

November 2, 2020

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 2 Sharpen Your Judgment**
Injury was worker's fault or bad machine guard?
- 3 What's Coming**
Worker fatality wasn't employer's fault
- 4 Who Got Fined – And Why**
3 companies involved in fatal fire fined \$387K
- 5 What's Worked for Other Companies**
Presentations: Be concise, keep attention
- 6 Safety Regs Update**
New hours of service rules take effect for commercial drivers
- 8 What Would You Do?**
Safety pro feeling stagnant, isolated in role because of COVID

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.

Automation means fewer injuries? Report says opposite is true

■ Amazon robotic warehouses seeing high injury rates

When it comes to automation, some argue the use of robots, such as those used in Amazon fulfillment centers, could lead to fewer injuries for workers as they no longer have to do the heavy lifting, so to speak.

But Amazon's reliance on automation and peak seasons in its warehouses appear to have hurt more than helped its human workers, judging from data revealed in a recent report.

The company's innovative robotic warehouses – touted by Amazon as

being good for human workers – and high-pressure peak business seasons like Amazon Prime Day and the weeks leading up to Christmas resulted in injury rates almost two times higher than the industry standard.

'Injury crisis' at robotic facilities

In 2019, Amazon recorded 14,000 serious injuries at its fulfillment centers, with an overall rate of 7.7 serious injuries per 100 employees – 33% higher than what was recorded

(Please see Automation ... on Page 2)

CORONAVIRUS

Only 1 in 4 states get top ranking for COVID response

A new National Safety Council report reveals that despite COVID-19 claiming more lives than accidental drug overdoses, vehicle crashes and falls combined, most states have an inconsistent approach to safety during the pandemic.

The "State of response: State actions to address the pandemic" report assesses states' efforts in five key areas – employer guidelines, testing, contact tracing, mental health and substance abuse, and roadway safety.

Only 12 states received an on-track rating with the top states being:

- California
- New Mexico
- New York, and
- Rhode Island.

Twenty-eight states and Washington, DC, fell into the middle category called "lagging," and ten

states were "off track."

The NSC ranked state employer guidelines for social distancing, testing, contact tracing, cleaning and face coverings.

Employer guidelines

No state received a perfect score, but three states were cited for their particular good work in creating employer guidelines:

Utah has a comprehensive guide that's easy to read, goes into significant detail.

New Mexico includes guidance for all employers and specific industries on its landing page, and

California's recently updated general guidance is comprehensive, provides detailed guidance and includes information on regulations affecting employers.

Automation ...

(continued from Page 1)

in 2016 and “nearly double the most recent industry standard,” according to a report from The Center for Investigative Reporting’s Reveal News.

Company records – including internal safety reports and weekly injury numbers from Amazon’s warehouses – reveal a “mounting injury crisis at Amazon warehouses, one that is especially acute at robotic facilities and during Prime week and the holiday peak.”

Internal reports call out problem facilities with bad injury numbers, detail safety initiatives and programs, and show “a committed drive to improve processes with technology or design changes,” but they don’t propose reducing intense workloads on Amazon employees.

These reports and records affirm accounts from Amazon workers and former safety professionals who reported the company used robots

to “ratchet up production quotas to the point that humans can’t keep up without hurting themselves.”

For the past four years, injury rates were significantly higher at Amazon’s robotic facilities than in its traditional warehouses.

The problem lies in the robots being too efficient, as they can retrieve items for an order so quickly the productivity expectations for human workers more than doubled, and kept rising as time went by.

Workers at robotic facilities were expected to pick and scan about 400 items an hour compared to 100 items an hour at normal warehouses.

Problems on Prime Day

And internal data on the busy weeks around Amazon Prime Day and Cyber Monday show spikes in injury rates, with those two weeks having the highest rates of serious injuries for 2019.

While Amazon did launch pilot programs intended to reduce injuries – through job rotation, adjusting shelving heights and ergonomic changes – none of them were intended for use during peak seasons.

