



January 2008

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Happy New Year Greetings!

Welcome to 2008! On behalf of the National Safety Management Society President Roosevelt Smith, Executive Director Jeffrey Chung and the entire Board of Directors, we want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Happy New Year, and Peace and Safety for all of you in 2008. We congratulate all who have worked so hard and passionately in 2007 to ensure a safe and healthy workplace, not only for your companies, clients and workers, but also for your families and friends. Thank you for reading the NSMS Safety Digest, visiting our Website and for being part of our Society. We hope to continue to add value to your professional development and work lives this calendar year and beyond.

NSMS 2008 Membership Renewal Notices Are in the Mail to You

2008 NSMS membership renewal notices were mailed out to all active dues-paying NSMS members. NSMS is very grateful for your membership throughout the years and looks forward to continuing our association together. Please renew by January 31, 2008. There is no dues increase over the 2007 rate. Your dues will support a number of critical initiatives, both new and ongoing. NSMS will strive to further: engage in outreach activities, maintain the website, offer online and live technical and management training workshops (with significant course fee reductions for current members), maintain certification programs for safety technicians and supervisors, prepare for annual conferences, offer CSHM exam preparation workshops, support the establishment of new state chapters and student chapters at higher educational institutions, and any other initiatives based on member needs and recommendations. These are ambitious goals and it will take a group of dedicated members stepping up and volunteering to help NSMS achieve them. Please consider offering your expertise and time to these important initiatives. Thanks you.

For inactive/past members who have not kept their membership dues current, but still receive our communications and access our website resources, we invite you to rejoin. We also encourage non-member recipients and readers of our monthly online Safety Digest Publication to officially join our Society and benefit from the networking, lower fee online professional development courses and special registration rates for attending our conference and regional workshops. A growing membership base will increase our ability to develop, deliver and subsidize programs and resources to all.

Welcoming Our New 2008 NSMS Members

On behalf NSMS President Roosevelt, the NSMS Executive Committee and the NSMS Board of Directors, we like to thank all members who have proactively renewed their 2008 membership to the National Safety Management Society. We would also like to acknowledge and welcome the following new members to our Society:

- Ralph J. Blessing, Corporate Safety Director – McKenney's, Inc. (Atlanta, Georgia)
- Scott Claffey, Manager of Safety Services – Great West Casualty Company (Bloomington, Indiana)
- Robin L. Compton, Health & Safety Officer – Entact Environmental Services (Bedford, Indiana)
- Esiri H. Kesiena, Safety Officer/Trainer – Hyundai Heavy Industries (Warri, Delta State, Nigeria)
- Gerald W. McNamara, Regional Safety Director – IBT (Grand Prairie, Texas)
- William M. Richardson, O&M Manager – Noresco (College Park, Georgia)
- Gregg Richley, Safety & Training Coordinator – Ajax TOCCO Magnethermic Corporation (Warren, Ohio)
- Lawrence S. Rozolsky, Certified Safety Manager – Certified Safety Inspections (Leesville, Louisiana)
- Erike Young, Risk Control Manager – Bickmore Risk Services (Sacramento, California)

We appreciate your interest in furthering your skills, knowledge and abilities in the management of safety and risks, as well as your interest to networking and professional development. Welcome again to NSMS!

Call for Nominations – NSMS Board of Directors

The National Safety Management Society (NSMS) is seeking nominations from its current membership to fill three (3) at-large positions on the Board of Directors to replace:

Carl Griffin
Tom Schneid, PhD JD
Tom Slavin, CSHM CSP

The newly elected Board members will be serving a two-year calendar term (2008-2009). The NSMS is looking for individuals with the talent and experience to help shape the direction of NSMS's future and we are especially interested in candidates of diverse safety management, strategic planning, organizational development and training backgrounds. All current dues-paying members classified as: "Members," "Retired Members," "Life Members," or "Fellows" (who are classified as "Members," "Retired Members," or "Life Members" are eligible to nominate a fellow member or self-nominate. No slate shall have more than one individual from the same firm, agency, or organization,

Please submit your letter of nomination or self-nomination with, along with the candidate's CV/resume, no later than March 1, 2008 and email it to nsmsinc@yahoo.com or physically mail it to:

National Safety Management Society
c/o NSMS Nominating Committee
P.O. Box 4460
Walnut Creek, CA 93496-0460

An electronic ballot will be mailed out to all current dues-paying members. Please make sure your email address is correct in our database.

Planning for “May 2008 – Professional Development Conference” in the State of Texas is Underway

Leveraging the successful experience we gained at our Annual Conference in Las Vegas, NSMS sponsor a May 2008 (2-Day) professional development conference in the state of Texas (The Woodlands/Houston area). This conference is open to NSMS members and other interested safety/risk management professionals/supervisors/managers/executives with the US and internationally.

Program planning and conference logistical efforts are underway to make this event a reality. If you are interested in being part of the planning committee, please contact the NSMS Headquarters via email (nsmsinc@yahoo.com) and we will connect you with the core logistical team.

If you are interested in speaking, submitting a technical, research or safety management paper, or sharing at our poster session, please contact:

Dr. Charles W. McGlothlin, Jr. PhD PE
Program Director, OS&H
Oakland University School of Health Services
Rochester, MI 48306
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If you are an employer, recruiter or vendor, and are interested in participating in our job fair and exhibition, please send an email to our corporate headquarters (nsmsinc@yahoo.com). Thank you.

NATIONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT SOCIETY

2008 Professional Development Conference: Safety Management Best Practices, Regulatory Update, Professional/Leadership Development and Job Fair

Date TBA (May 2008)

Location: The Woodlands, Texas

Draft Conference Agenda and Tentative Speakers

Day 1

7:15 am to 8:00 am	Conference Registration/Check-in
8:00 am to 8:30 am	Welcome/Introductions/Announcements (NSMS President Roosevelt Smith and Executive Director Jeffrey Chung)
8:45 am to 9:30 am	Guest Speaker or “Integrating the Environmental, Health, Safety and Security Functions into Business Operations” – James J. Thatcher, PhD
9:45 am to 10:30 am	The ANSI Z10 Occupational Safety & Health Management System Standard: What it is, why it was developed, and how it compares to other management system standards such as OHSAS 18001 and OSHA VPP. – Thomas Slavin, MS, MBA, CIH, CSP, CSHM.
10:30 am to 10:45 am	Morning Break/Networking
11:00 am to 11:45 am	“A New Benchmark for Integrating a Systematic Safety Management Approach” – Charles W. McGlothlin, Jr., PhD P.E
11:45 am to 12:45 pm	Lunch Speaker: “The Five Stars of Safety Leadership” – Steven J. Geigle, M.A., CSHM
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	The Jones Act – Overview and Regulatory Update
3:00 pm to 3:15 pm	Afternoon Refreshment Break/Exhibits Open
3:30 pm to 4:15 pm	“Safety vs. Risk Management: Can’t All Just Get Along” Scott Sloan, CSP CSHM ARM
4:15 pm to 5:00 pm	Speaker or “Problem Solving Tools Workshop for Safety/Health/Risk Managers and Technical Professionals” – Jeffrey Chung, PhD CSHM
5:15 pm to 6:45 pm	Vendors-Sponsored Reception/Poster Session/Networking

Day 2

7:30 am to 8:00 am	Conference Registration Check-in
8:30 am to 10:30 am	“Student Presentations – Safety Thesis and/or Research Papers.
10:30 am to 10:45 am	Morning Break/Networking
11:00 am to 11:45 noon	“The Aging Workforce: An Emerging Human Factors and Safety Issue Facing Safety/Risk Managers, Supervisors and Operations – Jeffrey Chung, PhD CSHM CHFP
12:00 pm to 1:00 pm	Lunch Speaker: “Safety Management Integration and Operational Excellence” – Anthony Veltri, Ed.D.
1:15 pm to 2:00 pm	Guest Speaker or "E-Learning in Emergency Management" – Dr. Thomas Schneid, Ph.D JD
2:00 pm to 2:45 pm	Guest Speaker or “Search of “Best-in-Class” Safety Organizations: Survey of Attributes Driving Excellence in Workplace “Safety” Performance – Jeffrey Chung, PhD CSHM
2:45 pm to 3:15 pm	Closing Comments/Program Evaluation/Final Thoughts Afternoon Refreshment Break/Networking
3:30 pm to 5:30 pm	Employment Job Fair and Recruiters: Student Internship Opportunities Safety Technician Level Job Opportunities Safety Professional Level Job Opportunities Safety Supervisor Level Job Opportunities Management Level Job Opportunities Vendor Exhibits and Poster Session

The NSMS “Blog” is Here

Steve Geigle has created and launched the “NSMS Blog” on the NSMS website. It will allow members and others to post comments, remarks and initiate discussions about a variety of safety management topics and issues. You can participate in the Blog by going to the NSMS website (<http://nsms.us>) and look for the link on the home page along the left-hand column of navigation areas.

FREE ACCESS: Online Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM) Educational and Exam Preparation Reference Materials

As a benefit for our current and future dues-paying members, NSMS is **permanently** offering free access to the Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM) preparation and educational materials. The online resources, created by NSMS member Steve Geigle, can be found at www.cshmprep.com and the only action an NSMS member needs to take is to email Steve requesting access from that website. You will need to include your current NSMS member number (found on your membership card and certificate). Once the number is verified, you will be granted a username and password to access the online reference materials. This is a great opportunity to brush up on your safety management and technical knowledge and prepare for a successful passing of the CSHM certification examination.

Safety Leadership: The 3 Factors of Effectiveness (by Jason LaBarge)

I believe that there are three factors that have a significant impact on the effectiveness of a safety meeting program and a safety program. They are:

- The things safety leaders pay attention to;
- How they respond to matters raised; and
- How they reinforce sound safety behavior.

Apply these factors to your own brand of safety leadership and I believe you will be able to improve your credibility and effectiveness. Let me explain how to do that.

Factor #1: What a Leader Pays Attention To, Measures and Controls

Problem: We do what we measure. So leaders need to establish methods to measure the key aspects of their own safety efforts. It's these measures that demonstrate accountability on the part of leaders and allow the leaders to hold members of their teams accountable.

Solution: Set firm measures and review them regularly with your team. For example, conduct a weekly review, including a discussion of safety participation and a roundup of issues brought forward at previous safety meeting for follow-up. Consistent review of these items and demonstration of progress build leadership credibility and promote a culture of accountability.

Factor #2: How a Leader Responds to Situations Brought to Their Attention

Problem: Even the most knowledgeable of leaders don't have all the answers. So you need to be prepared for those occasions when you don't have an immediate answer to a concern that's brought to your attention. Unfortunately, an all too typical response in this situation is no response at all. Such a lack of response allows the problem to fester and complicates the situation. And if workers perceive the safety leader as being unresponsive, they may stop reporting their concerns.

Solution: All concerns deserve a response, even the ones you perceive to be minor. If you don't have an immediate solution, use the resources within your organization to address the problem. For example, if *you* don't know how to solve a bathroom housekeeping issue, work with the person in charge of building maintenance to find a solution. Following up on concerns builds credibility with your team members.

Factor #3: How Positive Safety Behavior is Reinforced

Problem: Reinforcing positive safety behavior can have an enormous impact on your safety program. However, we are all sometimes guilty of focusing on the problems and not focusing enough on the accomplishments.

Solution: The leading indicator performance measures I talked about in item number one are excellent tools for identifying milestones that deserve recognition. Milestones and goals should be established and shared with each work group. The group should celebrate when a milestone is reached.

Conclusion

Any leader who focuses on these factors will raise their level of credibility with their team and enjoy the benefits of a positive work culture.

