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SAFETY NEWS ALERT

Safety News Alert, part of the Catalyst Media Network, keeps safety pros up to date on the latest OSHA news, safety training ideas, workers' comp cases and injury cases from other companies. Read what more than 334,000 safety pros turn to regularly for occupational safety information. Safety News Alert's editorial staff is led by veteran Editor-in-Chief Fred Hosier.

Re-opening after COVID-19: Safety checks before work starts

■ 3 areas to check, even if you haven't closed down

The closure and production cuts for businesses during the coronavirus pandemic are unprecedented.

So restarting and re-adding capacity will be unprecedented also. We don't know when and how this will happen.

From a safety standpoint, there are plans you can make now.

Staffing

Will your workforce look the same as before COVID-19?

If businesses ramp up gradually, some employees may be missing because the virus is still spreading (to a lesser extent) or because of on-going

childcare complications.

Ask yourself if Joe or Jane who volunteer to jump in on a job they don't know or haven't done for quite some time have all the safety knowledge they need to avoid injury.

It's a good time to review job hazard analyses with employees.

Restarting equipment

OSHA's lockout/tagout standard includes requirements for releasing machines or equipment before restoring energy and using it:

- **Machine inspection:** Have tools and other nonessential items been

(Please see COVID-19 ... on Page 2)

OSHA RECORDKEEPING

Do you have to record work-related COVID-19 cases?

OSHA has clarified the agency's recordkeeping requirements for COVID-19, making recording of the illness much less likely for most businesses outside of healthcare.

The agency won't enforce its recording requirements for COVID-19 cases outside of the healthcare industry unless some specific conditions are first met.

While COVID-19 is a recordable illness under OSHA requirements, it should only be recorded if the case:

- is confirmed as COVID-19
- is work-related as defined by 29CFR 1904.5, and
- involves medical treatment beyond first aid or days away from work, as described in 29CFR 1904.7.

However, in areas where there's community transmission, OSHA realizes it may be difficult for

employers outside of healthcare, emergency response organizations and correctional institutions, to determine if a COVID-19 case occurred on the job.

Until further notice, OSHA is not enforcing its recordkeeping requirements in COVID-19 cases for employers outside of the industries listed above unless:

- there is objective evidence a COVID-19 case may be work-related, and
- the evidence was reasonably available to the employer.

Employers in the healthcare, emergency response and correctional industries must still make work-related determinations of COVID-19 cases as per OSHA regulations.

For more, search "COVID-19" at our website.

Info: tinyurl.com/recording594

FIT TESTING

Temporary N95 guidance expanded

OSHA has expanded its temporary guidance for respirator fit testing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Temporary guidance about shortages of N95 and other facepiece respirators in the healthcare industry is now expanded to all workplaces with required respirator use.

OSHA inspectors will use discretion for annual fit-testing requirements if the employer makes good-faith efforts to comply with the Respiratory Protection standard and follows the guidance.

Consider other controls first

Employers should assess engineering, work practice and administrative controls to identify changes that could reduce the need for N95 and other filtering facepiece respirators.

Example: See if it's possible to increase the use of wet methods or suspend non-essential operations.

Due to shortages of fit-testing kits and test solutions, OSHA recommends prioritizing use of fit-testing equipment

to protect employees who must use respirators for high-hazard procedures.

If fit testing isn't possible and a respirator model is out of stock, employers should ask the manufacturer for recommendations on a different model that fits similarly.

The guidance will remain in effect until further notice.

Info: tinyurl.com/guidance594

COVID-19 ...

(continued from Page 1)

removed and are all components operationally intact?

- **Positioning of employees:** Are all employees safely positioned or removed from the area? Have affected employees been notified of the restart?
- **Lockout and tagout device removal:** Each device must be removed by the employee who applied it.

Air quality and disinfection

Buildings that weren't closed properly and weren't maintained during closure could pose health hazards to returning employees.

If HVAC hasn't been running as it normally would, relative humidity in the building hasn't been controlled. This creates the conditions for mold and moisture damage.

Best bet: Operate HVAC as close to normal as possible during shutdown, according to the American Industrial Hygiene Association.

