



National Safety
Management
Society

DIGEST

Updating Members on Safety Management News

November 2008

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Please Welcome Our Three (3) Newly Elected Members to the NSMS Board of Directors!

In a very competitive race by our five candidates, the votes have been tallied, and NSMS President Roosevelt Smith has contacted the director-elects. We are please to announce to everyone the results of our election for three NSMS Board of Director positions. We wish to thank all of our dedicated candidates for their interest to serve and contribute to this wonderful organization. One hundred and thirty-one votes were cast and our top three vote-getters were:

Erike Young
Dr. James Thatcher
Thomas Schneid

We appreciate these three individuals' interest and commitment to help serve on the Board and contribute to the Society's growth and needs of our membership. This leadership role is critical to help chart the strategic direction of our Society and address members' professional development.

NSMS 2009 Membership Renewal Notices Are in the Mail to You

Sometime this month you should be receiving your membership renewal letter in the mail. NSMS is very grateful for your membership throughout the years and looks forward to continuing our association together. For the 7th consecutive year, there is **no** dues increase. Please renew by January 31, 2009. 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.

SPECIAL ADVANCED ANNOUNCEMENT:

Planning and Logistics are Underway . . .

NATIONAL SAFETY MANAGEMENT SOCIETY Special Professional Development Program Tentatively – February 2009 New Orleans, Louisiana and/or Houston, Texas

“Enhancing Safety Stewardship: Regulatory Update, Best Practices and Leadership Development”

Due to the impact of Hurricane Ike, NSMS’ goal of hosting a regional workshop is being rescheduled for sometime in Spring 2009. We are relieved to hear that our members, their families and businesses made it through this natural disaster.

We hope you are all able to join the National Safety Management Society for a **Regional Safety Program** tentatively planned for the New Orleans LA/Houston TX. Based on interest and demand, this event is spearheaded by NSMS President Roosevelt Smith and is geared toward broadening the safety skills, knowledge and abilities of front line supervisors, managers and administrators in developing, implementing, evaluating and improving programs for worker safety, security, compliance and environmental protection in onshore and offshore oil and gas operations, as well as general industry. More details to come.

Conference Registration Fee: (includes lunch and program materials).

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.

ISHM Certified Safety and Health Manager (CSHM) Accreditation Update

Our sister organization, the Institute for Safety and Health Management that oversees and administers the CSHM credential has provided NSMS with the latest update towards certification accreditation. The first milestone toward accreditation, which is to gain membership into the [Council of Engineering and Scientific Specialty Boards](#) (CESB) has been achieved. Admissions and Accreditations have recommended and now approved ISHM for full CESB membership. This became effective September 1, 2008.

Next, the Application for Certification Program Accreditation must be prepared and presented to the CESB Accreditation Committee. In preparing the application, documentation and testing materials will be reviewed and updated. The CSHM Role Delineation Survey that was emailed to certificants was the first of several requests for assistance in this process. All CSHM certificants should watch for future emails requiring your input.

CESB is the recognized accreditation body for engineering and scientific certification and specialty certification programs such as the Board Certified Environmental Engineer, Certified Industrial Hygienist and Certified Hazardous Materials Manager. The criteria for certification includes a baccalaureate degree in an engineering related field (safety and health field for CSHM is acceptable) plus experience. Once the certification program is accredited, future candidates for the CSHM will have to possess a baccalaureate degree. Current holders of the CSHM will be grandfathered.

After the CSHM certification becomes accredited, the Board is considering an application for Technician Certification to include those who possess less than a four-year degree. This is allowable under the CESB procedures and would help provide recognition for those without a degree who have nevertheless achieved a high level of safety and health management proficiency. NSMS will explore with ISHM the feasibility of pursuing accreditation for our Certified Safety and Health Technician (CSHT) credential.

OSHA Administrator Foulke Resigns

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health, Edwin G. Foulke, has announced that Friday, November 7 will be his last day at the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Mr. Foulke is taking a position with Atlanta-based law firm. Fisher and Philips. Thom Stohler, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health, has been named Acting Assistant Secretary.