A Script for New Supervisors: How to Change the Talk from Co-Worker to Leader (by Dennis Corby, Safety Coordinator for City of Pasadena, Water and Power)

During the last 10 years as the Safety Coordinator at Pasadena Water and Power, I've seen newly promoted supervisors or lead men struggle with the same thing: How do you get your former peers on the crews to take you and your orders seriously?

Out in the streets is a rough place to work - there's the dangers of traffic, high voltage, trenches, heavy equipment, and it's all being watched by the public you serve. However, a more dangerous thing a new supervisor must face is the employee who challenges every request or order to move the job along. Let me share with you the same advice I've always given to new leaders.

The Promotion Role Reversal

Many new supervisors are thrilled to be promoted because of demonstrated skill in getting the job done. But your new role changes the relationship you once had with your co-workers. Maybe you were known on the job as one of the guys who liked to stretch the rules. You knew how to make a 30 minute lunch stretch into an hour. You knew how to delay the job so it ran into a "little overtime."

Now you have to enforce those same rules that you once took liberties with. You need to show your crew that you're no longer the rebellious one; you're the one in charge. That means you need to change how you communicate with your crew. You need a new script.

How to Talk Like a Leader

As soon as the first challenge shows up (even if they have been showing up everyday for the last 10 years, the next one is the first one), take the person aside, look him directly in the eyes and ask for a verbal confirmation that you're in charge. You may want to start the conversation with a statement like,

"I need to speak seriously with you for a moment. Do you realize that I am in charge of this job?"

Don't be confrontational, just firm. And expect an answer to be serious, not some smart remark. It needs to be a yes or no.

How to Answer No

If they say no, say:

"OK, let's make this clear. I've been assigned to get this job done and to lead this crew in the best way I see. Is that clear?"

Remember, your tone of voice is incredibly important. Don't yell. Don't be meek. Don't be challenging. However, ask the question, "Is that clear?" firmly with an expectation that they will answer.

If the answer is still no, you may have to move this conversation off the jobsite and with the aid of your boss or someone from Human Resources. And don't be afraid to have this conversation in front of the Union Rep. Be firm and professional. You have the right to establish an understanding of who is leading and who is following directions. You also have the right to establish an expectation of how work will be accomplished, how instructions will be given and received, and the disciplinary action that will come from altering these expectations.

When They Say Yes

When they say yes, you now have an agreement between the two of you that acknowledges that you are in charge. Here's the next stage of the script:

"Great. Now do you understand that I'm giving you a direct order when I ask you to do something?"

If the answer is no, then it is time to clarify that point.

"Ok, let me make this very clear. Even though we are all friendly and have worked together for years, now my responsibilities have changed and it's my job to get the job done in a reasonable amount of time. When I ask you to do something, I expect you to accomplish what I've asked to the best of your ability, without deviation and without putting it off - unless we discuss your suggestions or changes before you decide to make them. Is that clear?"

It's a yes or no question!

If the answer is yes, say:

"Great. Now, there is one more thing. Do you realize that making changes, not doing what I've asked, or intentionally delaying the job can only be considered insubordination?"

Wait for the answer. Again, it's a yes or no question.

We've gotten to the part of the conversation that will make you a respected leader for the rest of your career. You must make it very clear that not doing what is asked will be considered an insubordinate act and you must report such an act to your supervisor and it will go towards disciplinary action. This is where the new leader balks. You don't want to be looked at as the bad guy - or some more colorful words. You don't want to be the squealer. For the last time, look them directly in the eye and very calmly say,

"Don't make me do that. Let me ask for your suggestions without challenge. Let me direct the job to the best of my ability. Let me expect your best work everyday - without challenge. OK?"

This is the last yes or no question. Wait for the answer.

When the employee says yes at this point, you have taken the first step to establishing yourself as a leader and no longer "just one of the guys." You've made it clear that you want the worksite to be friendly and productive, and that conflict for conflict's sake will be dealt with quickly. It's not a bad thing.

Control the Conversation

Don't be put off by the way I word these questions. They work for me and I've heard them used verbatim with great success. But you need to put your personal style into the conversation with your employees. Just make sure that you retain control of the conversation.

If the conversation is full of laughter and playful, it won't be effective. If the conversation becomes loud and full of colorful language, you've lost control. You need to be the calm, firm leader that is in control. Ask the other person to step away for a moment because the conversation has become heated.

Calmly give employees the respect they deserve, even if it is before they deserve it, and it will be returned to you. And keep in mind the outcomes that you are expecting at the end of this conversation:

- They agree that you are in charge.
- They agree that your requests to do something on the jobsite are a direct order.
- They agree that not cooperating in any way will be considered insubordination and subject to disciplinary actions.

Don't Be Afraid to Take Action

If your environment is really full of challenging employees, the next step is to "write em' up" or issue a verbal warning at the first hint of challenge. Don't allow this conversation to be softened by your unwillingness to discipline those who will challenge you.

Conclusion

For new supervisors, these conversations can be uncomfortable. But it's your choice. You can choose to struggle to get your crews to work by being nice and friendly, and be disrespected for years, or you can be the bad guy for about six months and be the respected leader for your whole career.

Hazardous Risks? Risky Hazards?

The words "risk" and "hazard" are among the most commonly used terms in the field of occupational health and safety (OH&S). However the difference between a risk and a hazard is not always clear. To help eliminate confusion in this area, the OSH Answers website produced by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) includes a document that spells out the difference. Here is a summary of that document.

"Risk" and "hazard" are sometimes - misleadingly - used interchangeably. One dictionary even defines a hazard as "a danger or risk," hence the confusion. There is a clear difference, however, between a risk and a hazard.

In the context of OH&S, a *hazard* is anything with the potential to cause damage, harm or adverse health effects under certain conditions in the workplace. A *risk* is the likelihood or probability of that happening.