Out of the six warehouses testing the pilot programs, five put them on hold during the approach to Prime Day, and an internal report warned the programs could be terminated completely.

OSHA recommendations

In 2015, just one year after the company introduced its fleet of robots, OSHA issued a hazard alert to an Amazon robotic facility in New Jersey.

OSHA said the facility exposed employees to multiple ergonomic risks, including standing for entire 10-hour shifts for four days a week, and recommended extra rest breaks and job rotations to reduce the hazards.

Outside of the already abandoned pilot programs, Amazon has yet to implement these measures.

Info: For the complete report visit tinyurl.com/automation606

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.

■ INJURY WAS WORKER’S FAULT OR BAD MACHINE GUARD?

Flu shot, check, Safety Manager Pete Travers thought after returning to work from getting his annual immunization.

As Pete made his way to his office, he saw Attorney John Jenkins who was gently rubbing his upper arm.

“Something wrong?” Pete asked.

“I just got my flu shot,” John said.

“So did I,” said Pete.

“Well, I think my nurse learned her technique from watching 80’s slasher movies,” John said.

He didn’t follow the rules

“By the way,” John continued. “We need to talk about this OSHA fine we just received.”

“A fine? For what?” Pete asked.

“A worker with a crushed finger,” John said. “OSHA says the machine he was using didn’t have adequate guards.”

“They’re wrong,” Pete said. “That worker bypassed a perfectly effective guard.

“He took off his work gloves – which are mandatory when using that press – and slid his finger past the guard to hold a piece of metal in place,” Pete continued.

“Then he stepped on the foot pedal, causing the press to come down on his finger,” Pete said. “No one else uses the machine like that – the whole thing was his fault for not following the rules.”

“This is clearly unpreventable employee misconduct,” John said. “We can fight this.”

The 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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COURT DECISION

Worker fatality wasn't employer's fault

■ COMPANY ISN'T LIABLE FOR WORKER'S DEATH DESPITE VIOLATIONS

An Ohio appeals court found the family of a worker killed in a trench collapse can't hold his employer liable for the incident even though the company received OSHA citations in the aftermath.

Marcus Mennett worked for Stauffer Site Services LLC and was assigned to spread gravel and set storm sewer pipes at the bottom of an excavated trench.

As Mennett and other employees were working in the trench, a supervisor and a public works official noticed water seeping into the trench.

They ordered work to stop, then left the worksite to get trench boxes so work could continue.

About 20 minutes later, as the supervisor returned to the site, the trench collapsed and buried Mennett, who returned to the bottom of the trench for an unknown reason.

OSHA investigated and cited Stauffer for multiple safety violations, including a willful violation involving trench protection systems.

Mennett's family filed a wrongful death lawsuit against Stauffer and its owners.

The company and owners filed a motion to have the case dismissed because they were immune to civil liability under the state's workers' compensation laws, and a trial court granted the motion.

'A conscious regard for safety'

On appeal, the family claimed it established Mennett's death was caused intentionally and that the trial court erred in dismissing the case.

While the appeals court acknowledged there were genuine safety issues on the worksite, as evidenced by the OSHA citations, it found "a failure to provide safety protection or to adhere to OSHA regulations does not," of itself, prove a "deliberate, conscious attempt to injure."

Further, because Stauffer called for a work stoppage upon noticing the hazardous condition, "the company demonstrated a conscious regard for employee safety," so the appeals court upheld the dismissal.

TRANSPORTATION SAFETY

Crash shows need to inspect, maintain equipment

Safety professionals know equipment inspections and maintenance are an important component to every safety program, but even when such precautions are consistent with industry guidance things can still go wrong.

For example, conducting more stringent inspections and doing more regular maintenance on electrical equipment within a Pennsylvania Turnpike roadway tunnel could have prevented a fatal crash, according to the National Transportation Safety Board.