The AIHA also warns water that sits stagnant for an extended period in water mains, building plumbing lines and water heaters loses residual chlorine disinfectant which increases the risk for Legionella colonization.

Before re-occupancy, and often afterward, clean and disinfect interior occupied space, furnishings and machinery. Particularly, companies that have open seating (employees don't have permanent work stations) will have to keep on top of this.

Info: tinyurl.com/oshaloto594 and tinyurl.com/aiha594

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT

This feature provides a framework for decision making that helps keep you and your company out of trouble. It describes a recent legal conflict and lets you judge the outcome.

■ WAS WORKER'S DEATH CAUSED BY MISCONDUCT?

Safety Manager Pete Travers walked quietly out of the meeting room.

He gave a knowing nod at Jake Simmons, stopping to grasp his shoulder when he saw tears in the man's eyes.

"You alright?" Pete asked.

"I'll be okay, but thanks," Jake said.

"My door is always open," Pete said.

"I know. Thanks," Jake said, wiping at his tears.

A short time later, Pete ran into Attorney John Jenkins.

"John, I know we need to talk about Chuck's death, but does it have to be now?" Pete asked.

"Sorry, Pete, but yes, it has to be now," John replied.

Didn't follow the rules

"Chuck's wife filed for workers' compensation benefits because he died on the job," John said. "But I understand there was a question of willful misconduct on his part."

Pete sat down and rubbed both his hands over his face. He took a deep breath, then exhaled before answering.

"Chuck was working in a trench," Pete said. "We have rules about using trench protection – a trench box or shoring ... something – but he went into the trench without it."

"If he didn't follow the rules, then it was willful misconduct and his wife won't be able to collect, I'm afraid," John said.

Chuck's wife filed for a review of her claim. Did she get benefits?

■ Make your decision, then please turn to Page 6 for the ruling.

SAFETY COMPLIANCE *Alert*

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VOLUNTARY MEASURES

Workers wearing masks? 4 considerations

- DOES AN EMPLOYER'S MASK PLAN MEAN OSHA REGS KICK IN?

Companies considering face masks for employees during the COVID-19 pandemic should review health and safety obligations to their employees.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended cloth face coverings be worn where social distancing is difficult – like in retail – to help slow the spread of COVID-19.

Regulatory ramifications

Before issuing masks, employers should ask four questions, according to the law firm Haynes and Boon.

1. Is mask use expected or voluntary?

The CDC recommendation is for voluntary use, but an employer may feel compelled to require employees wear them in medium or higher risk situations. Under OSHA guidance, a mask could be considered an administrative control and part of an employer's duty to provide a safe workplace. If masks aren't mandatory, employees should know.

2. What types of masks are employees wearing? N95 respirators are subject

to OSHA's Respiratory Protection standard. The CDC recommends conserving N95 respirators which are needed in healthcare.

3. **Has the employer used the hierarchy of safety controls?** Cloth material not designated as face protection under OSHA's PPE standard could still be considered an administrative control when used with other controls like social distancing. An employer would have obligations to make sure masks are used safely as an administrative control. If an employer treats the masks as PPE under OSHA, there would be requirements on maintaining, inspecting and using them as well as training workers.

4. **If employees are required to wear face masks, what other obligations exist?** Because cloth masks can be considered an administrative control, employers will likely have to provide general information on safe use of any required mask. Employers should make it clear cloth face coverings and surgical masks don't provide a filtration system preventing particles from entering the lungs.

Info: tinyurl.com/masks594

N95 SHORTAGE

Other respirator standards can be used in COVID-19

As further guidance during the N95 respirator shortage, OSHA released a list of standards from other countries for alternative respirators and filters certified outside the U.S.

This guidance is for N95 filtering face piece respirators either certified under standards of other countries or certified under other countries' standards but are expired.

The Department of Labor says employers can consider using respirators and filters certified under:

- Australia's AS/NZS 1716:2012
- Brazil's ABNT/NBR 13694:1996, ABNT/NBR 13697:1996 and ABNT/NBR 13698:2011
- China's GB 2626-2006 and GB 2626-2019

- European Union's EN 140-1999, EN 143-2000 and EN 149-2001
- Japan's JMHLW-2000
- South Korea's KMOEL-2014-46 and KMOEL-2017-64, and
- Mexico's NOM-116-2009.

