

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 Sharpen Your Judgment**
Was equipment operator's death preventable?
- 3 What's Coming**
Execs in hot water for comp fraud
- 4 Who Got Fined – And Why**
Toxic fumes kill 2 in tanker trailer: \$499K OSHA fine
- 5 What's Worked for Other Companies**
Using comp data to validate safety strategy
- 6 Safety Regs Update**
OSHA issues final rule on access to employee medical records
- 8 What Would You Do?**
Employee coronavirus fears interfere with safety inspections

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 lead by veteran Editor-in-Chief Fred Hosier.

How a faulty gas alarm system killed a worker and his wife

■ *Untested hydrogen sulfide monitor to blame?*

Just like PPE isn't any good if a worker doesn't wear it, an alarm system is of no value if it's not in proper working order.

A malfunctioning hydrogen sulfide alarm system may have led to the deaths of a worker and his wife who were overcome by the deadly gas.

Checking on pump failure

Testing of the alarm system following the tragic incident suggests it may not have been performing as expected, according to a factual update report provided by the U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazardous

Investigation Board (CSB).

On the evening of Oct. 26, 2019, a pump component failed inside an Aghorn Operating Inc. waterflood station located in Odessa, TX.

This caused a release of water containing hydrogen sulfide inside the station and triggered a control board alarm about the failed pump, resulting in an automatic phone notification to an Aghorn employee.

Turns into double tragedy

The employee drove to the facility to check on the pump and was overcome by hydrogen sulfide gas a

(Please see Faulty alarm... on Page 2)

CORONAVIRUS

OSHA: Cloth masks don't cause harmful CO2 levels

OSHA is helping to separate fact from rumor about wearing cloth masks or other face coverings during the coronavirus pandemic.

The agency addresses this question in its coronavirus FAQ: Does wearing a medical/ mask or cloth face covering cause unsafe oxygen or harmful carbon dioxide (CO2) levels to the wearer?

No, says OSHA.

Medical masks, including surgical masks, are routinely worn by healthcare workers throughout the day as part of their PPE and do not compromise their oxygen levels or cause CO2 buildup.

Breathable by design

They are designed to be breathed through and can protect against respiratory droplets, which are typically much larger than tiny CO2 particles.

Consequently, most CO2 particles will either go through the mask or escape along the mask's loose-fitting perimeter. Some CO2 might collect between the mask and the wearer's face, but not at unsafe levels.

Like medical masks, cloth face masks are loose-fitting with no seal and are designed to be breathed through.

Protection from 'silent' COVID-19

In addition, workers may easily remove their medical masks or cloth face coverings periodically (when not close to others) to eliminate any negligible CO2 build-up.

Cloth face coverings and medical masks can help prevent the spread of potentially infectious respiratory droplets from the wearer to their co-workers, including when the wearer has COVID-19 and does not know it.

NEW RESEARCH

Noise risk higher in Services than thought

Workers in the Services industry sector – the largest sector in U.S. industry – have a higher risk of hearing loss than previously thought, according to a new report.

The new report identifies service sub-sectors with workers at similar risk of hearing loss.

The report, from the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, involved audiograms for 1.9 million noise-exposed workers across all industries, including those of 158,436 service workers.

The service sector includes:

- publishing
- renting and leasing
- legal advice and representation
- security and surveillance
- entertainment and recreation
- accommodations and food service
- machinery repairing
- dry cleaning and laundry, and
- landscaping.

Main findings of the report include:

- Hearing loss in Services was 17%,

while all industries combined is 16%.

- Many sub-sectors exceeded the overall prevalence by 10% to 33%.
 - Workers in Administration of Urban Planning and Community and Rural Development had the highest rate at 50%, and workers in Solid Waste Combustors and Incinerators had the highest of any sub-sector.
- NIOSH recommends more research.

Faulty alarm ...

(continued from Page 1)

short time after entering the pump house.

Having not heard from her husband for several hours, the employee's wife drove to the waterflood station with her two children to see what was going on.

Once onsite, she entered the pump house to look for her husband and was also overcome by the hydrogen sulfide gas.

