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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.

What GM did to safely return employees to the workplace

■ For coronavirus response, they used team approach

As its manufacturing and office employees return to the workplace, General Motors summed up its basic strategy in five words: We're all in this together.

Eltaneice Bolden, GM Global Manager for Industrial Hygiene, laid out the carmaker's return-to-work actions at the AIHA's Virtual AIHce EXP 2020.

GM's return-to-work goals:

- Keep COVID-19 out of their facilities.
- Prevent COVID-19 from spreading in their facilities.
- Effectively manage suspected COVID-19 cases.

Bolden says this is being done through a team approach. Here's what each part of the team did:

The teams and their tasks

- **Safety and Industrial Hygiene:** As employees returned to work, some wanted to go beyond wearing masks to protect themselves. If anyone wanted to wear a respirator or face shield, they had to receive GM's revised respiratory protection protocols. GM had to find a new way to disinfect fall protection gear because not everyone has their own harness and standard products used

(Please see Jump Headxxx ... on Page 2)

PANDEMIC

OSHA answers FAQs for masks during coronavirus

As more employees return to the workplace, many have questions about using face masks.

OSHA has published a series of FAQs about face masks in the workplace.

Pass along to employees

Here are some of the questions and answers from OSHA:

- Are employers required to provide cloth face coverings to workers? OSHA's PPE standards do not require employers to provide them. However, employers may choose to ensure that cloth face coverings are worn as a feasible means of abatement in a control plan designed to address hazards from the coronavirus.
- Should workers wear a cloth face covering while at work,

in accordance with the CDC recommendation for all people to do so when in public? OSHA generally recommends that employers encourage workers to wear face coverings at work.

- If workers wear cloth face coverings, do employers still need to ensure social distancing measures in the workplace? Yes. Cloth face coverings are not a substitute for social distancing measures.
- How should an employee keep their reusable cloth face covering clean? The CDC provides guidance on washing face coverings. OSHA suggests following those recommendations and always washing or discarding cloth face coverings that are visibly soiled.

Info: [osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/covid-19-faq.html](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/covid-19-faq.html)

SAFETY PROFESSION

AIHA rebrands at start of virtual event

The American Industrial Hygiene Association unveiled its new brand today at the start of the Virtual AIHce EXP 2020.

The organization says the new brand reflects its diverse membership and looks toward the future of the profession.

“AIHA” is now the new name of the occupational safety group, with its main slogan, “Healthier Workplaces. A Healthier World.”

Health and safety science

AIHA says it’s repositioning itself as the professional association for occupational health and safety science professionals, rather than industrial hygienists.

“COVID-19 has put a spotlight on our profession and positioned many of our members front and center as experts in occupational health in their workplaces and in the forefront of the country’s public eye,” said AIHA President Kathleen Murphy.

AIHA also kicks off a campaign to educate employers about the value occupational health and safety scientists bring to a workplace.

AIHA will reach out to employers in the construction, chemical manufacturing and first responder industries as part of the initiative.

Info: aiha.org

Safely return ...

(continued from Page 1)

- for decontamination degrade nylon.
- **Facilities:** They had to step up cleaning schedules and communicate to workers how often work stations, lunch room tables, etc. were cleaned. They had to alter conference room layouts for social distancing.
- **Engineering:** They had to develop new strategies for running HVAC.
- **Operations:** They managed people coming back. Examples: temperature taking, distributing masks (GM calculated their offices need 1.3 masks per employee per day), organizing where hand sanitizer and masks were available, and making sure the company covered employees’ right-to-know about cleaning agents and disinfectants being used.
- **HR:** Knowing our headcount as employees came back.
- **Legal:** They’re on-call, just in case.

Everyone, from the top down

GM provided leadership training, especially to Safety and HR, because they are the ones who are going to receive questions when workers return.

That included GM CEO Mary Barra and every corporate officer.

All employees receive a welcome-back package that contained GM’s playbook for safe return and five face masks with the corporate logo.

