



## February 2008

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## **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:

- Frank M. Gray, Student Member – Gray’s Creekside Manor (Kittanning, Pennsylvania)
- William A. Huff, Senior Safety Engineer – Wellman, Inc. (Bay St. Louis, Mississippi)
- Albert W. Jacobsmeyer, Policyholder Services Specialist – State Compensation Insurance Fund (San Francisco, California)
- Dr. Ahmad Latif, MD, Head of Preventive Affairs – School of Healthcare (Alkharj, Saudi Arabia)
- Ivelisse C. Scott, Managing Director – New Century Global Safety Solutions, LLC (Ponce, Puerto Rico)
- Philip Ufomba, QA/QC Engineer – Hyundai Heavy Industries NIG, Ltd (Lagos, Nigeria)
- Jonathan R. Vasilopus, safety & Environmental Management Student, - Allegheny Ludlum (Lower Burrell, Pennsylvania)

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](mailto: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 Underway for the “NSMS 2008 Professional Development Conference”**

With availability of cost-effective conference space around The Woodlands/Houston areas during the month of May, our decision making process to site a venue has been protracted. However, NSMS is actively moving forward with developing the 2-day conference agenda and program. We had an outstanding Annual Conference in Las Vegas last winter and the positive feedback we received is asking for more professional development events. This upcoming conference is open to NSMS members and other interested safety/risk management professionals/supervisors/managers/executives with the US and internationally, as well as students pursuing degrees in the field..

If you are interested in being part of the planning committee, please contact the NSMS Headquarters via email ([nsmsinc@yahoo.com](mailto: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  
Email: [mcglothl@oakland.edu](mailto:mcglothl@oakland.edu)  
(248) 370-2664

As an employer, Recruiter or vendor, if you are interested in participating in our job fair and exhibition. Please send an email to our corporate headquarters ([nsmsinc@yahoo.com](mailto: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

Location: Tentatively 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

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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](http://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.

## **OSHA Issues Final PPE Rule** (By Katherine Torres, Occupational Hazards – 11/07)

After nine years of anticipation and union lawsuits aimed to spur action, OSHA issued a final rule on employer-paid personal protective equipment (PPE) on Nov. 15. The rule will force employers to pay for PPE, removing the financial burden from employees. The new rule will not compel employers to supply PPE where none had been required before, and the rule won't dictate what PPE employers must mandate. “Simply put, the rule for employer PPE applies only when an equipment is used by an employer to comply with one of the PPE requirements of OSHA standards,” said OSHA Administrator Edwin Foulke Jr.

Foulke told the press that most employers were already paying for 95 percent of the cost of personal protective equipment and paying the rest will cost approximately \$85 million. In addition, he asserted that the new rule would have substantial safety benefits that will result in more than 21,000 fewer occupational injuries per year, which will also save more than \$200 million per year in costs including medical and insurance bills, not to mention “reduce the pain and suffering of many employees.”

He explained that the rule does not cover uniforms, caps or other clothing employees wear solely for the purpose of identifying them as part of a particular company. He also said that the rule doesn't apply to items worn to keep employees clean in situations unrelated to occupational safety and health, such as hair nets. Other exceptions are applied towards ordinary

safety-toed footwear, ordinary prescription safety eyewear, logging boots, ordinary clothing and weather-related gear. The final rule also clarifies OSHA's requirements regarding payment for employee-owned PPE and replacement PPE.

While these clarifications have added several paragraphs to the regulatory text, the final rule provides employees no less protection than they would have received under the 1999 proposed standard, Foulke said. "This final rule will clarify who is responsible for paying for PPE, which OSHA anticipates will lead to greater compliance and potential avoidance of thousands of workplace injuries each year," he stated.

Employers have until May 2008 to change their existing PPE policies to accommodate the final rule, Foulke said. OSHA first announced the rule in 1997 and proposed it in 1999 after the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission concluded that OSHA's existing PPE standard could not be interpreted to require employers to pay for workers' protective equipment. In 1999, OSHA promised to issue the final PPE rule in July 2000, but missed that deadline.