One might say: "Flammable liquids are a safety hazard (because they could cause a fire)", and "There is an increased risk of fire in a facility containing flammable liquids."

Here's another example. When referring to cigarettes as a health *hazard*, one could describe the *risk* as "x number of smokers per 100,000 will likely develop lung cancer" or "cigarette smokers are x times more likely to die of lung cancer than non-smokers." These sorts of statements illustrate that smoking cigarettes (the *hazard*) increases the *risk* (likelihood) of lung cancer, a potentially fatal disease.

Workplace hazards come from a wide range of sources. A hazard may be an object (such as a sharp knife), a substance (such as a toxic chemical, e.g., asbestos), a source of energy (such as electricity), a condition (such as a wet floor), a process (such as welding), or a practice (such as hard rock mining). These are considered hazards because they can cause harm. Knives cause cuts; asbestos exposure may cause mesothelioma, a wet floor can cause a slip or fall, and so on.

Practices or conditions that could release uncontrolled energy are also considered workplace hazards. For example, an object that could fall from a height is considered a hazard, because the fall, caused by potential or gravitational energy, could seriously harm whatever of whomever the object lands on. The potential release of compressed gas or steam, caused by pressure or high temperature, is another example of this type of hazard.

Remember that a *hazard* is something with the potential to cause harm (injury, illness or other adverse health effects). It doesn't necessarily always cause harm. The *risk* of this happening depends on several "risk factors" such as what hazards are present, the method, frequency and degree of exposure to the hazard, what kind of effect could result, and the likelihood and severity of the potential harm.

Fatigue - The Foe You Don't Want to Know at Work

Staying awake for 21 hours straight affects the human body almost exactly like a blood alcohol level of 0.1%, which exceeds many states' legal limit for drivers. Sleep researchers say drowsy drivers may cause as many automobile crashes as impaired drivers.

Now let's translate that to the workplace where someone might have to make important decisions, handle dangerous chemicals, operate heavy equipment or use a sharp knife. It's not hard to realize that work and fatigue don't mix.

Fatigue is the state of feeling very tired, weary or sleepy because of too little or inadequate sleep, prolonged mental or physical work, or extended periods of stress or anxiety. It varies, but on average we need at least 7.5 to 8.5 hours everyday. While it's always possible to reverse a short-lived or "acute" state of fatigue by catching up on sleep and rest, chronic fatigue may require a doctor's intervention.

Besides tiredness and drowsiness, other telltale symptoms of fatigue include irritability, depression, giddiness, loss of appetite, digestive problems, and an increased susceptibility to illness.

A recipe for shoddy, unsafe work - Fatigue affects:

- judgment,
- concentration,
- hand-eye coordination,
- visual perception,
- communication skills,
- productivity,
- performance, and
- ability to make decisions, do complex planning, and handle stress.

It slows reaction time, and contributes to loss of memory and ability to recall details, while increasing the tendency to take risks. Fatigued workers tend to become moody, have higher absenteeism and turnover rates, incur more medical costs and have a greater tendency to get hurt on the job. They also have a hard time staying awake and, to top it all off, are often too drowsy to realize they have dozed off or are not functioning well.

Does fatigue affect workers' safety? Science has yet to clearly support the link between fatigue and workplace accidents, however, Alberta Human Resources and Employment reports that most accidents happen when people are more likely to want sleep, between midnight and 6 am, and between 1:00 and 3:00 p.m.

Fatigue from work can be the result of long hours of mental or physical work, work shifts that are too close together without sufficient breaks, inadequate rest, stress, or a combination of these factors. Some people are more prone to fatigue if they live an unhealthy lifestyle or have ongoing problems and stress in the workplace.

Shift work, a necessary part of the working world, is another significant culprit. The human body is designed to sleep at night and cannot function at full capacity when its natural patterns are interrupted. Waking up, eating, and sleeping at unnatural hours upset our internal "circadian" clocks, which is why shift workers tend to be a little less awake on the job and a little less rested after sleeping. Studies have shown that one shift worker in five dozes off during a shift.

Other contributors to fatigue are poor workplace conditions (such as lonely or boring jobs), job dissatisfaction, heavy workloads, constant change and uncertainty, and burnout from overwork.

What employers can do

The National Institute for Working Life estimates that sleep-deprived workers cost \$350 billion US per year worldwide. It is in the employer's best interest to:

- Make sure the work environment doesn't promote fatigue. Try to avoid dim lighting, toasty temperatures and reduce noise.
- Vary job tasks to eliminate repetition or long stints of boring, monotonous work.
- Train workers on the importance of getting enough rest and how to achieve work-life balance.
- Introduce shorter shifts, and rotate shifts in the direction of the sun (morning, afternoon, night, in that order).

There is probably much more that employers can do. The suggestions above are by no means a comprehensive list, but rather just a few examples of strategies an employer may want to use.

Workers, too, can fight fatigue - Here's what you can do to minimize the effects of fatigue:

- Avoid driving if you are tired, especially in inclement weather where vision is impaired.
- Avoid excessive noise.
- Eat a healthy diet that promotes longer-lasting energy. Complex carbohydrates (starch) are preferable to simple carbohydrates (sugar). Avoid fatty foods and junk food.
- Adopt a steady exercise routine that includes cardiovascular, muscle strengthening and flexibility workouts.
- Make every effort to get at least 7.5 - 8.5 hours of sleep per night.
- Stay positive. Make a conscious effort not to be overwhelmed by negative circumstances.

Judge Tells Trenton to Re-bid Hospital Contract (by Linda Stein/Central New Jersey News – 10/29/07)

Here is a “lessons learned” story for management personnel putting out request for proposals and a decision-making process to award the contract that went awry:

In a ruling issued Monday, a judge threw out a health care contract that the City of Trenton awarded Robert Wood Johnson Occupational & Corporate Health, saying the bid process was flawed. The ruling was a shallow victory for rival bidder Capital Health System, as a city attorney said the contract would likely be put out to bid again rather than awarded to Capital Health or Professional Health Care Services of Lawrenceville, the other bidder.