How’d they get all this done? Bolden says the processes to do this were already in place – they just had to apply them to COVID-19.

Info: aihceexp.org

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 FALL CAUSED BY POORLY DESIGNED HOLE COVER?

Attorney John Jenkins stepped into Safety Manager Pete Travers’ office.

“Pete, do you have time to – ?” but John sneezed before he could finish, although it was contained by the surgical mask he was wearing.

He wore a look of utter disgust.

“It’s OK, John, the PPE did its job and contained the hazard,” Pete said laughing.

‘We didn’t design it’

“As I was saying,” John began again, “do you have time to talk? OSHA sent us a citation.”

“This isn’t about the hole covers, is it?” Pete asked.

“Yes, that’s exactly it,” John said.

“That’s ridiculous,” Pete said. “It was the general contractor’s design that caused the incident.”

“So what happened?” John asked.

“Gary Schaeffer and another worker had to make adjustments to the hole covers the general contractor installed so we could move ahead with our work,” Pete said.

“While Gary was working, the cover collapsed and he fell 20 feet – he was hurt pretty bad,” Pete continued.

“We didn’t have anything to do with the cover’s design, you say?” asked John.

“That’s right,” Pete said. “The general contractor designed it, but didn’t anchor it properly to the roof.”

“If it wasn’t our fault, then we should be able to win this,” John said.

Pete’s company fought the citation. Did it win?

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

SAFETY COMPLIANCE *Alert*

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CRUSHING FATALITY

Court: Death was due to worker error

■ HIS FAMILY CAN'T SUE BECAUSE OF THE WORKER'S OWN NEGLIGENCE

The family of a railroad worker who was crushed to death in a train coupling incident can't move forward with its lawsuit since the worker failed to follow safety rules, an appeals court determined.

Because the worker failed to follow safety protocols for walking between rail cars and there was no evidence of liability on the part of the railroad, the family can't sue.

The 3-step protection rule

On Aug. 12, 2015, Gregory Miller was helping three other Alabama Great Southern Railroad employees couple empty rail cars at a Petal, MS, facility.

Miller used the company's "3-step protection" rule to cross between the standing rail cars to get into position for coupling the cars the crew was going to move:

1. Verbally request passage between cars from the engineer.
2. The engineer is then required to apply the train's independent brake and put the train in neutral, and verify they've done so.

COURT DECISION

Employee can't sue supervisor for out-of-state injury

A worker from Kansas can't move forward with a negligence suit against her former supervisor over a car crash that occurred during a business trip in Missouri since she already received workers' compensation for the incident.

The Missouri Court of Appeals found that because the worker received workers' compensation in Kansas, she was unable to file a lawsuit in Missouri, according to state law.

Tonda Hill and her supervisor, Steven Freedman, worked for the University of Kansas School of Law, and both were sent on a business trip in January 2014 to an event at a law firm in Kansas City, MO.

They were involved in a car crash

3. The employee is then permitted by the engineer to go between the cars.

After the first car was successfully coupled, the engineer was told to begin a "rolling coupling" of the remaining cars by slowly shoving the train south at a slow speed, impacting and coupling each car, one right after the other, without stopping.

For reasons unknown, Miller went between two of the cars at this point and was crushed to death as the train made the shove.

Worker was negligent

Miller's family filed a negligence suit against the railroad for failing to train him and for failing to provide a safe place for him to work.

A district court dismissed the suit, finding Miller's failure to use the 3-step protection rule before going between cars was the sole cause of his death and was an unforeseeable incident.

The appeals court agreed with the lower court decision, finding there was no evidence the incident was anything but the result of Miller's own negligence.

Info: tinyurl.com/RRfatal598

while on the trip.

Hill reported her injuries to the university and received workers' comp.

Lawsuit filed in Missouri

Hill filed a lawsuit against Freedman in Missouri, claiming discrimination based on exercising her workers' comp rights.

Freedman asked that the case be dismissed because the court didn't have jurisdiction and because Hill received workers' comp and couldn't sue a fellow employee under Kansas law.