A tractor-trailer was traveling southbound in the right lane of the PA Turnpike's Lehigh Tunnel No. 2 when it struck a 10-foot section of overhead electrical conduit that had come free from its support system.

The driver died in the crash.

NTSB investigators found the conduit's suspension system was "corroded, fractured and missing transverse conduit supports at multiple locations," according to the report.

Guidance failed to prioritize repairs

Steps the Turnpike Commission took to replace the tunnel's electrical system were consistent with available guidance, but still didn't sufficiently prioritize repairs.

The NTSB suggested emphasizing the importance of inspecting, documenting and properly repairing significant corrosion in nonstructural elements above roadways to prevent such incidents from occurring again.

TRENDS TO WATCH

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

■ NEW RULE: COVID CLAIMS MUST BE INVESTIGATED

The Oregon Workers' Compensation Division adopted a temporary rule explaining that insurers must conduct a "reasonable investigation" before denying a COVID-19 claim.

These investigations must include:

- investigating whether or not employment caused exposure
- determining whether the worker didn't work for a period of quarantine as per a medical professional or the employer, and
- determining whether medical services were required for a potential exposure even if the worker didn't test positive for COVID-19.

Also, if an insurer reports five or more claims for COVID-19, regardless of whether the claims were accepted or denied, an audit will be conducted of files on all coronavirus-related claims the insurer denied.

The temporary rule is effective Oct. 1, 2020 through March 29, 2021.

■ NO 'IMMINENT DANGER' MEANS NO LAWSUIT

A worker in Iowa who sued his supervisor and a safety consultant over the incident that injured him cannot pursue his lawsuit against the pair, according to a state appeals court.

Kevin Lancial sued his co-workers, who he claimed knew the pressure washer he was using was unsafe, after a pipe blew off the device and struck him in the head.

The appeals court found that while the co-workers did know of a previous incident when the pressure washer injured an employee, there was no evidence they were certain the device was an imminent danger as defined by state law.

Roundup of most recent OSHA citations

3 companies involved in fatal fire fined \$387K

OSHA cited three oil companies involved in a Jan. 30 gas well fire that killed three workers and injured another.

The agency cited all three companies under the general duty clause for failing to maintain control of the well and monitor flammable vapors during servicing operations.

The U.S. Chemical Safety and Hazard Investigation Board is also investigating the incident.

Fines: \$175,419 (Chesapeake Energy); \$157,878 (Eagle Pressure Control); \$53,976 (Forbes Energy Services)

Companies: Chesapeake Energy Corporation, Oklahoma City, OK; Eagle Pressure Control, Fort Worth, TX; Forbes Energy Services, Alice, TX

Businesses: Support activities for oil and gas operations (Chesapeake Energy and Forbes Energy Services); natural gas distribution (Eagle Pressure Control)

Reasons for fine:

Chesapeake Energy and Eagle Pressure: *One willful violation for failure to:*

- use equipment approved for use around ignitable or combustible properties of specific gas present

Three serious violations for failure to:

- provide place of employment free from fire and explosion hazards likely to cause death or serious physical harm
 - include emergency evacuation procedures in emergency action plan
 - adequately train personnel in first aid
- Forbes Energy Services:

Four serious violations for failure to:

- use equipment approved for use around ignitable or combustible properties of specific gas present
- include procedures for reporting fires or other emergencies in emergency action plan
- adequately train personnel in first aid or make first aid supplies readily available
- use equipment approved for use

around ignitable or combustible properties of specific gas present

Employer fined for bypassing safety latch

A galvanized metal manufacturer was cited by Indiana OSHA for knowingly bypassing a safety latch on a crane hook, exposing workers to struck-by hazards.

Inspectors found several other crane-related violations causing struck-by hazards along with issues involving electrical equipment.