In suing Trenton over the contract award, Capital Health had contended it was the lowest bidder to continue the role of providing emergency and occupational health care for city employees. The hospital system said its bid should have been given extra weight because it has extensive operations in Trenton.

Capital Health also contended that Trenton **bent the rules** to allow RWJ to submit the winning bid. RWJ, a Hamilton provider, had been allowed to submit an amended bid after failing to include its lump sum bid of \$338,000 for its services in its first submission. "The fact that Robert Wood Johnson was able to view the lump sum budgets of the other two bidders gave it a distinct advantage in crafting its own proposal," Superior Court Judge Linda R. Feinberg said in a 22-page opinion.

While municipalities have "wide latitude" in hiring professional services, the city should have not considered RWJ's bid since it did not match the request for proposal specifications, the judge said. The services contract was to have begun on Nov. 1, and would have run a full year. Trenton can now select either of the two remaining bidders, Capital Health or Professional Health Care Services of Lawrenceville, or start the bidding process over, Feinberg said in her opinion.

Working in Close Quarters

Workers sometimes have to enter spaces that were not designed for humans at all. Silos, vats, hoppers, utility vaults, tanks, sewers, pipes, aircraft wings and other "confined spaces" may be difficult to exit and are often fraught with hazards. They may lack oxygen and contain poisonous substances, making it dangerous for the worker to breathe. Sometimes, explosive or flammable gases accumulate in confined spaces without the worker realizing it, and could cause a fire or explosion if ignited. Confined spaces may be very hot or very cold, offer limited visibility, and contain various other physical, chemical, biological or electrical hazards.

Each year, workers are injured or killed while working in confined spaces. Of particular concern are the poisonous gases in some confined spaces that can kill a person without warning. Hydrogen sulfide, for example, may be impossible to detect since at high concentrations, it reduces the person's ability to smell the tell-tale rotten egg odor of this gas. Too often the victim count is increased because someone has entered a confined space in an attempt to save a co-worker who has fallen unconscious or is in some other danger. These would-be rescuers often succumb to the hazardous conditions themselves, and represent an estimated 60 percent of fatalities in confined spaces.

Before entering a workspace, workers should stop to consider whether or not it is a confined space:

- an enclosed or partially enclosed space that has restricted entrance or exit, and hazardous substances or conditions
- not primarily intended for human occupancy
- can be below or above ground
- confined spaces can be found in almost any workplace
- despite its name, a confined space is not necessarily small

If it is a confined space, the company should consider doing the work outside of that space, if at all possible.

The air within a confined space should be tested before a person enters. The testing is done from outside of the confined space. A trained worker, using appropriate detection equipment, samples the air throughout the confined space. Before a person enters, the air testing should show a safe amount of oxygen, and absence of any toxic or flammable gas. If the space cannot be made safe, no person should enter.

Working in a confined space requires special training. For example it also requires a good understanding of gas monitoring, ventilation systems, fire and explosion prevention, equipment lockout, and a thorough knowledge of the worksite's specific hazards.

Making and Taking the Call While Driving - is Risky

Driving in today's vehicles, equipped with every convenience from temperature control to cup holders and stereo systems, can be considered a luxury. The introduction of cell phones in recent years adds yet another element of convenience - as well as distraction - to driving. Driver distraction is one of the leading causes of traffic accidents.

Should an employer be concerned?

The potential for injury to employees or bystanders, and property damage to company or other vehicles should be a concern for employers. In the United States, companies themselves have been involved in court cases involving motor vehicle accidents related to cell phone usage because the employer allowed or encouraged employees to conduct business from the car. Some employers have established no cell phone usage policies while driving for company business to reduce the risk of accidents.

Potentially life-saving tips

For anyone who uses a cell phone, consider these safety suggestions:

- Above all, the basics of safe driving are more important than ever: Keep your eyes on the road and hands on the wheel. Drive defensively. Be prepared for other motorists or poor driving conditions.
- If you must use the phone, pull over and stop before placing the call. If you have passengers, ask them to handle the phone while you drive. When receiving a call, let voice mail pick it up, and call back at a safer time.
- Avoid stressful, emotional or important conversations. Do not write or take notes while driving and talking on the phone. Do not make gestures while talking and driving.
- If you must use the phone while driving, remember that the conversation, in itself, will be a distraction. Keep the phone within easy reach. Know the location of the buttons or, better; yet, use a voice activation program or hands-free option. Pre-program commonly used numbers. Trying to find components, putting on a headset or changing settings while driving is risky.

Don't multi-multi-task!

Using a cell phone and driving are both activities that require visual, auditory, biomechanical and cognitive skills. This means that while we drive and our eyes are looking for the "send" button or scanning names in our phone's address book, they should instead be watching the road, using mirrors, shoulder-checking, and watching the speedometer and other gauges.

While our ears are busy taking in a conversation on the cell phone, they should be listening for the sounds of the vehicle, the squealing of brakes, or emergency sirens. While our hands are fumbling with the phone's buttons or headset, they should be busy enough steering the vehicle and activating signals and headlights, while our feet operate the accelerator, clutch and brakes. And while our minds are on the phone conversation, they should be alert for the various tasks that driving demands - anticipating future movements of other drivers, assessing traffic and weather, and preparing to avoid hazards.

Ultimately, a driver's first responsibility must be the safe operation of the vehicle.

Safety from the Bottom Up

Feet can get hurt on the job. They can get punctured, crushed, sprained, and lacerated. A lack of attention to foot safety can also cause slips, trips and falls. Feet don't just get hurt while in motion - they also can be injured when standing in one place for too long. The human foot is designed for mobility. Continuous standing not only tires the feet but can cause the joints of foot bones to become misaligned. It can even cause inflammation that might later lead to rheumatism and arthritis. To make the problem even worse, people often wear shoes or boots that no foot could happily endure. Wearing the wrong footwear can cause blisters, calluses, corns, arthritis, toe malformations, fallen arches, bunions and other problems. A worker with sore feet is often less alert, and more susceptible to various injuries at work.