Recently, the Missouri Court of Appeals agreed with a lower court ruling that Hill's lawsuit should be dismissed.

Info: tinyurl.com/xstate598

TRENDS TO WATCH

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

■ RE-OPENING EARLY COULD LEAD TO CITATIONS, FINES

Employers in Washington who re-open before Governor Jay Inslee gives the go-ahead may find themselves cited for workplace safety violations.

The state's Department of Labor & Industry adopted emergency COVID-19 rules May 26 ensuring "clarity that restrictions and conditions on business under the emergency proclamations are also health and safety requirements" making employers in violation subject to citations and fines.

Employers must not allow work to take place where business activity is prohibited, and must comply with all conditions for operation required by the proclamations, including Safe Start phased reopening requirements for all business along with any industry specific requirements.

■ MANY COVID19-RELATED CLAIMS ARE BEING DENIED

Colorado has received 1,425 workers' compensation claims related to the coronavirus as of May 26, but the majority of those were dismissed.

About 60% of the state's claims have been denied by employers, while 27% were accepted with a pay out. The rest are still being investigated.

Pinnacol Assurance, the state's largest workers' comp insurer, told the *Colorado Sun* it received about 1,000 such claims, but dismissed 60% of those because they were "filed out of an abundance of caution."

Later it was confirmed the majority of these employees had not contracted the coronavirus.

The remaining 400 claims did receive payouts from Pinnacol, with the average amount running to about \$13,000.

Roundup of most recent OSHA citations

Employee suffers fatal fall at construction site: \$44K

OSHA cited two contractors in North Miami, FL after an employee suffered a fatal fall from an aerial lift.

Prestige Estates Property Management LLC and Jesus Balbuena failed to ensure the use of a fall protection system to protect workers on an aerial lift, lacked fall hazard avoidance training for employees, and did not develop and implement an accident prevention program.

Fine: \$32,002 (Prestige Estates Property Management LLC); \$12,144 (Jesus Balbuena)

Companies: Prestige Estates Property Management LLC, North Miami, FL; Jesus Balbuena, Miami, FL

Business: Construction contractors (both companies)

Reasons for fines:

Six serious violations for failure to:

- develop and implement accident prevention programs
- ensure safe use of aerial lifts
- train employees on fall hazards prior to operating aerial lift
- provide health and safety training
- provide fall hazard protection
- provide employees with effective strategies to operate aerial lift

Two other-than-serious violations for failure to:

- report death of employee within 8 hours of work incident
- report hospitalization within 24 hours of work incident

Worker asphyxiates handling liquid nitrogen

OSHA cited a South Dakota bull stud facility after an employee asphyxiated while handling liquid nitrogen.

Inspectors found employees filled containers daily and cryogenic freezers weekly with liquid nitrogen but failed to implement safety measures to ensure the rapidly expanding gas didn't displace the oxygen in the room.

Fine: \$122,602

Company: Custom Genetic Solutions, Mitchell, SD

Business: Support activities for animal reproduction

Reasons for fine:

Five willful violations for failure to:

- provide employees with effective information and training on hazardous chemicals in work area
- monitor for releases of hazardous chemicals
- train employees on hazards of chemicals in work area
- provide training on measures employees could use to protect themselves from hazardous chemicals
- provide employment free from recognized hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm such as asphyxiation from liquid nitrogen causing oxygen deficient atmosphere

Four serious violations for failure to:

- develop and implement written hazard communication program
- include list of hazardous chemicals known to be present in workplace in hazard communication program
- ensure each container of hazardous chemicals was labeled properly
- maintain workplace copies of safety data sheets for hazardous chemicals

Employees seen working in trench without protection

OSHA cited a contractor for endangering employees due to cave-in hazards at a worksite.

After an inspector observed two employees working in an excavation without cave-in protection, OSHA cited the company

The company was cited previously for a 2017 incident involving a lack of cave-in protection.