## **AFL-CIO and UFCW Pleased with Final Rule Announcement**

In response to the repeatedly postponed rulemaking, the AFL-CIO and the United Food and Commercial Workers Union (UFCW) filed a lawsuit against the Department of Labor in January 2007, claiming that it has been dragging its heels in promulgating the proposed standard.

California Reps. George Miller and Lucille Roybal-Allard questioned why it took so long for the Department of Labor to issue the final rule if it was first proposed nearly a decade ago. Two months after the labor unions filed the lawsuit against the Department of Labor, the legislators introduced legislation to force the Department to issue a final OSHA standard requiring employers to cover costs for PPE. "It should have never taken the threat of a lawsuit and legislation to get the Department of Labor to take these simple steps to protect workers from everyday jobsite hazards and prevent thousands of workplace injuries each year," said Miller, who is the chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee.

During the press briefing, OccupationalHazards.com asked Foulke if the lawsuit had anything to do with the timing of the release of the final rule. He responded the agency has been working on standard all along. "It [the lawsuit] gave us a set date for us to shoot for, but the standard had been moving along pretty rapidly," he said.

Both the AFL-CIO and the UFCW said they were pleased to hear that OSHA had finally come out with the finalized rule after nine years. "It is unfortunate that nine years have passed since the rule was proposed, and that it took a lawsuit by the unions and Congressional intervention before the Bush Administration would act," said AFL-CIO President John Sweeney. "America's working men and women deserve the proper equipment to keep them safe on the job, each and every day, and we will thoroughly review this rule to make sure it protects them."

“Workers have spoken out for this rule and now Congress and the courts have forced the DOL to act. Our members will be watching to see this rule is enforced in every workplace,” said UFCW International President Joseph Hansen. “Workers should no longer be required to dip into their own pocket to keep themselves safe from harm at work.”

**OSHA's Wal-Mart Investigation:** The safety agency is looking into the retailer's handling of one whistleblower's complaint of suspected wrongdoing (Business Week article by [Pallavi Gogoi](#) )

The Labor Dept.'s Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA) has opened an investigation into a whistleblower complaint against Wal-Mart Stores ([WMT](#)). OSHA sent a letter to Chalace Epley Lowry, the employee involved, saying the agency is "notifying the party named in the complaint about the filing of the complaint" and "conducting an investigation into your allegations," according to a copy of the letter reviewed by *BusinessWeek*. Lowry, an administrative assistant in the company's communications department, after she reported what she believed could have been insider trading by a senior executive. The executive was quickly cleared. But in the process, Lowry's identity was revealed to the executive. This resulted in her having to look for another position within the company, with no guarantee that she would get one.

### **Stressful Complaint**

It's unclear how strong Lowry's OSHA complaint is since she ultimately did find another job within Wal-Mart's legal department (BusinessWeek.com, 10/16/07). She has decided to pursue her complaint with OSHA because she contends Wal-Mart broke its own promise of confidentiality by revealing her identity, which caused her three months of extreme stress as she looked for a new job. She says she has been diagnosed with stress-induced angina, has separated from her husband, and has had her house foreclosed. "Wal-Mart has been very careful about the way it's handled me—there's been no loss of wages and I haven't been demoted," says Lowry. "Still, I think that I did the right thing and they did me wrong by disclosing my identity." Wal-Mart declined to comment for this story. In the past, the company has said it revealed Lowry's identity only after she agreed to the disclosure. (Lowry says she was never given a choice.) Wal-Mart also said it decided to move Lowry out of the communications department only because she asked for the change.

### **A Political Issue**

The investigation comes amid a debate over the role of whistleblowers in American business. Many Democrats have argued that current whistleblower protection laws aren't strong enough, even in the wake of legislation passed after the accounting scandals at Enron and WorldCom. On Nov. 1, Representative Lynn Woolsey (D-Calif.) introduced a new proposal to strengthen and standardize the laws. "Employees who expose illegal practices or safety violations benefit us all," says Woolsey. "But when they blow the whistle, they are often retaliated against. They are demoted, lose their jobs, and are blacklisted."