Half an hour later, first responders arrived, rescued the two children who were still in their mother's vehicle, and eventually found the employee and his wife, both dead from exposure to the gas.

The next day, emergency personnel shut a valve isolating the pump from the water tanks.

Warning light wasn't illuminated

CSB investigators found the failed pump had a broken plunger resulting in the release of water, according to the report.

The investigation also revealed the hydrogen sulfide gas detection system may not have been performing as expected since a warning light on top of the building did not come on when the gas was released.

Emergency responders and Aghorn employees who responded to the incident didn't see the light illuminated during the incident.

The investigation into the exact cause of the incident is still ongoing, and the CSB hopes to have a final report sometime in 2020.

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 EQUIPMENT OPERATOR'S DEATH PREVENTABLE?

"I hate to make you go through this again, but OSHA is breathing down our necks," Attorney John Jenkins said.

"We did everything we could to make that site as safe as possible," Pete said. "No one should have died."

"But this was a freak accident," John continued. "You couldn't have anticipated what happened."

"I should have anticipated it," Pete said. "That's my job!"

"Let's go over it again," John said. "Maybe you'll see things differently."

Only one way to place machine

"Our bridge crew set up the piledriver in a narrow area between the river and another bridge," Pete said. "We looked at all the angles and found there was only one possible way the machine could be placed in that small space."

"We did a dry run – the piledriver wasn't even turned on – and let the hammer fall under its own weight, as usual," Pete continued. "But for some reason it sank further down than it should have and broke free."

"A piece of debris struck Matt, the operator, and killed him," Pete said.

"OSHA says he should have been standing further away," John said. "But there wasn't enough space."

"You looked at every angle and followed procedures to the letter – you said it yourself," John said. "We can fight this."

"It doesn't matter," Pete said. "It won't bring Matt back."

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

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

SAFETY COMPLIANCE Alert

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF: MERRIELL MOYER
MMOYER@PBP.COM
ASSISTANT EDITOR: LAUREN MCDERMOTT
MANAGING EDITOR: FRED HOSIER
PRODUCTION EDITOR: AMY JACOBY
EDITORIAL DIRECTOR: CURT BROWN

Safety Compliance Alert (ISSN 1077-9787), September 1, 2020, Vol. 27 No. 602, is published semi-monthly except once in December (23 times a year).

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information in regard to the subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other professional services. If legal or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be sought. — From a declaration of principles jointly adopted by a committee of the American Bar Association and a committee of publishers.

Copyright © 2020 Safety | News Alert. Please respect our copyright: Reproduction of this material is prohibited without prior permission. All rights reserved in all countries.

CRIMINAL CHARGES

Execs in hot water for comp fraud

■ OWNER, PARTNERS ARRESTED FOR EXPLOITING WORKERS

The owner of a California-based private security company is facing dozens of criminal charges for allegedly keeping workers from seeking workers' compensation benefits, wage theft and a variety of similar crimes.

A six-month investigation led to charges against the owner -- a veteran San Jose police officer -- who is accused of exploiting minority workers and hiding millions of dollars in revenue from state agencies.

Robert Foster and nine of his business partners are charged with workers' comp fraud, wage theft and dozens of other crimes for allegedly under-reporting payroll and shielding Atlas Private Security's earnings from auditors and tax collectors.

Told employees to lie

Investigators accused Foster and his associates of discouraging employees who were believed to be working 24-hour shifts for no overtime pay from seeking workers' comp benefits,

according to *The Mercury News*.

Employees were also allegedly discouraged from identifying themselves as Atlas employees while seeking medical care for injuries they sustained working for the company.

While at the hospital, one injured worker was told by a company executive not to identify herself as an employee, despite being in uniform, and to claim her treatment with Medi-Cal, California's low-cost health coverage for those with limited income.

When she resisted, the company executive allegedly threatened to have her deported.

The company was also said to have lied to insurance carriers about another employee injury, resulting in more than \$1 million in costs to be passed on to Medi-Cal.

A U.S. Department of Labor investigation began in January after an employee complained about being exploited, eventually leading to an investigation by the Santa Clara County District Attorney's Office.