Fine: \$56,405

Company: Jax Utilities Management, Inc., Jacksonville, FL

Business: Construction contractor

Reasons for fines:

One repeat violation for failure to:

- provide adequate protective systems to prevent cave-ins

One serious violation for failure to:

- provide protective helmets

WORKERS' COMP DECISIONS

Doctor says injury wasn't work-related: Benefits?

A worker injured her wrist on the job, but her doctor said the injury wasn't work-related. Can she collect?

What happened: The worker picked up a five-gallon bucket of paint at work and immediately felt pain in her wrist. Her doctor said the injury wasn't work-related and was instead related to degenerative disease in the wrist.

Company's reaction: You didn't report the injury until after you were diagnosed months later.

Decision: No, she couldn't collect. There was no proof the injury occurred at work and the employee's testimony lacked credibility, according to the court.

Cite: *Grant v. McConnell Painting Corp.*, LA Court of Appeals, No. 53,100-WCA, 1/15/20.

Train hits worker's car as he exits lot at work: Benefits?

A railroad worker was involved in a crash with a train as he was leaving work. Can he collect?

What happened: The railroad worker got permission to leave work early and left through the only open route from the parking lot, which went over a set of tracks. As he was leaving, a train car struck his vehicle and severely injured him.

Company's reaction: You weren't working when you were injured, so we're not responsible.

Decision: Yes, he could collect under the Federal Employment Labor Act. Because the route out of the lot was the only one available, it was reasonable to believe he'd leave that way, according to the court, and the company was found partially responsible for the injury.

Cite: *Haynes v. Union Pacific Railroad*, TX Court of Appeals, No. 01-18-00181-CV, 1/28/20.

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 What makes a great safety manager?

Surveys show employees don't quit bad jobs, they quit bad bosses.

So, what makes a great boss?

According to research on this topic, technical competence is one of the most important factors in making a great boss.

How do you advance your technical competence as a safety manager?

Take inventory

The first step is to take an inventory of technical competence when it

comes to safety and health at your organization.

Then, find ways you can continually improve from where you are now.

One of my favorite ways to do this is to increase awareness and employee engagement through risk assessment teams. Or, the team can focus on ergonomics or industrial hygiene improvement – something that moves the ball forward.

When creating these teams, pull together employees from all levels of your organization and involve them in these assessments.

Make sure these teams are included in your company's professional development plans for employees.

Not only will you be advancing your knowledge about safety, you'll improve your critical thinking skills and leadership abilities.

Employees will be happier with a more knowledgeable safety manager, and that will drive performance.

(Colin Brown, Professional and Organizational Advancement Manager, Board of Certified Safety Professionals, Indianapolis, at the Virtual AIHce EXP 2020)

**REAL
PROBLEMS,
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

2 Employees need to do more than see hazards

Situational awareness is a real and important issue, but it's not very well understood.

If you really think about situational awareness and how it applies to safety, think about Sherlock Holmes when he tells Dr. Watson, "You see, but you do not observe."

That's really what we're talking about. Situational awareness is about our ability to observe beyond seeing and put what we're observing in context.

It comes down to: Do we appreciate

the hazards around us, can we put our exposure to those hazards in context and can we recognize the change in vulnerability to the hazard?

Engaging the brain

One way to ensure employees can take all of this in is pausing work. This is about stepping back, engaging the brain and thinking about the level of exposure.

We're working with a group of delivery drivers who we've had shift gears in thinking about going from driver to delivery person as they

perform their duties. The exposures and mindset of being a delivery person is totally different than that of a driver.

What we're training them to do is when they show up to a home to deliver a product, they pause. They talk themselves through the new exposures they're about to get into.

This is only for a few moments, but it allows them to think things through instead of just running on autopilot.

(Donald Groover, Industrial Hygienist, Dekra Consulting, Oxnard, CA, at the Virtual AIHce EXP 2020)

3 Addressing emotions in risk assessment

When talking about risks and hazards it's important to keep human emotions in mind.

This is something to remember whether you're talking to employees, corporate officers or the public.