The first step to reducing foot problems in the workplace is to identify relevant hazards. Start with these factors:

How the job is designed

Tasks should incorporate varying body positions that use different muscles. Job rotation, job expansion and teamwork, as well as frequent short rest breaks, can all help reduce the toll on your feet.

How the workplace is designed

A workstation should allow the worker room to change body position. A foot-rail or footrest allows the worker to shift from one leg to the other and reduces stress on the lower legs.

What we stand on

An unyielding floor, such as concrete, has the impact of a hammer on the feet when stepped on. Any other type of floor is preferable - wood, cork, carpeting, or rubber. As a last resort, anti-fatigue matting provides cushioning that reduces foot fatigue, but should be used with caution.

What we wear on our feet

Fashion can be painful! Pointy-toed, high heels at work are a bad idea anytime, but not all footwear problems are so obvious. When choosing footwear, look for the following qualities:

- The inner side of the shoe must be straight from the heel to the end of the big toe.
- The shoe must grip the heel firmly.
- The forepart must be roomy enough for the toes to move freely.
- The shoe must have a fastening across the instep to prevent the foot from slipping when walking.
- The shoe must have a low, wide-based heel; flat shoes are recommended.
- The shoe must fit. Don't count on it stretching.
- Shock-absorbing insoles can help cushion the foot from impact.

Working Smarter and Living Better: New United Kingdom (UK) Initiative Promotes Smarter Work Practices

Could the nine-to-five workweek become a thing of the past? Changing labor markets and social responsibilities are causing employers and employees to seek more flexible arrangements in terms of how, when and where they work. A new program in the UK is promoting alternate approaches to work, as a benefit to businesses and their employees alike.

Work Wise UK is a not-for-profit initiative to make the UK the most progressive economy in the world by encouraging smarter working practices. It encourages the adoption of flexible working, remote working, mobile working, working from home and promotion of a work-life balance, to the benefit of business, employees and the country as a whole. Work Wise UK will provide a central information service for the UK workforce and disseminate key information and best practices throughout the initial three-year program. Organized by the IT Forum Foundation, Work Wise UK is a joint venture that brings together UK society, including the public and private sectors, professional bodies and trade unions.

There are various ways to work smarter, according to Work Wise UK. Businesses, organizations and workers in any sector might benefit from some of these alternative approaches.

Allowing flexible working hours, for example, enables staff to arrive or leave at different times. This could mean "flexitime," where an employee chooses how weekly or annual hours are worked; "flexiworking," where the employee works overtime and then takes that time off in lieu; or "condensed hours," where the employee condenses the week's work hours into four days and takes the fifth day off.

Allowing staff to work at home, or in Internet cafes, satellite offices or other alternative locations is another "smart work" approach that Work Wise UK will encourage. The number of people who work mainly in their own home, or in different places using home as a base, is currently known to be 3.1 million out of 28.76 million in the UK, or 11 percent of the total workforce, according to National Statistics for October, 2005. Work Wise UK believes this can be extended to 50 percent of the workforce within five years.

According to the Work Wise UK website, the UK workforce is currently among the hardest working in the world. Three-quarters of employees regularly work overtime, yet only a third of those employees are rewarded with extra pay or time off in lieu. One in six employees works more than 60 hours a week, and nearly five million worked, on average, an extra day every week in unpaid overtime.

For further information, visit www.workwiseuk.org/.

For The Love of Shoveling

With winter weather peaking around us, what's heavier: a ton of bricks, or a ton of snowflakes?

Lifting a heavy load can cause strain on the body. This simple fact is true whether the load consists of rocks, or of fluffy snowflakes that have clumped together into a heavy carpet of soft, slushy or frozen snow. Shoveling snow is a physically demanding task that results in the injury of many Canadians every year.

Ask yourself: *Should I be shoveling?* If you are unaccustomed to shoveling, or if you're not in good physical shape, shoveling snow can be a strain on the heart and back. Older, overweight people, or those with a history of back or heart problems should avoid the task altogether and delegate it to someone else, or use a snow-blower to clear the snow.

Allow plenty of time. Often the need for shoveling snow arises unexpectedly and in our effort to get it over with as fast as possible, we may tackle the task hurriedly and not prepare properly. Rushing the task of shoveling snow can cause cold exposure, fatigue, muscular strains and more serious injury, particularly to the lower back.

If you are physically fit enough to shovel snow, take the time to do it properly. Do warm-up stretches and flexing exercises before you begin to loosen up the muscles and prepare them for the job ahead. Take that extra few minutes to dress properly, in several layers of warm, lightweight clothing; the inner layer should be a fishnet or thermal fabric that wicks perspiration away from your skin. Cover your head, especially your ears. Wear water-resistant boots that are high-cut and have good traction. Wear light, flexible gloves with a good grip. In very cold weather, wear something over your mouth. Do not shovel at all if the temperature drops below -40 C, or below -25 to -30C, when it is windy.

Use the right shovel. To shovel snow, use a snow shovel - not any other kind. It should be lightweight, with a plastic or wood grip. The blade should be of a manageable size. If the blade is too large, your load will be too heavy. As for the handle, it should be long enough so that you won't have to stoop to shovel. Use this general guideline: When the blade is placed on the ground, the shovel's total length (blade plus handle) should be approximately to elbow height when arms are at your side.

Don't overdo it. When you shovel, push rather than lift the snow. If you must throw it, take only as much snow as you can easily lift and turn your feet to the direction you're throwing. Do not twist at the waist. Remember that the wetter the snow, the heavier it is.

