation expenses and costs associated with lost and restricted work days. It can be viewed at www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2006-117.

Safe Lifting Portal

A new online calculator has been launched for risk managers and safety officials at hospitals and other healthcare facilities, as part of the Safe Lifting Environment injury prevention campaign sponsored by Liko Inc., a vendor of patient/resident handling equipment. It provides an estimate of potential return on investment (ROI) from the implementation of a safe lifting program and helps justify the investment of time, training, and equipment.

Entering basic facility data such as the number of beds and the number of full-time employees produces a customizable report that provides basic savings information. The ROI calculator uses industry average costs and injury rates to provide an accurate representation of potential cost savings.

View the calculator at www.safeliftingportal.com/calculator. You can find tips and tools for achieving buy-in from all audiences, request a Safe Lifting Environment "Starter Kit" and subscribe to their e-newsletter at the Safe Lifting Portal website at www.safeliftingportal.com.

Industrial and Construction Safety

ARC-Flash & Electric Shock

Arc flash explosions are a major cause of death and injury among workers performing routine maintenance and/or inspections of electrical equipment. The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the main cause of electrocution of electrical workers from 1992 to 1999 was contact with "live" (energized) equipment and wiring.

At the 11th Annual IEEE-IAS Electrical Safety Workshop, statistics presented in a paper by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (CDC/NIOSH) showed that, from 1992 through 2001, there were 44,363 electrical related injuries involving days away from work. The number of nonfatal electrical shock injuries was 27,262 and 17,101 injuries were caused by electric arc-flash burns.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 29 CFR 1910, Subpart S-

The Safety & Health Advisor

Winter 2007

Electrical, employers must establish a program that protects employees against shock and arc flash. OSHA mandates that all services to electrical equipment be done in a de-energized state. Working live can only be performed under special circumstances. If it is necessary to work live (<50 volts to ground), the regulations outlined in National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 70E, Article 130 should be used as a tool to comply with OSHA mandates.

Before you can establish your electrical safety work program, you must perform a hazard assessment to identify potential hazards and the degree of protection required to safeguard employees. NFPA 70E covers the full range of electrical safety issues, including safety-related work practices, maintenance, special equipment requirements, and installation. It focuses on protecting people and identifies requirements that are considered necessary to provide a workplace that is free of electrical hazards.

OSHA bases its electrical safety mandates, found in Subpart S, on the comprehensive information found in NFPA 70E. NFPA 70E is recognized as the tool that illustrates how an employer might comply with these standards. You can get more information on NFPA 70E Standard for Electrical Safety Requirements for Employee Workplaces by calling NFPA at 1-617-770-3000.

A hazard assessment can be determined by one of the three following options:

- Refer to NFPA 70E 130.3 (A), including the tables 130.7(c)(9)(a) and 130.7(C)(10), Flash Hazard Analysis.
- Use an industry accepted software program to perform your hazard assessment.
- Use a consulting firm to perform your hazard assessment.

Once your hazard assessment is complete, you will know your Hazard Risk Category (HRC), which is given in a number ranging from 0-4. The proper protective apparel for the job can be determined by utilizing this HRC number. Please refer to NFPA 70E 2004 Table 130.7(C) (10) and Table 130.7 (C) (11) for this information. Additional information can be found at the Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), Standard 1584-2002, Guide for Arc Flash Hazard Analysis.

National Emphasis Program on Amputations Features Major Changes

Effective 10/27/06, OSHA revised its directive on the National Emphasis Program on Amputations to identify and reduce workplace machinery and equipment hazards which cause or are likely to cause amputations. Changes include identification of industries and establishments associated with amputations rather than equipment; lists of typical machinery and equipment associated with amputations; incorporation of a comparison chart for the Standard Industrial Classification codes and the North American Industry Classification System codes; and new targeting methodology based on more current data from OSHA and Bureau of Labor Statistics sources, and the Control of Hazardous Energy (Lockout/Tagout) and Mechanical Power-transmission Apparatus standards related to amputation hazards.

OSHA Amends Hexavalent Chromium Rule

OSHA made a minor amendment to its final rule governing occupational exposure to hexavalent chromium in general industry, the agency outlined in the Oct. 30 Federal Register. The amendment, which became effective Nov. 29, 2006 creates an optional, alternative compliance timetable for metal- and surface-finishing operations at eligible worksites. It is the result of a settlement agreement between OSHA and a number of groups, including the Surface Finishing Industry Council and Public Citizen Health Research Group.

OSHA promulgated its final rule governing occupational exposure to hexavalent chromium (also written as chromium (VI) or Cr(VI)) in general industry (the standard) on February 28, 2006. The standard requires employers to use feasible engineering and work practice controls to reduce and maintain employee exposures to Cr(VI) at or below the permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 5 micrograms per cubic meter of air (5 [mu]g/m³), calculated as an 8-hour time-weighted average (TWA). An OSHA Fact Sheet, *Health Effects of Hexavalent Chromium*, can be viewed at www.osha.gov/OshDoc/data_General_Facts/hexavalent_chromium.pdf.

If you need assistance in evaluating your ergonomics or safety and health program, please contact Neal Freedman, John Cotnam, Margie Lobaton, or Mark Hickox from Atlantic Charter's Safety and Health Department at (617) 488-6500.