Addressing risk is often not technical or data-driven. We get it wrong when we think technology and data have all the answers.

Logic and science are often not comforting.

We can see this reality through the

poor messaging related to COVID-19, which resulted in confusion and outrage.

Emotions drive beliefs, which drive decision making. It's nearly impossible to form a well-informed decision when instincts are allowed to drive the decision-making process.

Judged personally

Just saying the risk is low doesn't make it so in the mind of the person who sees you in control of a situation they have no control over.

People have different perspectives, and all risk is judged personally.

To alleviate this sort of emotional response, when addressing risks it's important to:

- tell the truth
- build credibility and trust
- pay attention to unvoiced concerns and underlying motives
- remember everyone has biases
- remember beliefs are more powerful than facts, and
- put facts into context, which is critical in giving them meaning.

(Fred Boelter, Industrial Hygienist, RHP Risk Management, Boise, ID, at the Virtual AIHce EXP 2020)

COURT CHALLENGE

OSHA closer to being able to issue eyewash fines in construction

OSHA is a step closer to getting its authority back for issuing violations for lack of eyewash stations and showers in construction, thanks to a May 15 appeals court decision.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit reversed a previous Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission decision, and found the agency followed proper protocol in establishing the eyewash station rule for construction, granting its petition of review of the case.

OSHRC agrees with company, but ...

Kiewit Power Constructors was issued a citation in 2011 for failing to have emergency eyewash stations close enough to workers who OSHA claimed were exposed to a corrosive resin.

The company said OSHA didn't have the authority to apply that standard – which originally applied only to general industry – to the construction industry without following the rulemaking process with proper notice-and-consent.

An administrative law judge for the OSHRC agreed with Kiewit and dismissed the serious violation, and the full commission upheld that decision.

However, the appeals court found “it is plausible that the Congress

intended standards ... to extend only to employers within the same industry as their source standard,” but OSHA’s “interpretation is nevertheless a permissible construction of the OSH (Occupational Safety and Health) Act.”

OSHA was within its authority

What this means is the appeals court found OSHA was working within its authority in applying the general industry standard to the construction industry.

The court made this decision based on two factors:

1. Because of the OSH Act’s stated purpose of expanding workplace protections “to assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the nation safe and healthful working conditions.”
2. The instruction of 29 USC 651(b) that “in the event of conflict among any such standards (OSHA) shall promulgate the standard which assures the greatest protection of the safety or health of the affected employees.”

This led the appeals court to grant deference to OSHA in this situation, reverse the OSHRC decision and send the case back to the commission to determine how

to proceed with Kiewit’s citation.
Info: tinyurl.com/eyewash598

NTSB: Change shipping for lithium-ion batteries

The National Transportation Safety Board has called for changes in air cargo shipping requirements for some types of lithium-ion batteries.

The recommendations follow an investigation into the shipment of lithium-ion batteries that ignited while in transport on a delivery truck in Canada.

An investigation into a fire which destroyed a FedEx delivery truck and its contents revealed batteries being shipped weren’t properly designed and packaged by the manufacturer.

The batteries may have qualified for a shipping exemption, but the manufacturer didn’t apply for one. That meant the batteries didn’t pass safety tests required of other lithium-ion batteries.

To address this hazard, the NTSB issued two recommendations asking the Pipeline and Hazardous Materials Safety Administration to remove the exemption.

Info: tinyurl.com/lithiumion598

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(see case on Page 2)

No, Pete’s company lost. The employees and supervisor involved in making the modifications never bothered to check with the general contractor to see how the covers were designed, according to the court.

Pete’s company claimed it wasn’t at fault since the general contractor’s hole covers weren’t designed to be anchored properly to the roof.

OSHA argued the covers were sufficient under standard 1926.500 and didn’t need to be anchored to the roof in the way Pete’s company said they did. Further, if the employees were working on the covers, they should’ve been wearing fall protection PPE, according to the agency.