Shoveling will make you sweat, so if you stop you could get a chill. Stay mobile, and shovel at a steady pace. The trick is to shovel efficiently without becoming fatigued. A good recommended rate for continuous shoveling is usually considered to be around 15 scoops per minute. In the more extreme conditions, such as very cold and windy weather, 15 minutes of shoveling should be followed by 15 minutes of rest.

Happy New Year, and happy shoveling!

Touchy Feely May Mean Coughy Sneezy

We are not “out of the woods” yet with this flu season. You can't see them, but you might be able to outsmart them - here are some tips to help slow down those "germs" that spread infections and make "holes" in the employee attendance records.

Individuals can slow the spread of infections, primarily by staying healthy. That means a well-balanced diet, regular exercise and plenty of sleep. But there are other ways to lessen the spread of infections too. One of the best is frequent hand washing - all you need is soap and warm water - and to wash, especially after coughing, sneezing, or blowing your nose. Also, when you are out in public, try to avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth, which are potential routes of entry.

Other tips to help stop the spread of "germs"? When you have a cold or flu, stay home so you don't spread it to other people. The old rule of covering your nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing still applies, but be sure to use a tissue so you can throw it away.

A workplace can proactively help in prevention of infectious illnesses by implementing an infection control plan. This plan should include ensuring proper ventilation, and providing clean facilities for hand washing. If washing facilities are not possible or if workers are on the road, waterless alcohol-based hand sanitizers can be used. If a very bad cold or flu is making its way through the office, you can also try to reduce the number of "things" that get touched by other people - ask people to not share mugs or dishes, and remove magazines and papers from waiting areas or common rooms.

Other ways to squash a bug

Cleaning - Influenza viruses can live on hard surfaces for up to 2 days. In most workplaces and homes, cleaning floors, walls, doorknobs, etc with soap and water is very adequate. In some workplaces, such as a hospital or health care facility, further cleaning can be done. When necessary, work surfaces can be cleaned using a bleach and water solution, or alcohol, depending on the surface (visit the OSH Answers link at the end of this article for more information).

Social distancing - Not to be antisocial, but sometimes handshakes may not be appropriate. Also, viruses spread easily in large crowds, so keeping a distance of at least one meter (3 feet) will slow their spread. As added precaution, you may want to replace face-to-face meetings with phone calls, or video conferences. In a pandemic situation, it may be necessary to allow employees to work from home, or to work flexible hours (to keep the number of interactions to a minimum). You may also want to think about keep large gatherings such as meetings and workshops and business travel, to a minimum.

Depression in the Workplace - Better Care Improves Worker's Mental Health and Bottom Line

Many of us have known someone close - a friend, family member or co-worker - who has suffered the debilitating affects of depression. They withdraw from us and lose interest in their regular activities, have little or no energy, seem sad, irritable or hostile and/or full of despair. And there is no amount of "cheering up", exercise or vacation that can chase the depression away.

That's because depression is a serious medical illness. It's more than just a feeling of being sad or "blue" for a few days. These depressed moods and feelings persist for weeks, deepening and eventually interfering with everyday life. People in their working years, between the ages of 24 and 44 are most affected.

The impact of undiagnosed depression

The fact that this highly prevalent illness is under diagnosed and under treated may cost the employer significant expense in lost productivity and absenteeism. Mental health disorders are more costly (workplace and health care costs) than many physical health conditions.

People with depression will try hardest to hide their illness at work. Fear of hurting their future opportunities, being reprimanded, fired or disgraced for feeling or acting "down", and feelings of shame can prevent someone from seeking help. They may also not realize that they have a legitimate and treatable illness.

Some people abuse alcohol and/or drugs to cope with their depression. A person can become so withdrawn they can't get out of bed to face the day. Their unexplained, frequent "sick days" can make family and co-workers resentful, and in some workplaces, result in dismissal. Higher absenteeism and turnover and lost productivity can affect the organization's bottom line and performance.

If there are negative attitudes in the workplace about mental illness and depression, employees may suffer in silence and not seek help. If depression is not treated, it can last for months or years and even result in death.

What to look for

Depression may begin gradually or suddenly. A person who is clinically depressed will seem more withdrawn and isolated than usual. Although not everyone experiences this illness in the exact same way, there are common signs:

- Sadness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities they used to enjoy
- Change in weight
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Energy loss, chronic fatigue
- Slowness of speech
- Alcohol/drug abuse
- Feelings of worthlessness, hopelessness and or despair

In the workplace, a person with depression may exhibit any of the following signs:

- Difficulty in making decisions
- Decreased productivity
- Inability to concentrate
- Drop in dependability
- Increase in errors in work
- Prone to accidents
- Frequent lateness, increased absenteeism
- Lack of enthusiasm for work

Someone who has been experiencing several of these signs for more than a few weeks should seek help.

Getting help

If you think a co-worker may be experiencing depression, you should continue to show them respect. You can help make the person feel valued in the workplace and offer encouragement and positive words every day.

Discreetly encourage your co-worker to speak to their doctor, an on-site occupational health nurse, or your employee assistance professional. These people can direct them toward appropriate treatment such as counseling, self-help groups, family and peer support, or provide referrals to specialists who may recommend medication or psychotherapy. These treatments are highly successful, but they will only work if the depressed person takes the first step to seek help and get a professional diagnosis.

Enhanced care for depression helps improve worker health and productivity

Once depression is recognized, help can make a difference for 80% of people who are affected, allowing them to get back to their regular activities.

Employees seeking treatment for depression who participated in a program that included telephone outreach had fewer symptoms, worked more hours and had greater job retention than participants receiving usual care, according to a study in the September 26 issue of Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). The study, "Enhanced Depression Treatment and Work Outcomes," finds that a telephone outreach and care management program that screened depressed workers and encouraged them to enter outpatient treatment and directed them to psychotherapy and/or medication for their illness led to improved productivity, greater staff retention and happier staff members.