OSHA Administers Sarbanes-Oxley Provision

After two employees of The Charles Schwab Corp. filed a complaint with OSHA under the whistleblower provision of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act, the Department of Labor ruled in favor of the workers. The Charles Schwab Corp. was ordered to reinstate the employees and pay back wages, interest, compensatory damages, attorneys' fees and other relief.

OSHA's investigation found merit with the employees' allegations that they were terminated because they would not falsify data entered into a database system. OSHA enforces the whistleblower provisions of the Sarbanes-Oxley Act of 2002, as well as 16 other statutes. The agency handles whistleblower claims brought by employees who report violations of securities laws, trucking, airline, nuclear power, pipeline, environmental, rail, workplace safety and health regulations, and consumer product safety laws.

"This case sends a clear message that OSHA will not tolerate retaliation against corporate whistleblowers," said Robert Kulick, OSHA's regional administrator in New York. "While OSHA is best known for ensuring the safety and health of employees, it is also the federal government's main whistleblower protection agency."

Charles Schwab can file an appeal to the Labor Department's Office of Administrative Law Judges, but the preliminary reinstatement order would still be in effect.

Under whistleblower laws, employers are prohibited from retaliating against employees who raise concerns or provide information to the employer or to the government. Employees who believe that they have been retaliated against for engaging in protected conduct may file a complaint with the secretary of labor for an investigation by OSHA's Whistleblower Protection Program.

U.S. Injury Rates Decline

For the sixth consecutive year, workplace injuries and illnesses in U.S. businesses declined. According to the Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses fell from 4.4 cases per 100 workers in 2006 to 4.2 cases in 2007.

"The 21 percent decline in the workplace injury and illness rate over the past six years and a 4.5 percent decline over the past year show the effectiveness of the strategy of targeted enforcement coupled with prevention through compliance assistance to promote a culture of safety at the workplace," said Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao.

Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health Edwin G. Foulke Jr., said, "Today's injury and illness results demonstrate that OSHA's balanced approach to workplace safety encompassing education, training, information sharing, inspection, regulation and aggressive enforcement is achieving significant reductions in workplace injury and illness throughout the country. This report shows that employees are now safer in the workplace than ever before. This success validates our efforts, and we are redoubling this commitment to make workplaces even safer."

3 Ways to Change Safety (Workplace – HR & Safety Email Report, November 7, 2008)

The workplace safety community must develop a more collaborative approach to U.S. safety and health policy, according to a new white paper released by ORC Worldwide [Organization Research Counselors], Washington, D.C. Although ORC recognizes that President-elect Barack Obama will face a myriad of domestic and international issues, workplace safety is likely to join the national momentum toward change that has been so popular during the recent presidential election. The type of change ORC advocates focuses on altering the basic framework for determining safety and health policy at the national level, rather than a piecemeal approach toward standard setting.

Challenges Ahead

ORC notes that challenges to future change in the occupational safety and health agenda in the United States include inability to pass legislation, stagnant budgets for federal occupational safety enforcement in light of the current economic crisis, and some indifference toward policy change within the occupational safety and health community. However, ORC's white paper recommends a series of steps to reshape how national safety and health policy is developed, with OSHA playing a key role, but other stakeholders taking greater ownership of that process.

The white paper explains that our current path has put us behind other regions of the world, such as the European Union and increasingly parts of the Asia Pacific region, in adopting safety and health policies. Examples include the inability to implement a risk-based approach to worker protection and a lack of an updated set of chemical exposure limits.

Recommendations Call for Collaboration

ORC's recommendations require new levels of openness and cooperation on the part of everyone in the safety and health community.

1. **Establish a national dialogue.** Develop strategies to ensure that all U.S. employers adopt a systems-based approach to assessing and reducing safety and health risks. Although the OSH Act has been effective, changes in our workplaces demand a new plan. With the rise of the service sector and changing manufacturing environments, hazards and safety concerns have changed. ORC's paper states, "...The overarching obligation of the employer is to evaluate all workplace risks and address them appropriately using competent safety and health professional resources."
2. **Overhaul standards-setting process.** Develop a process to evaluate the OSHA standards-setting system and develop recommendations for legislative and administrative improvements and effective alternatives. Most in the safety community agree that OSHA's standard-setting process has not been successful.