The court agreed with OSHA, saying the company

should’ve checked with the general contractor about the design along with having employees wear fall PPE while working on the covers.

■ ANALYSIS: NO DUMB QUESTIONS

Sometimes just asking what seems like a simple question can avert disaster, but it can be difficult convincing employees – and even supervisors – that it’s okay to ask, “Is this safe?”

In this case, the employees and their supervisor missed several opportunities to ask safety-related questions that could’ve saved one worker from experiencing major injuries in a 20-foot fall to a lower level.

Cite: *Secretary of Labor v. Tessier’s Inc.*, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, No. 18-0859, 5/7/20. 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.

CORONAVIRUS & CONSTRUCTION

The construction industry received new guidance from OSHA on working safely during the coronavirus pandemic.

OSHA released new guidance May 26 to help construction employers and workers avoid exposure to COVID-19.

Employers with workers performing construction activities such as carpentry, ironworking, plumbing, utility construction and earth-moving should continue to remain alert to changing conditions as the outbreak continues.

In response to those changing conditions, employers should implement COVID-19 infection prevention measures, according to the Department of Labor:

- Use physical barriers – walls, closed doors, plastic sheeting – to separate workers from anyone experiencing coronavirus signs or symptoms.
- Keep in-person meetings, such as toolbox talks and safety meetings, as short as possible, while using social distancing and limiting the number of workers in attendance.
- Request shared spaces in home environments where construction is being performed have good air flow.
- Stagger work schedules to reduce the total number of employees on a job site at any given time while ensuring physical distancing.

Info: tinyurl.com/covidconst598

CORONAVIRUS & DOCK WORKERS

OSHA issued an alert listing safety tips for retail employers to use to prevent coronavirus spread among stockroom and loading dock workers.

Prioritizing the health and safety of workers in these industries, OSHA offered strategic advice and information to limit the risk of employee coronavirus exposure in retail atmospheres.

Safety measures retail employers can take to help protect stockroom

and loading dock employees include:

- Maintain at least 6 feet between co-workers and customers, where possible, and use social distancing.
- Limit customer capacity in stores.
- Stock displays during slow periods or when stores are closed to minimize contact with customers.
- If stocking occurs while stores are open, use markers or barriers to create separation between customers and employees stocking shelves.
- Prioritize employee health by supporting sick days.
- Collaborate deliveries to limit stockroom needs and loading dock worker contact with delivery drivers.
- Allow employees to use masks to cover their noses and mouths.
- Provide a space to wash hands and offer alcohol-based hand rubs with at least 60% alcohol.
- Clean and disinfect equipment and surfaces to minimize virus contact.
- Support employee reports of health and safety concerns.

This alert is available in English and Spanish language versions.

Info: osha.gov/Publications/OSHA4029.pdf and osha.gov/Publications/OSHA4030.pdf

MORE COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Employers with high-risk workers, restaurants/bars, mass transit, schools and childcare facilities received detailed guidance from the federal government on how to safely re-open following coronavirus-related lockdowns.

The CDC released a 60-page guide focused on specific types of businesses offering information on phased re-opening plans for restaurants and bars, mass transit, and schools and childcare as well as any employers with workers at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19.

The guide offers information for specific industries on implementing a three-step approach for operating businesses in the new normal.

Info: tinyurl.com/covidopen598

WHERE TO GET HELP

RESOURCES TO PREVENT EMPLOYEE HEAT ILLNESS

Federal OSHA and most state plans don't have regulations about heat illness prevention.

California does have a heat illness prevention standard.

And Cal/OSHA has a Heat Illness and Prevention web page with resources to help employers take four steps to prevent heat illness:

- Training
- Water
- Shade
- Planning.

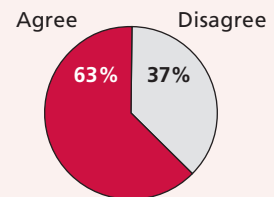
The web page is also available in Spanish.

Another resource from Cal/OSHA is the Heat Illness Prevention eTool.