Fine: \$174,598

Company: Crossroads Galvanizing, Lafayette, IN

Business: Metal coating, engraving and allied services

Reasons for fine:

One knowing violation for failure to:

- establish workplace free from recognized struck-by hazards
- Seven serious violations, including failure to:*
- conduct periodic inspections of cranes
 - conduct crane rope inspections
 - get in-house, fabricated lifting device certified for safe use

Hospital fails to protect workers from coronavirus

A hospital in Louisiana was cited by OSHA for failing to ensure employees wore proper PPE to protect them from the coronavirus.

OSHA opened an investigation after receiving reports of employee exposure to the virus.

Inspectors found emergency facility employees often shared used protective gowns or didn't have gowns to wear while treating patients.

Fine: \$13,494

Company: Christus Shreveport-Bossier Health System, Shreveport, LA

Business: General medical and surgical hospitals

Reasons for fine:

One serious violation for failure to:

- ensure employees wore proper protective equipment

WORKERS' COMP DECISIONS

Death due to crash or obesity? Can she collect?

The widow of a worker who died from a pulmonary embolism claims the death was work related. Can she collect?

What happened: A snowplow driver working long wintertime shifts struck a guardrail with his plow, causing him to get thrown against the vehicle's dashboard. He didn't report any injuries, but several days later he died from a pulmonary embolism.

Company's reaction: The embolism occurred because he was overweight and led a sedentary life, not because of the crash.

Decision: She could collect. There was enough medical evidence proving the crash was the primary cause of the embolism.

Cite: *Mize v. Montana State Fund, Montana Workers' Compensation Court, No. 2018-4297, 5/6/20.*

Worker gets hurt, is later fired for fighting: Benefits?

A worker inhaled paint fumes, passed out and hit his head. A few months later he was fired for assaulting his boss. Can he collect?

What happened: The worker was spray-painting without a respirator when he passed out and hit his head. Months later, he got into a fight with his boss and was fired, but the worker claimed it was self defense.

Company's reaction: You voluntarily quit when you started the fight.

Decision: He could collect. The company failed to prove it fired him for fighting, and the court found the worker's claim of self defense was credible.

Cite: *State ex rel. Welsh Enterprises v. Industrial Commission of OH, OH Court of Appeals, No. 19AP-127, 5/5/20.*

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 Presentations: Be concise, keep attention

When you're making a presentation, whether to the C-suite or to frontline workers, it can be a challenge to keep people's attention.

If you get too far into the weeds when it comes to details, you can lose your audience.

A good presentation should be short and concise, and it should address problems and include information on proposed solutions.

Most importantly, a presentation needs to function as a standalone – if

you send it to corporate ahead of time it should be crafted so that if a leader decides to forward the presentation to others in the organization, the presentation speaks for itself.

Notes and pics

That doesn't mean it should be full of text and bullet points – it still needs to be concise – but all the important high points need to be hit.

Using the speaker notes in PowerPoint can offer additional context outside of the slides – without relying on a lot of text on the slides

themselves – which is a really helpful tool.

Another helpful tool is pictures – lots of them – because pictures speak a thousand words and can really help get your point across.

A good picture will capture your audience's attention and help bring their focus in line with the information you're trying to present to them.

(Adapted from a presentation by Bryce Griffler, Safety, Health and Environmental Manager, BAE Systems, York, PA, at ASSP's Safety 2020)

REAL PROBLEMS, REAL SOLUTIONS

2 Want safer workers? Engage 'fast brain'

As safety professionals, we often tell workers they need to be situationally aware to avoid hazards in the workplace.

However, you may not know you're actually asking them to do something that's physically taxing on the brain.

Our brains operate in the fast mode – or unthinking mode – the majority of the time.

Most of the decisions you make are done without much thought because

they're automated by your brain.

If you had to think through every single step you need to take in order to safely start and drive a car – engaging the "slow brain" – it would be an exhausting task for your brain.

Habits v. awareness

The problem is we confuse people by talking about having safe habits, which are the opposite of situational awareness.

Habits are unthinking, automated responses of the "fast brain."

But habits aren't all bad. We want workers to be in the habit of putting on their PPE, or wearing a seat belt without giving it much thought.