Whistleblowers frequently do not fare well after reporting what they believe to be wrongdoing. OSHA administers whistleblower protections under the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, which was enacted July 30, 2002. In an article published in the latest issue of the *William & Mary Law Review*, Richard Moberly, an assistant professor of law at the University of Nebraska, writes that during the first three years, only 3.6% of the employees who filed Sarbanes-Oxley complaints with OSHA won. The agency fielded 491 employee complaints, resolved 361 of them, and only 13 times were the decisions in favor of the employees. "In the first three years after the statute's enactment, the act hasn't protected the vast majority of employees who filed a Sarbanes-Oxley retaliation claim," says Moberly.

OSHA's own, more up-to-date figures show somewhat better results. The agency says that from 2002 through Sept. 30, 2007, a total of 1,059 employees filed whistleblower complaints. Of the 1,032 cases handled so far, 728 complaints were dismissed and 138 were withdrawn. OSHA found 165 complaints, or 16%, in favor of the employee, of which 148 were settled and issued orders in 17 cases.

### **Identity Disclosure**

Lowry made her controversial complaint last spring when Mona Williams, Wal-Mart's vice-president for corporate communications, had asked her to make digital copies and send some papers that Lowry thought were stock-related. A few days later, Lowry found out that Wal-Mart was planning a \$15 billion stock buyback, and she worried that Williams might have traded on insider information by exercising her stock options. Lowry was prompted to file her complaint with the company's ethics department, in part because of an orientation session she had when she started at Wal-Mart in January that emphasized corporate ethics.

Wal-Mart has said its ethics office investigated the matter and Williams was cleared the same day the complaint was filed. A spokesman for the company said in June that Lowry mistook a deferred compensation form for an options exercise request. Soon after she filed the complaint, however, Lowry's identity as the whistleblower was disclosed to Williams—the development now most in dispute. At that time, a distressed Lowry said it was impossible to remain in the communications department since Williams was effectively her boss, so she asked for a transfer.

Lowry says she should have cause for action because the company disclosed her identity, a potential form of retaliation. But that argument hasn't been tested yet, says Michael Kohn, general counsel at the National Whistleblower Center, a Washington (D.C.) group that reviews laws to ensure proper protection for whistleblowers.

Bryan Little, deputy assistant secretary at OSHA, declined to comment on the specifics of this case. However, he says: "If a person engages in an activity protected by the law, and if his or her employer takes an adverse employment action such as firing, demoting, transferring, or other adverse action and there is a nexus between the protected activity and the adverse action, retaliation may have occurred."

## **Lessons Learned: OSHA Proposes \$196,000 in Fines for Mobile Plant** (by Birmingham News October 31, 2007)

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration has proposed \$196,000 in penalties against Cintas Corp. for 15 safety violations at its Mobile facility. During inspections, OSHA found four repeat violations of failing to develop proper energy control procedures and failing to protect employees from electrical shock. Cintas also was cited for not providing adequate machine guards and not instituting procedures that are intended to prevent inadvertent machine start-ups.

Cincinnati-based Cintas is a uniform manufacturer with 11 plants across the country and 34,000 employees. "As a large, national employer with a history of OSHA inspections and citations for hazards at other facilities, we are disappointed to find so many of the same or similar hazards at this facility," said Ken Atha, OSHA's area director in Mobile. The four violations are similar to conditions discovered in other Cintas facilities in New York state in 2004 and 2005, OSHA said.

## **Lessons Learned: Poop Friction: County Landfill Workers, Managers Clash Over Validity of Cal/OSHA Citations**

The men who operate the heavy equipment at Butte County's Neal Road Sanitary Landfill in California know all about dirt. They spend their days in a dusty place moving around garbage and trash. They understand they're going to get dirty. But there's a difference between dirty and dangerous, they say, and this past summer, when they were asked to bury approximately 5,600 tons of wet sewage sludge, working at the landfill became dangerous. As evidence, they pointed to two citations issued Oct. 15 by the state Division of Occupational Safety and Health, or Cal/OSHA, in response to their complaints and following a July 20 inspection.