The results suggest that the benefits of providing enhanced care for workers who are depressed go beyond improved health to workers and extend to improved workplace outcomes. The financial value to employers in terms of recovered hiring, training, and salary costs shows that many employers gain a positive return on investment from outreach and enhanced treatment of workers suffering with depression.

Bottom line - everyone benefits by making depression their business - and by taking and giving better care.

Training Improves Safety at Work (Story from BBC NEWS – 10/2007):

Companies with managers who are poorly trained in health and safety have eight times more accidents at work, according to new research.

Experts at Glasgow Caledonian University collected data from more than 100 building contractors. They found that health and safety managers who vetted sub-contractors had an accident rate at work of more than 60% less than those who did not.

Calls have been made for the regulation of UK-wide standards of competence.

The Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH), Europe's biggest body of health and safety professionals, which commissioned the research, called for action to ensure properly qualified safety professionals are in place.

Ray Hurst, IOSH president elect, said: "These latest results show that health and safety is good for people and it's good for business.

"Skimping on safety has a very negative human impact indeed."

"This research provides lessons for all and demonstrates that organizations with more qualified health and safety personnel have lower accident rates."

Accidents at work - such as falls from ladders, burns and exposure to asbestos - left more than 200 people dead and a further 300,000 seriously injured across Great Britain last year.

Safety Training Strategies – “Naming That Acronym” (Richard Fisher, Fleet Maintenance Supervisor - Glenn O. Hawbaker) [from "Safety Stuff" by Richard Hawk Inc.]

I work as a shift supervisor for a maintenance fleet. I conduct weekly safety meetings, and try to focus on shop related topics. I try to keep them interesting, because topics are usually discussed over and over again, becoming a bit bland. I came up with an idea, and thought I would share it with you.

Throughout the safety meeting, I go around the room and ask if anyone has noticed any safety issues in the shop. When I say their name, I write the first letter of their name on a piece of paper, and move on to the next person (never in the same order). After I ask everyone if they have noticed any safety issues, I read the first letter of each name.

Kyle Chuck Andy Paul Dave

Everyone writes the letters down. Then, using the letters they try to come up with a safety related acronym.

Keep Chisels And Punches Dressed

It is a lot of fun to see what people come up with in a short amount of time, and everyone has fun with it.

Say What? (from "Safety Stuff" by Richard Hawk Inc.)

“SAFETY FIRST PLEASE PUT ON YOUR SEAT BELT PREPARE FOR ACCIDENT”

(Sign in a Japanese taxi)

”SWIMMING POOL SUGGESTIONS OPEN 24 HOURS LIFEGUARD ON DUTY 8AM TO 8PM DROWNING ABSOLUTELY PROHIBITED”

(Sign at a resort in the Philippines)

”WHEN YOU CAN SEE THIS SIGN THE RIVER IS UNDER WATER”

(Sign in a country lane)

”REMEMBER, OBJECTS IN THE MIRROR ARE ACTUALLY BEHIND YOU”

(On a helmet mounted mirror used by U.S. cyclists)

Dangerous Records

1. **Fastest Car Driven While Blindfolded:** 144.75 mph, by Mike Newman at North Yorkshire, U.K., in August 2003.
2. **Scorpion Eating:** 35,000 by Rene Alvarenga of El Salvador. He averages 25 poisonous scorpions a day.
3. **Fastest Motorcycle Driven While Blindfolded:** 164.87 mph, by Billy Baxter at Wiltshire, U.K., in August 2004.
4. **Most Rattlesnakes Held in the mouth at One Time:** Eight, by Jackie Bibby in Orlando, Florida, in May 2001.

Can Loud Music Cause Physical Damage?

Undoubtedly. Turn up the bass, and the high-pressure sound waves can literally knock the wind out of you, causing your lungs to collapse. The condition, known as primary spontaneous pneumothorax, was experienced by one man while driving. Doctors blamed the injury on a subwoofer he had installed to boost his in-car stereo. Another man described a sudden sharp pain in his lung while standing next to a loudspeaker at a club.

Doctors believe that tiny pockets of air become trapped in the outer tissues of the lungs, and when hit by intense pulses of sound these air pocket resonate so much they can rupture the tissue, allowing air to leak from the lung. Most cases of primary spontaneous pneumothorax are thought to be caused by air leaks at so-called "emphysema-like changes" or in areas of pleural porosity at the surface of the lung.

John Harvey, a lung specialist at Southmead hospital, Bristol, teamed up with colleagues in Belgium to highlight the danger. "In the worst case scenario, the leak is big and continues, so the lung can collapse," he says. Only certain frequencies, the bass tones between 30 and 150 Hz, are thought to be problematic.

No one knows how many collapsed lungs are due to loud music. "It's never been described before so we don't know how common it is," says Harvey. "But whenever we mention it at meetings, people say, 'I had a case like that'. Now that it's a described association, hopefully doctors will ask patients and we'll probably find it's not uncommon."

Safety Tidbits (from "Safety Stuff" by Richard Hawk Inc. <http://www.richardhawking.com>)

- You have three times the likelihood of surviving a plane crash at 70 mph than at 120 mph.
- On November 26, 1970, 1.8 inches of rain fell in 1 minute at Bassee Terre, Guadeloupe. The most intense rainfall ever recorded.
- A bite from a brown recluse spider can cause a skin ulcer that takes months to heal.
- In the Ukraine, it's considered good luck if you find a spider web on Christmas morning.
- A person's sense of hearing becomes less sharp after overeating.
- Greenland has to import all of its Christmas trees.
- It's not an old wives' tale! A fruitcake, properly prepared and stored, will last for 25 years.
- The burnt wick of a candle is called the *snast*.
- Almost one-third of urban motor vehicle-related deaths are pedestrians.
- Exercise isn't just good for your heart and waist size; thirty minutes of exercise also reduces eye pressure by up to 20 percent.
- More than 2 million Americans see a doctor because of dizziness every year.