This guidance is effective immediately and will remain in effect until further notice. It is additional to OSHA's other guidance on the N95 respirator shortage.

OSHA reminds employers to also reassess engineering, work practice and administrative controls to identify changes that can be made to decrease the need for N95 respirators during the shortage and COVID-19 outbreak.

For more information, search "COVID-19" at our website.

Info: tinyurl.com/certs594

TRENDS TO WATCH

Watch what's happening in various states. Some actions indicate trends.

■ STATE OSHAS KEPT BUSY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

It's not just federal OSHA dealing with the spread of the coronavirus.

Nevada OSHA has been issuing warnings to construction crews ignoring social distance guidelines while Oregon has seen a significant increase in complaints from workers concerned about COVID-19 exposure.

Construction workers at jobsites in the Las Vegas area have received reminders to follow safety guidelines if they want work to continue during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Nevada OSHA sent a letter March 27 noting workers at construction sites all across the state weren't practicing social distancing, according to the *Las Vegas Review-Journal*.

The letter – sent to essential businesses in construction, mining and manufacturing – said inspectors observed employees being allowed to work with less than 6 feet of separation between individuals.

No specifics were released on which companies were violating social distancing guidelines.

This comes after a worker at the \$2 billion Allegiant Stadium project tested positive for COVID-19, causing contractor Mortenson-McCarthy to post signs with COVID-19 health and safety reminders at the worksite.

Increase in complaints

Meanwhile, Oregon OSHA has been inundated with COVID-19-related workplace safety complaints.

Workers at essential businesses are significantly driving up complaints, with the agency receiving about 400 in the Portland area alone in 24 hours.

Complaints include PPE shortages and not enforcing social distancing.

Oregon OSHA says anyone who feels unsafe should raise the issue with their employer first, and, if there's a need to, escalate it to the state level.

Roundup of most recent OSHA citations

Worker dies while trapped in machine: \$293K fine

Indiana OSHA cited a food processing plant after a worker was killed while cleaning inside a machine.

Sean Merrell, 22, died from blunt force trauma to his head, chest and abdomen after getting trapped inside the machine, which began to re-energize before he could escape.

Fine: \$293,196

Company: Pacmoore Process Technologies, Mooresville, IN

Business: Food manufacturing

Reasons for fine:

11 knowing violations, including failure to:

- inform exposed employees of existence and location of permit required confined spaces
- develop and implement written permit space entry program

Four serious violations for failure to:

- protect employees on working surfaces with unprotected edge 4 feet or more above lower levels by using guardrail, safety net or personal fall protection systems
- include step to verify equipment was completely de-energized in lockout/tagout procedures
- adequately train employees in lockout/tagout procedures
- ensure lockout/tagout procedures were done in proper sequence

Roofers fail to wear fall protection: \$114K fine

A Florida roofing contractor was cited by OSHA after inspectors saw employees working on roofs at two worksites without fall protection.

Inspections were initiated as part of OSHA's Regional Emphasis Program for Falls in Construction.

Fine: \$114,294

Company: Turnkey Construction Planners, Melbourne, FL

Business: Roofing contractor

Reasons for fine:

Two repeat violations for failure to:

- protect employees engaged in residential construction activities 6

feet or more above lower levels by using guardrail, safety net or personal fall arrest systems (at both worksites)

One serious violation for failure to:

- ensure ladder side rails extended at least 3 feet above upper landing surface

Note: OSHA has cited this company six times in the past five years for similar hazards.

Company exposes workers to amputation hazards

OSHA cited a window and door manufacturer for exposing employees to amputation and noise hazards.

The inspection was conducted as part of the National Emphasis Program on Amputations.