One citation faulted the county for not providing training on the hazards of the sludge, the procedures needed to prevent exposures, or the equipment required to control the hazard. The second charged the county had failed to provide "washing facilities for personal cleanliness ... in a reasonably accessible location. ..." In other words, if a worker got the sludge on his person, there was no way to clean it off. A third citation, unrelated to the sewage sludge, faulted the landfill for expecting workers "to remove auto batteries and other corrosive materials from the municipal waste" without supplying them with adequate eye- and face-washing equipment.

The citations don't tell the whole story, said the workers, who asked that their names not be used because they feared retribution. The citations don't begin to describe the irresponsible way fecal water and waste were slopped about, getting on the roads and equipment and putting the employees and, to some extent, the general public at risk. Nor does Cal/OSHA convey what the employees insist was management's brush-off when they came forward to express their fears about the way the sludge was being handled. As one employee put it, "They blew us off. Told us it was safe and to go back to work."

Several of the workers say they later became sick, with fevers and diarrhea, but so far there's no documentation of a relationship between the sludge and their illnesses, said Dr. Mark Lundberg

of the county's Department of Public Health. The workers, however, worry they may have been exposed to a disease such as hepatitis whose symptoms may not appear for months or even years. They also note that the landfill's own safety-training manual on blood-borne pathogens points out that the nasty germs can be brought to the landfill in several ways, including "sludge, sewage or septic tank waste...." Although management has added a washing station and boot-cleaning trays, increased training and become more proactive about requiring employees to wear personal protective equipment (called "PPE"), the complaining workers say they simply don't trust their bosses. As one man put it, "We were treated as less than human."

For the workers, management's poor handling of the sludge and refusal to take their concerns seriously became the last straw. Working conditions had been bad for a long time, they said. For years they'd had no separate break room and had to eat in a work area. And what water they had for cleaning wasn't potable, contrary to OSHA regulations. Management acknowledged that the break room had taken a long time to build, largely because the county tried to save money by using in-house crews. It also took a long time to get PG&E to extend power to the site and to build a water system. But it's done, he said, and it's a nice room, air conditioned and clean.

After complaints had been filed with Cal/OSHA, county officials convened a big "Come to Jesus meeting," as one worker called it, at the landfill. Officials from Environmental Health, Public Health, Public Works and the CAO's office were there, as were landfill employees. Management was looking for a way to put the issue behind them and convince the workers that things would be better in the future, but the workers wanted to express their grievances. To this day, they don't think they were really listened to. Progress, as far as identifying the issues and having a better process, has been made, but management acknowledged that they lost some trust during this process."

One major change was to move supervision and the site engineer from their offices at County Center out to the landfill, so they could be there full-time. The hope is that this will foster better communication. The workers are skeptical and hold management primarily responsible for the sludge fiasco and don't think some individual's have been held accountable. The District remains adamant that the workers' claims are unjustified and that nobody has been injured. "Management believes, based on data provided by the public health officials who have studied the matter, came to the same conclusion that there wasn't a problem with workers being exposed.

Although the fines Cal/OSHA levied for the citations were miniscule, only \$560 each, the county has decided to appeal all three of them. Steve Weston, the county's safety officer, said the purpose was to obtain clarification, not dispute the charges. "We want elaboration on how the problems can be solved so they never happen again," he said.

## **OSHA Offers Two New Modules for its "Ergonomic Solutions for Electrical Contractors" e-Tool**

The U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has added two new [modules](#) to the Agency's "Ergonomics Solutions for Electrical Contractors" e-Tool. The modules, developed with input from the Independent Electrical Contractors, Inc.

(IEC), as part of the [OSHA and IEC Alliance](#), include safety and health information for Installation and Repair, and Prefabrication processes.

"Employees in the electrical contracting industry have benefited greatly from information in our Ergonomics Solutions e-Tool," said Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA Edwin G. Foulke, Jr. "The new modules are another proactive effort to educate employees on how to improve safety and health in the workplace."