Foster surrendered to authorities July 30 and is scheduled for arraignment Nov. 30.

ILLNESSES

Confused by OSHA's COVID-19 reporting rules?

Are you confused by federal OSHA's reporting requirements for coronavirus cases? You're not alone.

The law firm Baker Hostetler says it's been hearing from employers that they're confused by OSHA's reporting guidance on what to do if an employee gets the coronavirus.

Guidance removed

Baker Hostetler says OSHA published guidance on its website that appeared to conflict with its own rules and created confusion for employers.

So much confusion resulted that OSHA removed the guidance.

To top that off, OSHA is prioritizing inspections related to COVID-19.

And employees haven't been shy

about reporting their employers to the agency. Some companies have received fines as a result.

Under 1904.5, for a COVID-19 case to qualify as work-related, an event or exposure in the work environment must either cause or contribute to the illness.

An employer must classify the case as work-related only if it is more likely than not that workplace exposure played a causal role in the COVID-19 case.

Also, a case is reportable if the worker is hospitalized within 24 hours or dies within 30 days of the workplace exposure (1904.39). The employer must report the hospitalization or fatality within 24 hours of learning of a reportable hospitalization or within eight hours of learning of a reportable death.

TRENDS TO WATCH

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

■ 8 BUSINESSES CITED FOR CORONAVIRUS VIOLATIONS

Eight fitness centers in Washington face fines of more than \$77,000 for being open in violation of the state's coronavirus plan.

The Washington Department of Labor & Industries cited the companies for potentially exposing employees to the coronavirus.

It's the second time in a month that one facility, Anytime Fitness Selah, has been cited and fined.

L&I cited Bradshaw Development Inc. for operating the Selah location along with others in Union Gap and Yakima. Inspectors found all three facilities open on July 15.

The state also issued four citations to Fit City NW LLC for operating Anytime Fitness gyms in Moxee, Toppenish and Granger on July 14.

L&I also cited Double Down CrossFit Co-CrossFit Reformation for operating a facility in Yakima on June 24.

Complaints from the public led to the inspections. Each violation is categorized as "willful general."

■ STATE REQUIRES FAST NOTICE OF POSITIVE COVID-19 TESTS

Starting Aug. 5, 2020, New Mexico is requiring employers to report to NM OSHA any coronavirus case in which an employee tests positive for the disease within four hours of the employer learning about it.

This provision will stay in effect for 120 days (taking it into early December). It could also be made permanent.

A state spokesperson confirmed NM OSHA interprets the reporting requirement to cover any employee who reports a positive test, including those whose illness isn't work-related.

Roundup of most recent OSHA citations

Toxic fumes kill 2 in tanker trailer: \$499K OSHA fine

A Texas waste management company is facing OSHA citations after two employees were killed by toxic fumes while cleaning inside a tanker trailer.

One employee became unresponsive after entering the confined space, and when a non-entry retrieval system used in an attempted rescue failed, several other employees entered the tank.

As they attempted to pull the unresponsive worker out, a second employee succumbed to the fumes.

Fine: \$499,134

Company: Alpha Technical Services, doing business as Quala Rail & Specialty, Pasadena, TX

Business: Miscellaneous waste management services

Reasons for fine:

One willful violation for failure to:

- ensure appropriate test entries were made on confined space permit before authorizing entry

Two repeat violations for failure to:

- implement procedures for rescuing entrants from permit spaces
- provide training on physical and health hazards of chemicals in work areas

Seven serious violations, including failure to:

- identify and evaluate respiratory hazards in workplace
- test conditions in permit space before entry was authorized
- provide training on tank trailer cleaning tasks that established skills to safely perform rescue duties
- provide adequate training for night shift cleaning technicians when operational hazards increased

Amputation leads to \$485K fine for candy manufacturer

A Chicago-area candy manufacturer was cited after employees were severely injured by unguarded machinery in two separate incidents.

OSHA began investigating an incident involving an employee

who suffered a fingertip amputation after coming into contact with an unguarded rotary valve. While the investigation was ongoing, another employee was injured after getting caught in machinery.