Fine: \$162,688

Company: Assura Windows and Doors, Pompano Beach, FL

Business: Metal window and door manufacturing

Reasons for fine:

30 serious violations, including failure to:

- create hearing conservation program
- establish and maintain audiometric testing program
- train employees exposed to noise
- store flammable liquids away from open flames or other ignition sources
- provide PPE to employees
- provide adequate eye protection for employees with prescription glasses
- provide sufficient amount of welding screens around welding area
- ensure each container of hazardous chemicals was properly labeled
- provide place of employment free from caught-by hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm
- protect pedal mechanisms to prevent unintended operation
- establish energy control procedures
- guard machinery points of operation
- securely anchor machines designed for fixed locations
- regularly inspect power presses
- guard flywheels 7 feet or less above floor level

WORKERS' COMP DECISIONS

Worker failed to return after injury: Can he collect?

A worker was injured in a fall, but failed to return to work because of ongoing pain. Could he collect?

What happened: The worker slipped and fell at work, injuring his back and ankle. His doctors released him to go back to work, but only if he used crutches and an air brace, which were forbidden at the worksite.

Company's reaction: You're fired because you didn't show up for work for three days and didn't call in.

Decision: Yes, he could collect. There was sufficient evidence proving his physical limitations prevented him from working, according to the court.

Cite: *State of N. Dakota through Workforce Safety & Insurance v. Salat*, Supreme Court of ND, No. 20190056, 12/12/19.

Driver injures his back for the 3rd time: Benefits?

A truck driver injured his back at work, his third back injury in two decades. Can he collect benefits?

What happened: The driver fell while looking into the back of his dump truck, injuring his lower back. He had two previous back injuries, the last only five years earlier.

Company's reaction: Your recent injury hasn't put you in any worse shape than you were in after the last injury.

Decision: No, he couldn't collect benefits. There was "an abundance of evidence" proving the recent injury left him no worse off than the last injury, according to the court.

Cite: *Sheffield v. S.J. Louis Construction Inc.*, Supreme Court of MS, No. 2018-CT-00385-SCT, 12/12/2019.

WHAT'S WORKED FOR OTHER COMPANIES

SCA subscribers include a broad range of small, medium and large firms involved in all types of economic activity. In this regular section, three of them share a safety success story.

1 **Healthcare provider deals with COVID-19**

I work for a healthcare management company, so we are extremely aware of what is happening with this virus (coronavirus/COVID-19).

We have moved over 99% of our administrative employees to “work at home” status to help stop the spread in the office.

Handling the transition

I am the Safety Officer for the company and, during the process of setting workers up to work at home, I

set up disinfection stations throughout the office including hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes.

We stopped everyone from using the lunchrooms and asked that everyone wipe down their desks and workstations at least twice daily. This was very well received by everyone.

Using hierarchy of controls

Our physician practice sites are using engineering controls first and relying on PPE as the final piece of protection, especially since it is in such high demand.

We are monitoring our

employees for symptoms and quarantining according to CDC guidelines.

Thankfully, our employees have not panicked. They have banded together with an “us and our patients against the virus” attitude.

Hopefully this will be over soon.

(Denise Bohonek, Safety Officer, Physicians Management Group, Hanover, MD, via comment on www.safetycompliancealert.com/pandemic-expert-shares-insight-on-covid-19-assp-webinar/)

**REAL
PROBLEMS,
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

2 **Remove disconnect of behavior-based training**

Behavioral-based safety training asks, “What do we need to do differently to create new results in our lives?”

However, there is a clear disconnect that exists within this model. For example, I may know I need to eat healthy and exercise more, but I won't necessarily act on that knowledge.

If we live in a truth that “it” is happening to us, there's nothing you can do anyway, so you just get to keep existing in the same pattern instead of

taking responsibility.

It's more powerful to identify how our actions are creating a specific result.

Leave story out of it

One thing to do to accept responsibility for our actions is to acknowledge the facts of a situation. When I'm using words like “nobody” or “everybody” or “always” or “never,” I'm telling a story, not giving factual information that will get results.

“Nobody will listen to me.”
“Everybody is just focused on

themselves.” Those are story triggers.

Instead of saying, “I'm broke,” say, “I've got \$14 left in my bank account.” That is a fact.

“I made a recommendation, but it has been two weeks and I haven't heard back on anything yet.” Fact.

When you take the story out of the situation, you can handle anything. It's the story that overwhelms us.