The e-Tool offers potential solutions to ergonomic hazards that electrical contractors may encounter. The Installation and Repair module describes hazards encountered by employees who often dig trenches and pull and feed wire. It includes information on potential tendon and nerve problems that may result from using hand tools such as pliers, crimpers, and side cutters. Further, the module provides solutions to help industry professionals reduce the risks associated with electrical installation and repair.

The Prefabrication module discusses ergonomics-related hazards including heavy manual lifting, repetitive movements, and awkward or stationary positions. It lists possible solutions to reduce these hazards as they relate to various activities such as bending conduit, cutting and spooling wire, and welding and assembly tasks.

E-Tools are "stand-alone," interactive, Web-based training tools on occupational safety and health topics. They utilize illustrations, graphical menus, and expert system modules, which enable the user to answer questions, and receive reliable advice on how OSHA regulations apply to their work site.

Under the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970, employers are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their employees. OSHA's role is to assure the safety and health of America's working men and women by setting and enforcing standards; providing training, outreach, and education; establishing partnerships; and encouraging continual process improvement in workplace safety and health. For more information, visit [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).



## **Seasonal Safety: 5 Winter Driving Tips**

(by Ted Morrison)

### **1. Clear the Snow**

Clear all snow from your car's windows, lights, license plates and roof of your car. Also keep in mind that snow blowing from the roof and hood of your car poses a visibility hazard to the driver behind you.

## **2. Back Off**

Tailgating leads to accidents and could provoke road rage. Exercise patience with the vehicle in front of you. This is good advice at any time. But during winter, it's especially critical. Give people extra lead time when roads are covered with snow, ice, slush and rain. You'll thank yourself when the car ahead suddenly spins out.

## **3. Know How to Brake**

Braking poses special challenges when roads are wet and icy. Don't take the wheel until you know how to brake in these conditions. If you go into a skid, take your foot off the gas, steer into the skid and regain control. If you have to stop right away pump your brakes—don't slam on them. If your vehicle has anti-lock braking systems (ABS), apply steady pressure to the brake pedal.

## **4. Winterize Your Vehicle**

In the old days, we used to change to snow tires for the winter. All-season radials have made this unnecessary in many areas. But there still are things we need to do to prepare our vehicles for the cold and icy climate. Plug in a block heater, add fuel line de-icer to the fuel tank and consider using a battery warmer. Keep your tires properly inflated (check them before you drive) so that you never feel the flat spot of frozen tread as you start off in the morning. Use chains on your tires when conditions warrant.

## **5. Winterize Yourself**

The most important part of the vehicle to winterize is the driver. Winter weather is unpredictable. So be prepared for the unexpected. More specifically, anticipate that you might be stranded and keep these essentials in your car:

- A spare tire, properly inflated;
- A shovel and a bag of sand, salt or cat litter for traction;
- Spare warm clothing and a pair of boots; and
- Blankets, candles and food.

## **Best Practices in Safety Training**

It is the constant challenge of any trainer, to be interesting. Especially in the field of safety where so many of the topics are technical and often well known by the adults being trained. If you want your audience to leave with new-found knowledge or some "tool" they can use back on the job, you've got to engage them in the topics you are covering. While there are many ways to do this, as with most professions, there are "best practices" that stand out as worth pursuing.

But what is a best practice exactly? Well, "most productive" is one definition for best and "actual performance or application" is one way to define practice. So a best practice is the "most productive application" So, let's explore the most productive applications" you can use to train humans? What is the best way to get adults to learn and be inspired enough to change their behavior? Having worked with dozens of companies and given thousands of training sessions and talks, I've found these three practices to be some of the most productive:

## 1) Get Them Involved

People quickly become catatonic when someone else is talking. Even when they are paying attention, people tend to remember little of what's given in lectures. Attendees at a psychological society meeting in England were asked, two weeks after the meeting, to write down what they recalled. Of the points actually covered in the speeches, attendees remembered an average of only 8.4 percent! And 42 percent of what they said they remembered was incorrect-much of it was not even in the meeting. Lecture style presentations have been shown to be nearly six times less effective than those that include audience participation. As you can see, you've got to get your humans involved if you want them to remember the topic.