ORC suggests that an open process for reviewing the standards-setting process can best be initiated through the appointment by the new administration of a multidisciplinary expert panel, perhaps under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences, comprised

of specialists in safety and health, administrative law, public policy, relevant sciences and others. After initial planning, the panel would consult the broader safety and health community. Active involvement by the new administration is critical to the success of such a process.

3. **Establish open forums.** Stakeholders should be able to participate in the development and prioritization of national safety and health initiatives. ORC advocates creating more participatory and transparent processes for developing safety and health policy. These forums would offer suggestions for OSHA's strategic plans, the development of compliance directives and technical bulletins, and the early drafting of standards and guidance documents.

ORC's white paper states, "Candidly, OSHA has been a stumbling block over the years to a spirit of cooperation and collective consideration of major policy initiatives. Even in an era where transparency and accountability are ascendant and when OSHA and other agencies are supposedly trying to be more 'customer friendly,' OSHA has generally been doggedly reluctant to bring stakeholders in at an early stage of the policy-development process to provide informal input, let alone to contribute as "partners" in the policy development process. A more open and transparent agency will, in the long run, be better able to be more responsive and effective in its ultimate mission."

Chronicling OSHA in 2007: Comparisons With the Rest of the World (By Katherine Torres, Occupational Hazards, June 2008)

Although OSHA Administrator Edwin Foulke Jr. pledged to accomplish a laundry list of items by the end of his tenure, safety and health experts maintain the agency isn't doing enough to serve its mission. With the European Union and the rest of the world taking the lead in adopting innovative approaches to safety and health, these experts fear OSHA is being left behind in the dust.

In an interview with OccupationalHazards.com in December 2006, Foulke stated he expected three or four final rules to be issued by the end of his term in 2008. So far, only one standard – the direct final rule on employer-paid personal protective equipment (PPE) – was issued in 2007.

The agency's tenacious focus on compliance assistance and alliance programs over enforcement and standard-setting initiatives prompted Joel Shufro, executive director for the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health (NYCOSH) to describe the agency as "increasingly irrelevant to workers' everyday lives" in OccupationalHazard.com's analysis of OSHA last year.

Most stakeholders are hesitant to use the term "irrelevant" to describe OSHA, but they do wish the agency would shift its priorities from compliance assistance to standards setting and enforcement.

Tarnishing OSHA's Reputation

Charles Jeffress, who was OSHA administrator during Clinton administration and currently is a chief administrative officer for the Legal Services Corp., opined that OSHA's "non-aggressive" enforcement policy has created problems for the agency. He claims a lack of action has tarnished the agency's reputation as an enforcement agency among the safety and health professionals counting on its presence and support for the work they do.

"OSHA has to have a presence that helps everyone in the safety field ... and they should be very present to let folks [companies and workers] know that they are there and serious about standards and compliance," Jeffress notes. "Also, OSHA has a responsibility to use its reputation as a safety and health agency as a way to motivate employers to comply."

During his tenure as OSHA administrator, Jeffress said the agency did a better job of balancing compliance assistance with enforcement, attempting to allot an equal amount in the budget to each focus.

"I think we communicated a more balanced message about having compliance in the workplace and expecting that [employers] were going to continue to improve their safety and health programs," Jeffress said. "And I don't believe that same message is being communicated."

Stakeholders such as American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) President Don Hart and Government Affairs Director Aaron Trippler say they support OSHA's efforts to build partnerships and alliances. However, they said they wished the agency had taken more regulatory action, such as updating permissible exposure limits (PELS, the consensus-based limits that indicate how long an individual can be exposed to a particular substance without experiencing harmful effects.