Info: dir.ca.gov/DOSH/HeatIllnessInfo.html (English) and 99calor.org/espanol/ (Spanish) and dir.ca.gov/DOSH/etools/08-006/

What safety pros say

The way in which Americans work will never go back to "normal." Agree or disagree?



Source: Prudential's Pulse of the American Worker Survey of 2,050 employed adults

The pandemic also affected how workers think about their worksite. Nearly six in 10 say they'll limit their contact with people at work.

Info: tinyurl.com/workersurvey598

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?

Safety manager not feeling on same level as other managers: What should she do?

The Scenario

Manager Mike Kelly was working at home. The company's weekly all-hands tele-meeting had just ended.

These are great, Mike thought, but they need to start the meetings with everyone on mute.

The vibration of his cell phone made a buzzing noise on his desk. The screen said it was Cathy Lester, a friend who is in charge of safety at another company.

"What's up Cathy?" Mike said. "We haven't talked in a few months. Everything going OK at work?"

Years of experience, but ...

"That's a good way to put it – things are going OK," said Cathy. "No big problems, but ..."

"Yes?" Mike said.

"I guess I'm questioning my credentials," Cathy said. "You know

how I got into Safety ... I was a line supervisor for years, and when the previous Safety Manager retired, they approached me.

"I was lucky to get a lot of training and information from my predecessor," Cathy said. "But ..."

"What's brought this on? You said things are going OK," Mike said.

"They are," Cathy said. "It's not the front-line workers. It's when I go to management meetings. I don't feel like I'm on equal footing with the other managers. They've all got college degrees. I feel like I need professional development, but I don't know where to start or how to ask for it."

Mike thought to himself, *as usual, Cathy has a good idea. Now what do I say to her?*

If you were Mike, what would you do or say next?

Reader Responses

1 Cassie Hilaski, Director, Nibbi Brothers Associates Inc., San Francisco

What Cassie would do: First of all, I would remind her that her front-line experience as a line supervisor is equal to (or sometimes even better than) a college degree.

I wouldn't let her buy into the notion that she's not as good as the other managers.

I would talk up her years of experience and remind her that experience can't be replaced by book learning.

And then I would ask her what areas in particular she feels she could really use improvement on, or is simply interested in gaining more confidence/insight in, and steer her to any resources in the area and online.

I would also recommend her involvement in Women in Construction activities in the local area for moral support.

Reason: Oftentimes, women dupe themselves into believing they're not as good as everyone else in a male-dominated industry.

It seems to be part of our DNA. Extra moral support can be helpful.

2 Haven Snow, Safety Manager, Reyco Systems Inc., Caldwell, ID

What Haven would do: I would point Cathy to the limitless amount of free or fairly inexpensive training available.

Reason: Not only safety-specific training, but leadership and management training would benefit her greatly in being able to contribute and feel more confident in her role as a manager in general.

OUTSIDE THE LINES

2020'S SAFEST STATES IN U.S., CORONAVIRUS INCLUDED

Which states in the U.S. are safest?

WalletHub used 53 key safety indicators, including states' coronavirus support and assaults per capita.

The three safest states:

- Maine
- Vermont, and
- Minnesota.

The three least safe:

- Florida
- Louisiana, and
- Mississippi.

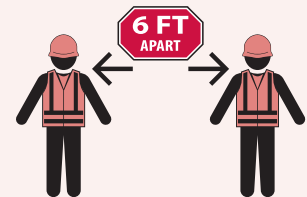
Arizona registers right in the middle of the pack at No. 25.

No. 1 for workplace safety is Minnesota. No. 50 in that category is North Dakota.

Info: To see where your state ranks, go to tinyurl.com/safestates598

Did you know ...

Use flexible work arrangements to combat coronavirus



OSHA recommends telecommuting and flexible work hours to prevent COVID-19 spread.

Source: OSHA

Even as states relax restrictions, OSHA recommends flexible work to reduce COVID-19 spread. This includes telework where feasible.

Info: tinyurl.com/covidguide598

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