There are many other reasons why you should involve your audience as much as possible. For one thing, people are much more likely to be supportive of something they're made to feel a part of and it shows your professionalism in spending the time necessary to plan strategies to reach and involve that particular group.

Here are a few effective (and easy) ways to get adult students involved in your training:

**Set up a Competition:** This a superb way to give a review and even to cover new material. There are several software programs available that will do much of the set up work for you. A few years ago I worked with Cabot Supermetals and we created a "Safety Olympics." It was their annual safety and health refresher course which included many standard safety topics such as Respiratory Protection, Lock, Tag and Try, etc. There was no lecture type training throughout the day, every topic involved a competition between teams. Not only was it fun, the one common response from attendees was how surprised they were how much they learned from the class.

"But safety is a serious topic. Is it appropriate to use games and other fun things to train employee?" That's a question I get asked now and again. Of course there are times, such as when you've had a serious accident or even fatality, when it would be grossly inappropriate to set up games. But most times it's a wonderful way to teach and reinforce a safety topic. Just keep these three things in mind:

1. The competition should mostly revolve around the topic at hand. Sure, you can add a few humorous questions not related to the topic. Be sure to make that the exception, not the rule.
2. Don't make it too easy. The most successful training games are the ones that force the teams to think deeply about the topic or do some research to find the correct answer. (Having two teams try to be the first to find a specific point in a Confined Space procedure and then list why it is a vital step, is an example of a productive competition.)
3. Explain the purpose upfront. Describe the skill set the teams are learning or reviewing and why. When adults realize the benefit of a competition they are much less likely to think it's a waste of time or just play.

**Use Stories, Questions and Comments from Your Students:** Safety is a personal topic. To stay safe is one of our strongest natural desires. That's why it's effective to include personal stories and comments from your students. I often will have the class write brief accounts related to the topic, on a large index card. They don't have to include their names. I then collect the cards and read the responses throughout the session. It's an easy way to get your audience involved without putting anyone on the spot.

**Use Props and Objects:** Give each participant a small bolt before they sit down; immediately, they become involved. It doesn't matter what the object is, as long as you use it as part of your discussion, it will have a positive impact on your audience. I use this practice often and have yet to see it fail. It works best when the object you give out (or display if it isn't feasible to give everyone what you're using) doesn't easily connect with the topic.

Example: During one session on blood borne pathogens, a trainer gave everyone a small rubber worm and had a fishing pole and tackle box displayed at the front of the classroom. At first there is no logical connection between the topic and the "props." However, she went on to explain that "like fishing, we are going to learn what it takes to catch and not to catch something." Your students can't help but get involved when you turn a subject into a common fun pastime.

**Design Something Useful:** This best practice can give you two perks. One is that your audience will be involved in the topic and two, you'll get a product out of it. Do you have a roomful of mechanics who already know most of what you're covering on electrical safety? Then why not have them put together a one or two-page handout for new employees on what to watch out for when working with electricity at your site? How about using your students to revise a procedure? Even new employees can help. Spend time with them getting feedback on ways to make the new employee indoctrination course more effective.

## **2) Use Less Text-More Pictures and Examples**

Though slides can be helpful, they can also distract from your purpose--especially if they mostly include text. Nothing tires a student's mind more than to watch one slide of text after another while listening to someone stand and read each one to him.

Trainers can learn much from the marketing moguls. They get us to buy with power because they know what touches us emotionally: pictures and examples. With digital cameras you can transport almost any tank, pipe, employee or aftermath of a fire into your classroom. We believe what we see. Our eyesight is our most believed sense. So use it to your advantage. I like to use "3-D" pictures with clear backgrounds. There are many companies that sell relatively inexpensive clip-art packages that include several thousand images.

Often a trainer will use slides to help him know what is next in the presentation. You can still use images to do that. When you review your notes before class, use the image as a prompt then too. You'll also find that by using more images and less text you'll spend more time looking and interacting with you audience- always a good thing.

**Using Examples:** Norman Vincent Peale, who has been heard by millions on radio, once said that his favorite form of supporting material in a talk is the example or illustration. He once told an interviewer from the Quarterly Journal of Speech that "the true example is the finest method I know of to make an idea clear, interesting, and persuasive. Usually, I use several examples to support each major point."