"It's something that everybody wants," Hart asserts. "Industry wants it, labor wants it, everyone wants some kind of progress on the updates on the PELs and nothing happens and it's frustrating for everybody."

Lagging Behind

Many experts are concerned OSHA's current approach has prompted it to lag behind other countries in adopting new occupational safety and health policies and standards. A case in point is the adoption of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS), introduced by the United Nations in 2003, with the hope of global adoption by 2008. Three countries – New Zealand, Bahrain and Mauritius—have already adopted GHS. Japan, Australia, and Brazil have started implementation activities and the EU is currently drafting GHS legislation.

"Here we [U.S.] are entering 2008 and we have seen nothing," Trippler exclaims. "We have put out some little advanced notice for some comments on the hazcom [standard] dealing with GHS, and that's it."

However, Trippler is quick to note that the reason why GHS and other standards haven't been implemented stems from "a bigger problem" taking place in the federal government; where accomplishing initiatives seems to "take longer and longer."

“Other countries aren’t looking at OSHA as a viable regulatory agency like they used to,”
Trippler says.
EU and U.S. Comparisons

Frank White, senior vice president of **ORC Worldwide**, has had an opportunity to assess where OSHA is lacking and where other countries are ahead.

White was one of the speakers at the 5th Annual US - EU Joint Conference on Occupational Safety and Health in Portugal last November, and it was there that White said the difference between OSHA and EU’s methods in workplace injury and illness prevention became apparent.

“A lot of people in the room agreed that the EU had a much more integrated and collaborative approach to safety and health and is ahead of OSHA,” says White. “The United States tends to get stuck because no one agrees on anything. And we have these old standards that we are enforcing.”

An example, White points to what he perceives as OSHA and U.S. employers’ tepid treatment of workplace stress as an occupational hazard, comparing that response to that of the EU, which has been gung-ho in distributing public information and helpful guides about stress to workers. “In this country, it would be hard for industry and labor to even agree that there is stress in the workplace that ought to be addressed somehow,” says White.

Another fundamental difference between European and American approaches to safety and health is that European operations look at risks, not hazards, when performing assessments. According to White, the concept of risk includes not only hazards, but also the likelihood that hazards will occur. Risk identification is one of the objectives in the European Commission’s 5-year strategy to reduce the number of work-related illnesses and injuries in EU countries by 25 percent.

Despite OSHA’s challenges, Trippler points out that the agency still is very relevant to safety and health.

“Whether you agree or disagree with what OSHA has done, you play the hand you are dealt,” he says. “It’s the only agency for workplace safety and health that we have and it’s still the best there is.”

Managing Change: A Safety Management Perspective (by Wayne Pardy, Vice President of Safety Management Services & Auditing with Q5 Systems Limited, Canada, 7/29/08 – Safety XChange)

Big changes are taking place in workplaces across this continent. These are not safety changes, per se. They're changes in economic, social and political structures. But they're having an impact on health, safety and environmental issues. If you choose to sit back and wait for change to happen, you may not like what you get when changes filter down to you. A better approach is to be active. That doesn't mean resisting change. It means managing it. From a safety management perspective, those who do the best job in strategic planning with the known will be the best prepared for the unknown.

Change should be something you plan for, not simply await and react to. Being proactive enables you to manage the process of change and shape its results. Let me make the point by giving you practical, real world examples of planning, and then show you how to apply the same logic to your safety management activities. Pre-Planning & Non-Planning organizations fall into two very distinct categories when they attempt to address their safety management issues:

The Pre-Planners: One group includes those who know exactly what they want to achieve because they have already undertaken the necessary pre-planning and issue identification. As a result of this preparation, they know what they want and are prepared to roll out activities associated with achieving specific objectives.

The Non-Planners: The other group are those who aren't exactly sure what they want or why they want it. Individuals in this group rely less on strategic planning than on instinct and reaction and trust in their capacity to "know it when I see it."