(Keith Mercurio, Director of Training Strategy, Nexstar Network, St. Paul, MN, at the 2019 AIHCE conference in Minneapolis)

3 **Slashed our hazwaste storage issue overnight**

Dealing with hazardous waste was a constant drain on my time and attention.

We needed to use solvents, paints and coatings on our products to keep them from rusting.

So changing to safer chemicals wasn't an option.

Became large quantity generator

But this created hazardous waste storage issues for us.

All the used solvents and coatings

turned us into a large quantity waste generator.

I had to make sure none of the waste was stored for more than 90 days. And I was constantly worried that somebody would leave a cover off a waste container.

Shrunk our permit duties

We couldn't eliminate use of the solvents, paints and coatings. But we could eliminate the storage issue.

We opted to rely on service companies to handle solvent wastes.

It's a simple process.

We put a sink over a container and wash or treat parts in the sink.

The solvent collects in a container, and the service company rotates the container out and treats all of the hazardous waste off site.

We've lowered our permit status and can focus on other areas.

This has also helped us keep employee exposures to harmful substances in check.

(From a metal fabricating facility in the Pacific Northwest)

ENFORCEMENT

OSHA fines a dozen companies in triple-fatal building collapse

OSHA has issued \$306,000 in fines to a dozen companies involved in building the Hard Rock Hotel in New Orleans, which collapsed Oct. 12, 2019, killing three workers.

The engineering firm which designed the building was fined \$154,200.

Engineering firm denies violations

Beams and other load-bearing structures on the upper floors of the hotel weren't designed properly by Heaslip Engineering LLC, causing "structural problems ahead of the building's collapse," according to a *Times-Picayune/New Orleans Advocate* story.

OSHA citations accuse Heaslip of multiple, significant design problems with the project, but the company's attorney calls the agency's conclusions "unwarranted, not supported by the facts and beyond the jurisdiction of OSHA's statutory authority."

Citation documents point to the hotel's 16th level floor beams not being strong enough for the weight they were supporting and vertical beams on the 17th and 18th floors being spaced too far apart and bearing too much weight.

Heaslip was cited for one willful

and two serious violations for:

- steel connections inadequately designed, reviewed or approved, affecting the structural integrity of the building, and
- the under-designed beams on the 16th, 17th and 18th floors.

Steel contractor cited

Suncoast Projects, the steel contractor on the project, was cited for five serious violations relating to the building's structural integrity, including steel beams on the 16th floor not being connected to columns on the 15th floor which didn't meet specific load requirements.

Other companies involved with the project were cited for problems with training and documentation of hazardous materials, lack of PPE provided to workers, and failing to have exits or staircases workers could use in an emergency.

Info: tinyurl.com/NOLA594

DOT guidance on drug testing during COVID-19

The U.S. Department of Transportation has issued guidance

providing clarification on existing DOT-required drug and alcohol testing during the COVID-19 outbreak.

While DOT drug and alcohol testing requirements still remain in effect, the agency issued some guidance with regard to problems caused by the pandemic.

DOT-regulated employers must comply with training and testing requirements, but the agency realizes compliance may not be possible in certain areas because program resources may be unavailable due to the outbreak.

Make a reasonable effort

Employers should still make a reasonable effort to locate the resources and should consider mobile collection services if fixed-site facilities aren't available, according to a blog post by law firm Jackson Lewis.

Point-of-collection testing and instant tests still aren't authorized.

If DOT drug and alcohol training or testing can't be accomplished due to COVID-19-related reasons, employers must document why it wasn't completed.

Employers may not permit workers to perform any DOT safety-sensitive functions if drug and alcohol training and testing can't be completed.

Info: tinyurl.com/drugtest594

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(see case on Page 2)

Yes, she was able to collect workers' compensation benefits. The court found Pete's company didn't enforce the safety rules, so Chuck's actions couldn't be construed as willful misconduct.

Pete's company claimed it had rules governing safe methods for working in trenches and Chuck's death was a result of his failure to follow the rules.

Chuck's wife argued that her husband's actions were not willful misconduct since that safety rule was not enforced.

The court found Chuck didn't engage in willful misconduct because there was evidence the company didn't enforce its trench safety rules.

Further, several executives saw Chuck in the unsafe

trench on the day he died, and all of them failed to reprimand him for working unsafely.