The richly textured example supplies everyday details that bring the example to life. If you are using a real-life accident as an example, include details such as what the area looked like, sounds that were heard, what people may have been thinking about, and as many details as you can to help your audience create the experience in their mind. Remember, the more vivid your examples are-brief or extended-the more impact they are likely to have on your audience. Vivid, concrete examples have more impact on listener beliefs and actions than any other kind of supporting material. Without examples, ideas often seem vague, impersonal, and lifeless. With examples, ideas become specific, personal, and lively.

There are several kinds of examples you may want to include in your training sessions such as: Personal accounts of accidents, ways that the tool or PPE has prevented accidents, how someone has ingeniously overcome hazards, etc.

### **3) Experiment**

Try new things. Yes, this is a best practice. Perhaps the best one of them all. If you've been a safety trainer for any length of time you know what a challenge it is to keep it fresh and exciting. Safety training has a reputation for being boring. It has nothing to do with the topic.

Safety is an incredibly important and poignant subject-one that involves our survival and quality of life. It's the lack of variety that makes it stale at times. That's why you need to try new things. Don't limit yourself to standing in front of your students and going over one slide after another. Use your imagination. If you do, who knows how many "most productive applications" you'll create.

### **Tips for Trainers** (Published by Steve Geigle in "Safety Matters" online training newsletter)

It is very important to understand and integrate the principles of adult learning in training your employees. ANSI Z490 requires the use of adult learning principles in training safety. In order to implement more effective and efficient methods, attention must be given to your employees learn and respond to information. We need to look not only specific information on how adults learn, but also more recent research on the most effective teaching methods for different age groups.

#### **The worker population is evolving.**

- Age, ethnicity, culture, and social climate all influence the changing workforce
- These changes require new ways of thinking about safety training

### **Traditional training is less and less effective for today's workers.**

- Most training is still done in lecture format
- Lectures are not appropriate for adult learners today
- Adults are more likely to forget lecture material than material gained through experience

### **Training should be headed in new directions.**

- Personal experience, group support, and mentoring are preferred over lectures
- Group experiences are useful, in that they allow learners to assist each other in understanding material
- Learners want to know how what they learn will be applied to workplace

Understanding adult learning principles is the key to developing successful training procedures that engage trainees and facilitate learning. It is helpful to make a list of the characteristics of adult learning preferences in order to tailor your training methods to the needs of the trainees. By understanding these principles, you will find that the training will be more beneficial to the trainees and the organization. **Concepts you can practice:**

- Dialogue - interaction between learners and instructors.
- Supportive atmosphere - a comfortable environment facilitates learning along with a nurturing instructor; acknowledged support outside of the learning environment (management, available resources) is also helpful.
- Encouragement of cooperative communication - clear opportunities for discussion between learners and instructors and learners amongst each other.

### **Adults respond best to learning that is:**

- Active
- Experience-based
- Recognizing the learner as an expert
- Independent
- Real-life centered
- Task-centered
- Problem-centered
- Solution-driven
- Skill-seeking
- Self-directing
- Internally and externally motivated

**Practice is important in motor learning** In the short-run: practicing skills in separate but concentrated blocks (e.g., learning to install a roof bolt as one block in a sequence of blocks) leads to better performance during practice than integrating one skill after another (e.g., performing the whole task of roof bolting). But in the long-run: integrated practice (practicing the whole task) leads to better learning than block learning. People are often poor assessors of what they have learned. This can lead to serious consequences with a critical task (donning respirators, etc.).

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

- One British airport plays Tina Turner songs to scare birds off the runway.
- Chance that a driver will swerve out of their lane of traffic while talking on a cell phone: 7 percent.
- No insurance company will underwrite Jackie Chan's productions.
- Astronauts have the same rate of bone loss as people on bed rest: about 1 percent loss of bone per month.
- About 1,000 American's are seriously injured by their clothing every year.
- Exposure to 160 decibels will cause instant perforation of the eardrum. (A military jet takeoff--140 decibels.)