Identify where you can have people operating in habit mode and where you need them to actually be situationally aware, or both.

This will allow workers to use "slow brain" when necessary without exhausting themselves.

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

3 Using the power of storytelling in training

A lot of safety training relies on slide presentations, and unfortunately they often have too many bullet points.

Even if adult learners take notes, their retention of the key concepts you want them to remember is limited.

One way to fix this is by using quizzes after the training.

Ask the right type of questions

But quizzes often focus on "gotcha" questions, so they don't reinforce major points you want employees to remember.

There is another way to present safety training and avoid this problem.

The key is storytelling. Stories draw people in with a limited amount of mental distraction (fewer slides and bullet points).

Trainees aren't focused on taking notes – instead they're actually listening!

A good story (and storyteller) can help trainees "feel" what the characters feel in your story – they're developing empathy.

But a good story all by itself isn't enough. You still need discussion and involvement from workers.

Ask questions about the story

without making it a quiz.

Ask trainees:

- what they liked about the story
- what they didn't like
- to summarize a lesson from the story, and
- what safety changes they'd make after hearing the story.

Workers will discover the importance of the story themselves which will help them remember the key takeaways.

(Based on a presentation by Joe Korpi, Manager, Safety & Health, Renewable Energy Group, Ames, IA, at ASSP's Safety 2020)

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

New hours of service rules take effect for commercial drivers

Motor carriers must comply with new hours of service (HOS) rules starting Sept. 29, 2020.

The HOS rules set the maximum time commercial drivers are allowed to be on duty, including driving.

What's changed?

On June 1, 2020, the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration revised four provisions of the HOS rules. The FMCSA says these changes will provide greater flexibility for drivers without compromising safety.

The four changes:

- **Short-haul exception:** expands the exception to 150 air-miles and allows a 14-hour work shift to take the place of the exception
- **Adverse driving conditions exception:** expands the driving window during adverse driving conditions by up to an additional two hours
- **30-minute break requirement:** requires break of at least 30 consecutive minutes after eight cumulative hours of driving time (instead of on-duty time) and allows an on-duty/not driving period to qualify as the required break, and
- **Sleeper berth provision:** modifies

the sleeper berth exception to allow a driver to meet the 10-hour minimum off-duty requirement by spending at least seven hours of that period in the berth combined with a minimum off-duty period of at least two hours spent inside or outside the berth, if the two periods total at least 10 hours. Neither period counts against the 14-hour driving window.

“incident” means exposure to COVID-19, so under 29 CFR 1904.39(b)(6), a workplace exposure requiring a hospital stay must occur within 24 hours of exposure in the workplace for it to be reportable.

With COVID-related fatalities at work, according to the same standard cited above, an employer must report such a fatality if it occurs within 30 days of the work-related exposure.

OSHA clarifies reporting COVID hospitalizations

OSHA released a new FAQ on its website providing information and guidance on how to handle work-related coronavirus hospitalizations and fatalities.

Along with information on how to report in-patient hospitalizations and fatalities, the FAQ includes:

- guidance on how to calculate reporting deadlines for in-patient hospitalizations and fatalities, and
 - clarification on the meaning of the term “incident” as it relates to work-related coronavirus cases.
- For in-patient hospitalizations involving COVID, OSHA says

Some respirators can be used without fit testing

OSHA now permits use of tight-fitting powered air-purifying respirators used as protection against the coronavirus when fit testing can't be accomplished due to supply shortages.

The agency released new guidance Oct. 2 allowing use of these NIOSH-approved respirators if initial or annual fit testing is infeasible because of shortages of respirator and fit-testing supplies.

This applies only to healthcare personnel and other workers in high or very high exposure risk activities, according to an OSHA news release.

SHARPEN YOUR JUDGMENT – THE DECISION

(see case on Page 2)

Yes, Pete's company won. The court found the worker's bypassing of the guard was not reasonably predictable.