Case Study 1: The Pre-Planners

A few years back, a client hired me because they felt that its senior executives hadn't been sufficiently active in or aware of OHS matters. I asked the client to articulate exactly what it wanted to achieve. After some give and take, it was decided that I was to conduct essentially standard training sessions for senior managers on safety management and due diligence. These sessions would then facilitate the creation of a safety action plan session that would enable the client to address specific, strategic safety initiatives to help move the organization forward on EHS matters.

Our objectives were thus very clear: Deliver a consistent safety message, ensure people understand their role in an effective safety management system and propose short and long term actions for future improvements in select safety initiatives.

Case Study 2: The Non-Planners

Now let's look at another assignment. The client, who represented union employees, felt that the safety situation at a particular facility was awful and couldn't be allowed to continue. The problem went beyond poor statistical performance. The client felt that there were fundamental problems with the existing safety system and culture. And, indeed there were.

I was asked to attend a meeting with senior management and union representatives to try and "figure out" what was wrong with the safety system and how it could be fixed. I didn't have much information about the safety system before the meeting. So I was faced with the challenge of trying to identify the problems during the meeting session. I decided to structure scenarios of questions, which would be tabled for discussion. These questions were based in part on previous safety perception surveys which I had conducted, and were intended to obtain sample feedback on the "safety maturity" level at the facility.

Pre-Planning as the Key to Successful Change Management

Not surprisingly, the two clients achieved different levels of success. Client 1 knew exactly what it wanted, why it wanted what it wanted and how it was going to achieve what it wanted. My role as a consultant was facilitator. I was there simply to facilitate training sessions, the objective of which were to improve the health and safety knowledge and skill levels of executive managers.

Client 2, by contrast, knew it had a problem but didn't know what it was or how to resolve it. Nor were they clear about their reasons for bringing me in. My role thus was as much about diagnosis as cure. So I advised the client that it had to engage in a broad process using audits, perception surveys, with managers interviews, physical conditions assessments of workers and other system appraisal tools. Only after the results were amassed and analyzed could solutions be considered.

Understanding and Managing Generation Y (Safety X Change - Training and Leadership, July 30, 2008

You have in your employ a group of well-educated, technically savvy, efficient young workers who are skilled multi-taskers. These Generation Y individuals are a bit of an enigma to you. But you've invested a lot of time and energy in hiring and training them and you want to get the best they have to offer and keep them in the fold. Here are some of the things you can do to achieve that objective.

How to Accommodate Generation Y's Expectations

High on the "wish list" of the typical Gen Y worker is the desire to work for a socially responsible organization. The men and women of Gen Y also want to have fun, belong to a team, make a difference, enjoy a degree of flexibility and develop skills. Accommodating every item on that list is probably not a realistic possibility for most employers. But accommodating *some* of these items is. Here's how you can find some common ground.

1. Provide thorough, job-specific orientation, including:

- Site tours;
- Staff introductions; and
- Review of company policies and protocols.

Explain to Gen Y workers how their role fits into the corporate "big picture."

2. Be clear in your expectations and specify what can and can't be changed. Don't make any assumptions about workplace etiquette or safety procedures. Remember, there's a knowledge gap and some Gen Y workers may bring to the workplace very few basic skills.

3. Coach workers. When training, explain why something needs to be done a certain way.

4. Encourage communication. Talk to your Gen Y workers. Learn about their interests. And, if it's appropriate in your workplace, ask them how they like to communicate. Do they text message, for example, or use instant messaging? Let them know that the communication is two-way and that they can talk to you, too.
5. Provide feedback when tasks are completed and when mistakes are made. Be sure to include the "why."
6. Create an environment of inclusion. Remember that Generation Y'ers want to belong to a team.
7. Recognize efforts. Yes, Gen Y employees want recognition; who doesn't? Recognition motivates and inspires employees, contributing to loyalty. But the recognition must be specific, timely and meaningful.
8. Establish goal-setting. The Gen Y worker wants to learn, develop skills and be challenged and goal-setting can help address those expectations.
9. Offer mentoring, to help your Gen Y workers build relationships with their more experienced co-workers and learn from them; consider pairing up different generations.