Fine: \$485,008

Company: Ferrara Candy Company, Bellwood, IL

Business: Non-chocolate confectionery manufacturing

Reasons for fine:

Five repeat violations for failure to:

- provide lockout/tagout devices
- conduct periodic inspections of energy control procedures
- train authorized employees on control of hazardous energy
- ensure energy control procedures are performed in sequence
- ensure authorized employees use lockout/tagout devices when servicing equipment

Six serious violations, including failure to:

- provide adequate machine guarding
- maintain PPE in safe, reliable condition
- mark exterior of machine housing with signs indicating hazard of rotating blades

Walmart fined \$12K for coronavirus noncompliance

Nevada OSHA cited a Walmart store for failing to comply with coronavirus safety requirements.

The store was cited after inspectors found noncompliance with industry requirements related to COVID-19.

There were violations during both initial and follow-up compliance visits, according to Fox 5 News.

Fine: \$12,145

Company: Walmart, Las Vegas

Business: Department store

Reasons for fine:

Details on the exact reasons for the fine weren't immediately available:

- noncompliance with one or more industry requirements related to COVID-19

WORKERS' COMP DECISIONS

Can worker collect benefits for pre-existing disability?

A worker with an injured wrist claims he had a pre-existing disability, so he should get more benefits. Can he collect?

What happened: The worker injured his right wrist on the job which was later declared a permanent disability. He received benefits, but he felt entitled to more because of a pre-existing diabetic disability which caused severe pain in his feet.

Company's reaction: You haven't offered enough proof of the pre-existing disability.

Decision: Yes, he could collect. A disablement doesn't mean the worker couldn't perform the work he was doing when he was injured, but instead refers to injuries resulting in the general impairment of earning power, and there was evidence of the previous disability, an appeals court stated.

Cite: *Simmons v. Industrial Commission*, AZ Appeals Court, No. 2CA-IC2019-0003, 2/7/20.

Injured worker refuses light duty: Can he collect?

An injured worker refused a light duty position. Can he collect?

What happened: A truck driver injured his knee at work. He was offered light duty, but he refused since he was diagnosed with deep vein thrombosis in his leg.

Company's reaction: You didn't take our offer of light duty, so you're not entitled to benefits.

Decision: Yes, he could collect. The court found he was still in his healing period, so didn't need to accept the offer of light duty.

Cite: *Grant v. Westar Refrigerated Transportation*, AR Court of Appeals, No. CV-19-365, 2/12/20.

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 **Using comp data to validate safety strategy**

I had a client whose OSHA injury rates were declining over the course of five years but workers' comp costs were going up every year.

The client couldn't understand why Safety was telling them things were getting better, but Finance was telling them things were getting worse.

Most safety pros know OSHA 300 log data is not the same as workers' comp data.

But if safety pros are concentrating more on OSHA data, they're not

showing the financial impact of their safety program.

That's why safety pros have to take a deeper dive into workers' comp data to quantify the human capital financial impact.

Partner with risk management

I recommend safety pros partner with risk management to do this.

For example: If the wage replacement costs are more than 30% of your workers' comp program, there's an opportunity for Safety to interact with risk management and improve

the employer's return-to-work program.

Claims that are filed earlier cost less. So if workers' comp data shows less than 70% of claims are filed within three days of the incident, Safety can help encourage employees to report injuries in a timely way.

By collaborating with risk management, you'll have a lot of information that can show the value of your Safety program.

(Based on a presentation by Stephen Bennett, Director, Aon Risk Services, Chicago, at ASSP's Safety 2020)

**REAL
PROBLEMS,
REAL
SOLUTIONS**

2 **3 tactics for good safety training storytelling**

Stories help communicate points you want to make in safety training.

So what are the elements of a good story in safety training?

3 acts

There are three acts in a good story:

1. Explain what's going on.
2. Present the problem or challenge, and
3. Provide a solution that relates to the safety training.

It's a version of tell them what you're going to tell them, tell them,

and then tell them what you told them.

It's also possible to make storytelling more interactive.