Pete's company claimed the worker intentionally bypassed the guard by taking off his work glove – required PPE per the job safety analysis – and intentionally sliding his finger under the guard. Other workers testified that this was the only way the guard could be bypassed and no one else operated the machine in that manner.

OSHA argued the machine did not have adequate guarding in place, exposing employees to crushing and amputation hazards.

The court found credible testimony from the other workers who said the normal operation of the machine did

not require an operator's hands to be anywhere near the area where the injured worker's hand was crushed.

Since the operating area of the machine presented no hazard, and because the worker took off his PPE to bypass the guard, the court vacated the citation.

■ ANALYSIS: IMPORTANCE OF JOB SAFETY PLANS

As this case demonstrates, a detailed job safety plan or analysis is important for workers and employers alike.

Workers benefit from knowing what hazards they'll face and exactly what PPE to use to keep themselves safe.

And if you find an employee isn't following the plan, they can't use “I didn't know” as an excuse.

Cite: *Secretary of Labor v. Aerospace Testing Alliance*, Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission, No. 16-1167, 9/21/20. 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.

LOCKOUT/TAGOUT

The fatal injury of a CSX Transportation equipment operator was due to failure to use lockout/tagout procedures, according to a National Transportation Safety Board report.

The operator's attempt to repair a railroad ballast regulator without powering it down and using lockout/tagout procedures is the probable cause leading to the machine moving and striking the operator.

The incident occurred March 12, 2018 at a CSX rail facility near Wartrace, TN.

A CSX manager of work equipment was traveling on a highway in the area when he saw the operator climb into the ballast regulator's cab, according to the report summary.

Shortly thereafter, there was a radio transmission from the operator reporting a problem with a proximity switch on the machine.

When the manager arrived to assist the operator, he found him under a part of the ballast regulator. The operator died at the scene.

The NTSB found the probable cause of the incident was the operator's attempt to complete repairs while the machine still had power and wasn't locked or tagged out.

This allowed the electrical connection to re-establish with the proximity switch, causing the machine to strike the operator while he was out of the cab, killing him.

NIOSH RESEARCH

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health introduced a new process for identifying hazards to assess air-purifying respirator canisters used by emergency responders.

Methods for testing air-purifying

respirators (APR) equipped with chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear (CBRN) canisters have been updated to ensure testing agents still represent all potential hazards the user may face.

A recent NIOSH hazard assessment study revealed that because new chemicals continually emerge, the organization needed to update its CBRN hazards to make sure the canisters can protect against changing hazards.

The study identified 237 hazards – 191 chemicals and 46 radiologicals – with 203 of those hazards grouped into one of the seven chemical families, with the remaining ones considered too unstable and irrelevant to emergency responders.

Reviews of each of these hazards showed the current 11 CBRN test agents should remain the basis for approval testing, so an update to the standards for air purifying respirators was not necessary.

However, five chemicals were identified for additional testing.

INDOOR AIR QUALITY

Portable air cleaners used to make indoor work environments safer from wildfire smoke do help reduce the hazard, according to researchers with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health.

Researchers found air quality levels in offices were like those reported outside by a local air monitoring station during a wildfire in the Pacific Northwest.

However, the portable air cleaner – a device recommended by public health officials – reduced levels by 73% during working hours and by 92% during non-working hours, according to a story in NIOSH's October 2020 newsletter.

Two identical offices were compared during wildfire season, one with the device and one without, with the results showing portable air cleaners do minimize the hazard.

WHERE TO GET HELP

WORKPLACE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FROM NSC

As a safety pro, you know workplace safety doesn't take a back seat during a pandemic.

The National Safety Council offers a variety of training relevant to COVID-19.

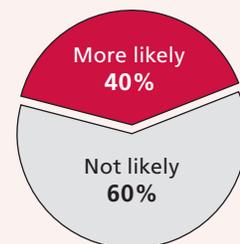
Among the training opportunities offered by the NSC:

- Advanced Safety Certificate
- Virtual Industrial Hygiene Basics course
- Risk Assessment Workshop
- Online workplace training
- Online Supervisor Safety Development Program Training, and
- Compliance courses (currently offering confined spaces and lockout/tagout).