ANALYSIS: ENFORCING SAFETY RULES

This case clearly illustrates the need to consistently enforce safety rules.

The company in this case had a solid safety rule on using trench protection, but it never bothered to enforce it.

This ultimately led Chuck, a long-time employee, to ignore the rule and climb down into the unprotected trench, which collapsed and killed him.

While this may seem perfectly obvious, enforcing safety rules in a consistent manner is of the utmost importance.

Cite: *Bonebright v. City of Miller and SDML Workers' Compensation Fund*, SD Supreme Court, No. 2020 S.D. 16, 3/18/20. Dramatized for effect.

Government notices on workplace safety

Here's SCA's digest of key notices that appeared recently in the Federal Register (FR) or on OSHA's website concerning workplace safety issues.

HAZMAT

Enforcement against shippers and carriers unable to comply with training requirements in federal Hazardous Materials Regulations has been temporarily halted due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

As of March 23, the U.S. Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration halted enforcement of recurrent training requirements.

This doesn't apply to all other HMR obligations or related laws.

This enforcement discretion is limited to recurrent training requirements found in 49 CFR 172.704(c)(2) and will remain in place for 90 days.

Because many hazardous materials shippers and carriers are experiencing problems providing required training, the PHMSA and other transportation agencies won't take enforcement action against those unable to.

This is in response to changes in business practices related to the COVID-19 outbreak and is meant to minimize disruptions in the supply chain.

The Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, Federal Railroad Administration, PHMSA and U.S. Coast Guard will all be operating under the enforcement discretion.

While these agencies are under the enforcement discretion, the PHMSA reminds employers the HMR doesn't require traditional classroom or on-the-job training, as any methods of training delivery – including web-based, self-paced computer instruction – are acceptable.

Info: tinyurl.com/phmsa594

OSHRC

The Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission's Office of Administrative Law Judges is open and conducting business – thanks to telework technology and e-filing –

despite the COVID-19 outbreak.

Onsite office personnel are being kept to a bare minimum with only essential staff being physically in the office during business hours as the majority of staff is teleworking.

All hearing-specific deadlines or scheduling orders in pending cases remain in effect unless modified by the assigned judge or the Chief Administrative Law Judge.

The office is confident all assigned judges will apply the principles of flexibility and accommodation to reasonable requests for filing and scheduling adjustments needed by “reasonable and fact-based travel, health or safety concerns, or advice or directives of public health officials,” according to the OSHRC.

Info: oshrc.gov/coronavirus/

OSHA FINES

OSHA failed to collect \$19.1 million in fines during Fiscal Years 2018 and 2019, according to a Department of Labor Office of Inspector General audit.

The agency's Debt Collection Accountability Team failed to refer delinquent debt to the Treasury's Fiscal Service for timely collection and didn't notify area offices on the final status of the uncollected fines.

On Oct. 1, 2019, anonymous allegations were made against OSHA and the Treasury's Fiscal Service Debt Management Service.

The OIG audit found OSHA wasn't manipulating data but that its Debt Collection Accountability Team did mishandle collections resulting in the uncollected fines for FY 2018 and 2019.

OSHA's team didn't refer delinquent debt to Fiscal Service for collection in a timely manner, often failing to transfer the debt until more than 30 days after the debt became 180 days delinquent.

This left Fiscal Service a limited time to attempt collection before the debt was recalled.

Info: tinyurl.com/oigreport594

WHERE TO GET HELP

NEW CDC COVID-19 GUIDANCE ON DISINFECTING

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have issued new guidance on how to clean and disinfect your facility to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

This new guidance offers step-by-step methods for cleaning a variety of hard surfaces, including electronics, and soft surfaces, such as clothing, carpets and rugs.

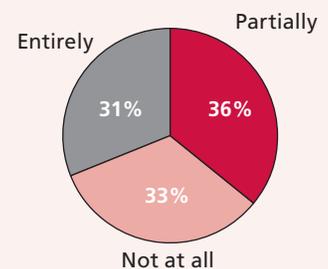
A link is included to EPA's list of approved disinfectants.

Information on when and how to clean a building or facility after someone is found to be sick is also included.