Find a photo of a workplace with several problems.

Give the photo to the trainees and tell them an injury occurred here.

Then ask the trainees to create their own story around what caused the injury.

It helps employees think about all the possible things that could go wrong and how they can solve them.

What if you don't have a personal

experience to relate via a story during safety training?

Two solutions: It doesn't have to be your story, and it doesn't have to be specific to workplace safety.

You can relate a story you've heard from someone else.

And you can use non-work situations, as long as you related them back to the training topic.

(Adapted from a presentation by Regina McMichaels, Tim Page-Bottorff and Linda Tapp at ASSP's Safety 2020)

3 **Become more valuable: Innovate like a pro**

Innovation drives the world.

To be valued within our organizations as safety pros, we have to embrace innovation.

5 steps to facilitate innovation

Here are five ways a safety professional can help drive innovation – what I call “the winning mindset”:

1. **Accept failure as an opportunity to improve.** If people are afraid to fail, they can't innovate. Fear leads to inefficiency, lack of trust and

poor performance – not innovation.

2. **Encourage respectful disagreement.** If we all think alike, we're not going to be innovative.

3. **Set up an innovation framework for success.** Make innovation a priority, like Safety and Quality. Make efficiency of process and improvement in the way things are done a requirement. When that's done, innovation becomes a priority.

4. **Establish an innovation team.** Become the person who brings this team together. Turn the team loose, and watch crazy ideas lead to innovation.

5. **Create opportunities for early career**

pros to lead. When these pros are placed low in a company, they tend to disappear. Give them opportunities and they'll innovate.

The result: When you become an innovation leader within your organization, the next time someone has an innovative project, they'll think of you, the safety pro.

And when someone thinks of you, there's an indicator that you're a value to the organization.

(Based on a presentation by J.A. Rodriguez Jr., Director, Board of Certified Safety Professionals, Indianapolis, at ASSP's Safety 2020)

FINAL RULE

OSHA revises internal procedures for accessing medical records

OSHA issued its final rule on access to employee medical records, revising internal procedures agency personnel must follow when using personally identifiable employee medical information.

The final rule describes internal procedures that must be taken when obtaining and using such records.

Several provisions of the regulation were amended to improve efficiency for internal procedures, according to an OSHA news release.

Approval changes, clarification

This final rule:

- transfers approval of written medical access orders from the Assistant Secretary of Occupational Safety and Health to the OSHA Medical Records Officer, who is responsible for determining the transfer and public disclosure of such information
- clarifies a written medical access order doesn't constitute an administrative subpoena, and
- establishes new procedures for the access and safeguarding of such records maintained in electronic form.

The final rule was listed on the agency's 2020 Regulatory Agenda and

has since been published in the Federal Register.

Manufacturer fined for false abatement claims

A flooring manufacturer has to pay \$166,265 for falsely claiming to have corrected hazards OSHA previously cited it for.

An Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission administrative law judge upheld OSHA's recent citations against Timberline Hardwood Floors LLC for lying about its abatement efforts.

In 2012, OSHA cited Timberline's predecessor company, Timberline Hardwood Dimensions Inc., for failing to adequately train forklift operators and for failing to develop lockout/tagout, hearing conservation and chemical hazard communication programs at its Fulton, NY, plant.

At that time, the co-owner of both Timberline entities, Thomas Vavra, signed abatement certifications which stated the company corrected the violations, according to a Department of Labor news release.

A 2018 OSHA inspection found the

company didn't correct the violations, so OSHA cited Timberline for willful violations of the uncorrected hazards.

Timberline fought the citations, leading the OSHRC judge to the July 9, 2020, decision affirming each of the willful citations along with seven serious citations for violations including a locked emergency exit, unguarded machines and electrical hazards.

Smithfield settles with OSHA over COVID results

Smithfield Packaged Meats settled a lawsuit July 29 filed against OSHA to prevent the agency from obtaining COVID-19 test results of employees at a South Dakota processing plant.

The company had asked the court to protect it from a June 23 subpoena OSHA served on the SD Department of Health to obtain employee health records as part of the agency's ongoing investigation of the facility.