Info: nsc.org/safety-training/workplace

What safety pros say

If there were no laws governing cell phone use, would American drivers be more likely to read and send text messages while driving?



Source: National Safety Council

The National Safety Council urges employers to enact distracted driving policies – such as locking cell phones when a vehicle is in motion – to keep workers from accessing their devices.

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 is feeling isolated, stagnant in role because of pandemic

The Scenario

Let's see, what do I need to cover in tomorrow's safety meeting? Manager Mike Kelly asked himself.

I need to mention COVID protocols, at least briefly, he thought. *And maybe something on slips, trips and falls since we had a near-miss.*

"Ah, I just don't know!" Mike said loudly, rubbing his temples.

"It seems like it's the same thing over and over lately," he said.

He was working late, so no one was around to hear him.

It's a constant struggle to keep everyone up to date on the virus plus keep them informed of the normal hazards – I feel like I'm not getting anywhere, he thought.

He looked at his calendar where the entry for a safety conference he was supposed to attend had been crossed off, the word "canceled"

written below it.

No contact with other safety pros

Mike sighed.

Whenever I've started feeling this way before, I'd go to a conference or meet with some fellow safety professionals over lunch and I'd feel reinvigorated, he thought. *Thanks to the pandemic, I can't do any of those things.*

He stared at his notes for the safety meeting, not happy with anything he'd written.

Mike began to write another entry in his notes, but stopped.

"I don't know what to do," he said.

Mike put the pen down again, not liking any of the ideas that he thought of.

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

Reader Responses

1 Steven Johnson, EHS Director, NVE Inc., Reston, VA

What Steven would do: Mike has to remind himself that his position is about protecting others and saving lives. What greater honor is there than this?

Mike should consider this an opportune time to get caught up on any loose administrative matters, as well as review the company's safety programs, SOPs, training plans, etc. for improvements, corrections or updates.

Reason: I'm certain most safety professionals understand how Mike feels in regards to being locked-down or locked-in, and stagnant during these COVID-19 times.

Many businesses have reduced their workload, and their staffing. Reduction in personnel makes for

a not-so-social environment and employees may want to take shortcuts just so they can maintain production.

And if Mike cannot see his way through this pandemic era, he should continue to reach out to others who are in the same field.

Short of face-to-face, social contacts are at one's fingertips, and there are times when the best of us must understand maybe it's times to seek professional therapeutic intervention.

2 Gordon Webb, Medical Director, LOHS, Alexandria, LA

What Gordon would do: Meeting associates for lunch may be out but setting up a Zoom lunch meeting with the same people may recharge you.

Reason: Conferences are canceled but I'm finding more and more webinars popping up that are very helpful and much more convenient.

OUTSIDE THE LINES

■ CASE OF 'DOG PHOBIA' WAS MORE BARK THAN BITE

A meter reader who claimed a job-related dog bite caused severe "dog phobia" had a "bark bigger than her bite," according to the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries.

Linda Jordan was working when a dog viciously bit her right forearm, which she said was so traumatic she fainted at the sight of dogs and could never go back to work.

However an investigation found she owned and rescued dogs while receiving comp benefits and claiming to suffer from "dog phobia."

She even maintained a Facebook page on dog breeding and sales.

Jordan was accused of faking the severity of her injuries to steal more than \$186,000 in benefits.

One official called Jordan's alleged actions "so blatant it's astounding."

Did you know ...

Read and follow labels on containers of cleaning chemicals



When disinfecting to prevent COVID-19, OSHA recommends **reading and following label instructions to prevent chemical hazards.**

Source: OSHA and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Reading and following the label instructions is important since mixing some cleaning products – like those containing bleach and ammonia – can release dangerous gases.

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