Generation Y Workers Value Relationships

The most effective way to bridge the generation gap and tap the potential of your Generation Y employees - and keep them safe on the job-is to develop relationships with them. Good pay will get Gen Y workers in the door, but it won't necessarily make them stay. They will, however, stay for a supervisor they respect and trust.

Conclusion

About 30 years ago, companies recognized a shift in the American work ethic. Young adult workers were rejecting jobs they deemed menial or unpleasant, and employees everywhere were showing a preference for leisure time versus overtime. Job satisfaction ranked higher than good pay and employers, not employees, had to change. According to Harvard Business School professor Wickham Skinner, "We simply have to remove the roadblocks stopping individuals from gaining satisfaction on the job." That was in 1972. Perhaps there aren't so many differences between the generations after all.

Women More Likely Than Men to Get Injured in Tech Workplaces

(by Patrick Thibodeau, Computerworld - October 29, 2008 (Computerworld))

While injuries can occur in any workplace, when something happens at an IT-related business, women employees are more likely to get hurt, according to data from the U.S. Department of Labor. But take heart, the overall odds of being injured at work are low.

In one tech sector -- ISPs, Web search portals and data processing services -- approximately 900 injuries were reported last year from among a worker population of about 356,000, according to data released last week by the DOL. Although this tech-focused industrial category includes software engineers and information systems managers, it represents only a fraction of IT workers in the U.S.

Across all industries, including farming, logging, fishing and oil drilling, there were approximately 4 million occupational injuries and illnesses in the workplace in 2007, a slight decline from the prior year, when 4.1 million injuries and illnesses were reported.

The exact causes of the injuries last year won't be released until later next month, but data from prior years provides some indicators about what to expect when those details emerge.

In 2006, the overall number of injuries at IT-related employers stood at 840, with 480 injuries, or 57% of the total, suffered by women. In 2005, out of 1,120 injuries, 740, or 66% of the total, were suffered by women, 380 by men. In 2004, women accounted for 60% of the injuries and illnesses out of a total of 760.

Most of those injured worked in management, office and administrative support jobs, and tended to be more than 35 years of age, with many of the injuries involving sprains, strains and bruises involving the floor and other ground surfaces.

Kristin VanSoest, director of operations and a consultant at Safety Resources Inc. in Zionsville, Ind., said footwear can be a major cause of injury at the office, especially heels. Indeed, women are less likely to injure themselves in a shopping mall than at an office, said VanSoest. "If I'm setting out to go shopping, I'm not going to put on my most uncomfortable dress shoes."

In 2006, a fall was blamed for 260 of the 840 injuries, or 30%, for both men and women. The DOL didn't provide a breakdown by sex. In 2005, falls were blamed for 360 out of the 1,120 injuries, or 32%. Sprains and strains were another big category.

These injuries can lead to significant lost work time; of the total reported in 2006, 40% of the injuries accounted for a month or more of missed work.

The data that goes into these labor statistics is gathered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration. Employers are required to keep what's referred to as an OSHA 300 log to report injuries; the logs can help federal officials identify patterns in specific companies and industries, according to Steve McCown, a labor attorney at Littler Mendelson P.C., an employment and labor law firm.

The threshold for recording an injury is something that may involve a workers' compensation issue, treatment by a doctor -- anything more than a Band-Aid, said McCown.

Tiny, "Barely There" Particles Could Pose Big Health Risks (Preliminary Study Says Carbon Nanotubes Look and Act Like Asbestos Fibers)

Imagine tiny wiry tubes that are about 50,000 times thinner than a single strand of hair, and stronger than steel. These tiny tubes made of rolled up sheets of carbon hexagons are better known as carbon nanotubes. They look and act much like asbestos, according to a recent preliminary study, raising concerns with researchers.

Nanotechnology involves working at the nanometre scale of small numbers of atoms to produce materials and devices. It's at the forefront of research and technology development - and carbon nanotubes are the building blocks. Most carbon nanotubes are made from sheets of graphite about a nanometre, or one billionth of a metre wide, and formed into cylinders. Nanotubes are important in electrical research and the next-generation of computer chips and are also being developed for use in new drugs, batteries and other products. However some scientists and environmentalists are concerned that they could pose hidden dangers.