Smithfield initially argued this violated employees' privacy rights, but still settled with OSHA, although the case could be re-opened if needed.

Settlement details weren't available.

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(see case on Page 2)

Yes, Pete's company won. The court found there really was no alternative way to position the piledriver to allow the operator to stand further away.

The company claimed that under normal circumstances, the operator would be positioned at least 13 feet away from the equipment. In this instance, that couldn't be achieved, and the company had evidence to support its claim.

OSHA, in issuing its General Duty Clause citation for a struck-by hazard, argued the company could have adjusted controls on the machine to allow the operator to be further away. The agency offered a training video on piledrivers from the Florida Department of Transportation as proof.

However, the court found the video only showed the

equipment for a few seconds and didn't provide any details on how such an adjustment would work. No expert witnesses were offered by either side, and the court found the company sufficiently proved there was no way to position the piledriver to allow for more space.

■ ANALYSIS: 'NO ABATEMENT' TOUGH TO PROVE

Proving there was no means to abate a hazard is typically difficult to prove in court, and is rarely a successful defense.

This case was an exception because the company had definitive proof it couldn't re-position the equipment in a safer manner, and OSHA couldn't prove its suggested abatement method would work.

Cite: *Secretary of Labor v. The Lane Construction Corp.*, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, No. 16-0803, 7/28/20. 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.

COURT DECISION

The Mine Safety and Health Administration will not have to issue an emergency temporary standard for the coronavirus, despite a lawsuit filed by the United Mine Workers of America.

A decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit rejected the union's request for the court to compel MSHA to issue a temporary standard to protect miners from exposure to COVID-19.

MSHA is required to provide an emergency temporary standard if miners are exposed to grave danger from exposure to harmful substances, agents or other hazards if the standard is necessary to protect them from that danger, according to a blog post from law firm Jackson Lewis.

The agency denied the union's request to create an emergency temporary standard, so the union challenged the denial in federal court.

The appeals court said it wouldn't compel MSHA to issue such a standard, finding the agency wasn't unreasonable in determining the standard was unnecessary.

MSHA declared it is already issuing safety citations over COVID-19 and other health and safety violations, so there was no need for a standard.

In June, the court refused to compel OSHA to create an emergency temporary standard for the coronavirus in a similar suit brought against the agency by the American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations.

OFFICE OF INSPECTOR GENERAL

The Mine Safety and Health Administration needs to re-evaluate whether or not it needs an emergency temporary standard for the coronavirus, according to the Department of Labor's Office of

Inspector General.

A July 24 watchdog report from the OIG recommends MSHA take another look at its decision to not issue an emergency temporary standard related to COVID-19.

MSHA posted guidance related to the coronavirus and the mining industry on its website on March 26, but "unless it issues an emergency temporary standard, MSHA cannot enforce this guidance," according to the report.

The report was released days before a federal court refused to compel the agency to issue a temporary standard to protect miners from exposure to the coronavirus.

While MSHA is taking measures to reduce unnecessary contact, "such actions could impact miner health or safety as well as result in a backlog of work."

MSHA agreed with recommendations outlined by the OIG, according to the report.

WEATHER EMERGENCIES

Heads up East Coast and Gulf Coast states:

The updated outlook from the National Hurricane Center now calls for 19-25 named tropical storms (sustained winds of 39 mph or more) in the Atlantic Basin and Gulf of Mexico, of which 7-11 will become hurricanes (winds 74 mph or more) and 3-6 will be major hurricanes (winds 111 mph or more).

To be prepared, make sure your staff knows the meaning of warning terms used for tropical storms:

- **hurricane/tropical storm watch:** a storm is possible in the area
- **hurricane/tropical storm warning:** a storm is expected to reach the area, usually within 24 hours.

All tropical storms and hurricanes have the potential to be deadly. However, on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Wind Scale of 1 to 5, those categorized 3-5 are major hurricanes.

WHERE TO GET HELP

SAFETY STAND-DOWN TO PREVENT FALLS RESCHEDULED

OSHA's 7th annual National Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction has been rescheduled for Sept. 14-18, 2020.