Info: The new guidance can be found at tinyurl.com/help594 and a printable pdf with the same information can be found at tinyurl.com/cdchandout594

What safety pros say

Can your business operate remotely during the coronavirus pandemic?



Source: Society of Human Resource Management survey of U.S. small business

About 2/3 of small businesses have employees reporting to work during the pandemic. Follow the CDC's guide for cleaning workplaces.

Info: tinyurl.com/stillopen594

Each issue of SCA contains an exclusive survey to give safety professionals insight into what their peers nationwide are thinking and doing.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Here's a challenging scenario you could encounter. We've asked three of your peers what they'd do. How would you handle it?

In pandemic, it's not 'business as usual' – What should Mike's safety message be?

The Scenario

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Manager Mike Kelly found a thought kept popping into his head: *I just wish things would get back to normal.*

"I swear, I'll never complain about 'normal' work problems again if we just get through this," Mike said out loud, to himself.

"I hear ya," said Ralph, the facility manager. Ralph was standing in Mike's office doorway and had startled Mike briefly.

"No closer than that," Mike said. "Social distancing, you know."

Doing unfamiliar tasks

"I'm all about social distancing these days," Ralph said. "But there are a few things I need to discuss.

"We have employees missing from the assembly lines," Ralph said. "One or two are sick – their doctors say it's

just a normal cold. Others have child-care issues since the schools are closed. People are going to have to do jobs they don't normally do."

"I think I know where you're going with this," Mike said. "Safety ..."

"Exactly," said Ralph. "For example: Jerry said he'd jump in. He hasn't been on the line for three years since he became a supervisor. I think he might be a bit overconfident. He's saying 'I did this job before.'"

"And I just heard from the CEO," Mike said. "We're going to convert a production line to making face shields for healthcare workers. We have the materials and machinery, but it'll be a different process."

Mike knew he had to send out a safety reminder with these changes. If you were Mike, what would you say and do?

Reader Responses

1 Adele Abrams, Occupational Safety and Health Attorney, Beltsville, MD

What Adele would do: Anticipate failures that might occur due to lack of continuity. Have a job hazard analysis? Take it out. Make sure you're not missing something when you jump in and start maintenance on a conveyor you haven't done since you got promoted to supervisor years ago.

Reason: I've seen this happen. Supervisors get injured or killed because they jumped into a vacancy and haven't done the task themselves in years.

2 Mark Taylor, Safety Director, Cape Roman Contractors, Wando, SC

What Mark would do: The best thing I've found when taking a new

employee or an employee who hasn't done a particular task in quite some time is to pair them up with a seasoned employee when you can.

Reason: Yes, there is a little pushback, but they will inevitably show them the ropes as long as that employee is engaged.

3 Donald Hossli, Safety Manager, Red Monkey Foods Inc., Springfield, MO

What Donald would do: A complete analysis of risks should be done. Since a different product is to be produced, a Task Risk Assessment (TRA) should be performed to identify any risks, needed mitigations, and training requirements. An implementation plan should provide training and effective assurance prior to any worker being pronounced as adequate.

Reason: Change in the workplace is as inevitable as the sun rising every day.

OUTSIDE THE LINES

THREATENING TO INFECT SOMEONE = FELONY BATTERY

A Chicago-area man thought he could get out of a drunk driving arrest by coughing on police, according to Findlaw.com.

The man in question had been laying on the ground when he allegedly hopped up, charged police and started coughing on them, yelling, "Now you have the corona."

Not only did he not beat the drunk driving charges – he also faces a charge of felony battery.

This isn't an isolated case, apparently.

A man in Odenton, MD, allegedly started spitting at officers who had put on masks and gloves before showing up.

The man was charged with four counts of "exposure by an individual who has an infectious disease."

Info: tinyurl.com/felony594

Did you know ...

Fall prevention



There were **320 fatal falls** to a lower level out of **1,008 construction fatalities** in 2018.

Source: OSHA

Workers 6 feet or more above lower levels are at risk of serious injury or death if they fall. OSHA says proper ladders, scaffolds and safety gear must be provided.

This feature in each issue of SCA charts trends in national workplace safety and health to help safety professionals perform their jobs.