A recent study showed that inhaling carbon nanotubes in sufficient quantities could be as harmful as breathing in asbestos. During the study, led by the Queen's Medical Research Institute at the University of Edinburgh/MRC Center for Inflammation Research in Scotland, scientists observed that the long, needle-like fibre shape of carbon nanotubes look and behave like asbestos fibres. The researchers reached their conclusions after they introduced the needle-thin nanotubes into the abdominal cavities of lab mice and found that the inside lining of the animals' body cavities became inflamed and formed lesions.

This resemblance raises the concern that the nanotubes may cause illness similar to that linked to asbestos. Asbestos can cause mesothelioma, a deadly cancer of the membrane lining the body's internal organs (especially the lungs) that can appear 30 to 40 years after exposure. Most people who develop mesothelioma have worked on jobs where they inhaled asbestos particles.

Study co-author Ken Donaldson stated, "We still don't know whether carbon nanotubes will become airborne and be inhaled, or whether, if they do reach the lungs, they can work their way to the sensitive outer lining. But if they do get there in sufficient quantity, there is a chance that some people will develop cancer-perhaps decades after breathing the stuff."

Donaldson also commented on what he deemed to be the upside of the findings. "Short or curly carbon nanotubes did not behave like asbestos, and by knowing the possible dangers of long, thin carbon nanotubes, we can work to control them. It's a good news story, not a bad one. It shows that carbon nanotubes and their products could be made to be safe."

But Donaldson added that the present study only tested for fibre-like behaviour and did not discount the potential for carbon nanotubes to damage the lungs in other ways. "More research is still needed if we are to understand how to use these materials as safely as possible," he notes.

It is estimated that the market for carbon nanotubes will continue to grow and could easily reach 1-2 billion dollars annually within the next seven years, according to studies. Read more about the study published online -

<http://www.nature.com/nnano/journal/v3/n7/abs/nnano.2008.111.html>

Powder Poof! Dust in the Workplace Can Combust (The Health and Safety Report, E-News from Canada's National Occupational Health and Safety Resource, Volume 6, Issue 10 – October 2008)

Disasters don't always start with chemicals. Even something as sweet as sugar can explode, as the people of Port Wentworth, GA found out when a sugar dust explosion at the Sugar Dixie Crystals plant killed 13 people and left others critically injured with severe burns.

The Oregon branch of the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has issued an alert to warn industries of the dangers of combustible dust. Injuries and fatalities have occurred in the state of Oregon because of a wood-dust fireball, dust flash from powder-coating filters, and a grain-dust explosion.

Assessing the risk

The Industrial Fire Hazards Handbook from the National Fire Protection Association states that "any industrial process that reduces a combustible material and some normally noncombustible materials to a finely divided state presents a potential for a serious fire or explosion." Industries that are potentially at risk include those that manufacture or handle food (such as candy, starch, flour or feed), plastics, wood, rubber, furniture, textiles, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, dyes, coal, metals (such as aluminum, chromium, iron, magnesium, and zinc), and industrial plants that generate fossil-fuel power.

Any "material that will burn in air" in a solid form can be explosive when in a finely divided form. It is possible for different dusts of the same chemical material to have different ignition and explosive characteristics. These depend on particle size, shape, moisture content, and other variables. If you are not sure whether or not a product produces combustible dust, one possible source of information is the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) for the product, however OSHA recommends checking with the chemical manufacturer for additional information.

For a dust fire to occur, three elements must be present: combustion dust (fuel), an ignition source (heat), and oxygen in the air (oxidizer). When two other elements are added to the mix - dispersion of dust particles in sufficient quantity and concentration, and confinement of the dust cloud - an explosion will occur.

OSHA recommends that facilities assess their potential for dust explosions by looking at the following:

- Materials that can be combustible when finely divided;
- Processes that use, consume or produce combustible dusts;
- Open areas where combustible dusts may build up;
- Means by which dust may be dispersed in the air; and
- Potential ignition sources.