The event was postponed from earlier this year due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Materials are available at OSHA's Fall Prevention Stand-Down webpage (see link below).

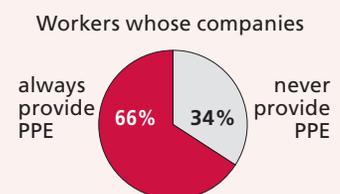
Resources are presented in several languages including English, Spanish, Russian and Portuguese, including:

- a brief video, *5 Ways to Prevent Workplace Falls*
- a series of fall prevention publications, and
- OSHA's fall prevention training.

Info: www.osha.gov/StopFallsStandDown

What safety pros say

Are companies providing PPE to prevent spread of the coronavirus?



Source: "Workplace PPE, symptom checks rise as more workers return" Gallup poll

The number of companies providing their workers with PPE has risen since April, when 46% of workers said their employers always provided protective gear.

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?

Employees' coronavirus fears are interfering with safety inspections

The Scenario

Manager Mike Kelly was getting a presentation ready for an upcoming meeting with corporate.

Got to get all my ducks in a row for this one, Mike thought.

The coronavirus had a big impact in all aspects of the operation, and the C-suite was relying on him for information and ideas.

Someone knocked on Mike's office door.

"Come in," Mike said.

As the door opened, Mike looked up to see Frank Logan, an employee in manufacturing.

"Hi, Frank," Mike said, putting on his cloth mask. "What can I do for you?"

"I'm sorry Mike, but I didn't finish the safety check this week," Frank said. "And I'm not sure I want to keep doing them."

"Why not?" Mike asked. "You loved the idea of helping out with safety before."

Inspections mean more exposure

"With everything going on with the pandemic, I don't want to be exposed to a lot of other people," Frank replied. "Doing these safety checks gets me all over the facility and exposes me to lots of other employees."

"I'm not the only one feeling this way," Frank added. "Andre and Sean said they're going to talk to you about dropping their checks, too."

This isn't good, Mike thought. *Having employees do those checks is pretty much the only way they'll get done with the small crew I have.*

If you were Mike, what would you do in this situation?

Reader Responses

1 Brian Nellis, Environmental Health & Safety, ArcTex Group LLC, Nederland, TX

What Brian would do: Place employees in face shields.

Reason: Talk with all who are going to be involved and remind them to social distance. If they get in an area where they can not do this, observe from a greater distance.

2 Sharon Collins, Safety Coordinator, Wilmad Lab Glass, Vineland, NJ

What Sharon would do: Masks are required whenever we go outside our own department or to another building, so everyone at our facility has a mask. We also do daily temperature checks.

Reason: That being said, out Safety

Reps have specified areas to take care of on their safety walkarounds.

When they enter a department, they can request everyone put on their masks.

They can do the walkaround when people are on break or lunch.

Social distance while observing the area.

3 Bob Brown, EH&S Manager, Zack Painting Co. Inc., Fords, NJ

What Bob would do: Call the managers together and coordinate the workers' activities so they can maintain physical distancing throughout each of their tasks.

I may also look at different ways of performing the inspections through technology as appropriate.

Reason: Frank's not the only one at risk in this example, but it does highlight how some are more sensitive to the situation than others.

OUTSIDE THE LINES

■ EVEN ROBOTS NEED A BREAK FROM WORK SOMETIMES

The use of robots in the workplace is, at times, the subject of controversy as some fear human workers could be replaced en masse.

Thanks to the coronavirus, robots recently began infringing upon human leisure activities, too.

In Japan, robots replaced human fans – who couldn't attend games due to coronavirus restrictions – in the stadium of the Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks baseball team.

At one July game, more than 20 robots "stamped and shimmied in a choreographed dance that is usually performed by the Hawks' fans before games in the 40,000 capacity Fukuoka Dome," according to Reuters.

However, the robotic invasion was short-lived as restrictions were lifted and humans returned to the stadium for the next game.

Did you know ...

OSHA recommends employers also train workers on proper workplace cleaning and disinfection methods and what to do if they get sick, including reporting procedures.

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