Employees must be trained in safe work practices specific to dust control and ignition source control, which apply to their job tasks and to the entire plant. Canadian employers should review their relevant legislation and ensure the workplace is in compliance. Read the safety & health bulletin from OSHA on combustible dust in industry at the following URL -

<http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib073105.html>

NFPA 70E: What Does it Mean to You? (Jim White is the training director for Shermco Industries Inc. in Irving, Texas)

A lot of numbers get bounced around about injuries and fatalities due to electrical incidents. The Department of Labor estimates that there are, on average, 9,600 serious electrical shock and burn injuries each year. They also estimate approximately one fatality per day due to electrocution. That's quite a number when you think about it.

Electrical incidents do not always result in death. Sometimes, they result in severe burns, scarring, tissue death, lost limbs, blindness, hearing loss and several other really bad things that you don't want to have happen to you.

Where are these injuries occurring? Although there is a great interest in the industry in arc flash, according to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, the biggest hazard is still electrical shock, except for workers in the construction and utility industries. H. Landis Floyd II, PE, in a paper presented to the 13th annual IEEE-IAS Workshop, estimated the direct and indirect costs of a major electrical injury event to be \$23 million.

Keep in mind that almost all of the information cited in this article is related to a worker being exposed to an energized part. Do you want your facility to be electrical-incident free? The solution is really quite simple just put your equipment in an electrically safe condition before working on or near it. But sometimes that is easier said than done ...

What Does OSHA Expect from Me?

OSHA expects quite a bit, actually. Safety is not to be a passive, reactive policy that is brought out for show-and-tell or after-the-fact. Reviewing some of the major requirements:

- Employers must know what their employees do. OSHA 29 CFR 1910.269(a)(2)(iii) states: "The employer shall determine, through regular supervision and through inspections conducted on at least an annual basis, that each employee is complying with the safety-related work practices required by this section;" and, "Note: OSHA would consider that tasks that are performed less often than once per year to necessitate retraining before the performance of the work practices involved."
- Employees must be trained in their job tasks. OSHA 29 CFR 1910.332 states: "The training requirements contained in this section apply to employees who face a risk of electric shock that is not reduced to a safe level by the electrical installation requirements of 1910.303 through 1910.308."
- Additionally, OSHA 29 CFR 1910.301 through .308 basically paraphrases the National Electrical Code (NEC). OSHA 29 CFR 1910.269(a)(2) states: "Employees shall be trained in and familiar with the safety-related work practices, safety procedures and other safety requirements in this section that pertain to their respective job assignments. Employees shall also be trained in and familiar with any other safety procedures (such as pole top and manhole rescue) that are not specifically addressed by this section, but that are related to their work and are necessary for their safety."

So, where is the focus? Ken Mastrullo of the National Fire Protection Association has trained OSHA compliance officers in NFPA 70E (also known as Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace). In his presentation at the IEEE-IAS workshop, Mastrullo made a national comparison of the OSHA 1910 Subpart S citations versus accidents and fatalities between Oct. 1, 2003, and Sept. 30, 2004. Interestingly enough, the results were as follows: Installations accounted for 80 percent of the citations, while safe work practice issues were cited 20 percent of the time. However, installations accounted for 9 percent of the accidents, while safe work practice issues accounted for 91 percent of all electrical-related accidents. Looking at Mastrullo's data, while the majority of the OSHA citations were for installation issues, the majority of the injuries were occurring because of safe work practice issues.

So where should you focus your attention? It seems logical that safe work practices should be the focus, and you should ensure that you have qualified personnel who understand the hazards involved with the specific tasks they are required to do for their job.

So what does that have to do with you? Think about it: OSHA regulations are federal law. They tell you what you have to do, but fall short of telling you how to do it. Not necessarily OSHA's fault; that's the way regulations have to be written in order to be enforceable. So if OSHA tells you what to do, but not necessarily how to do it, what do you do? Go to the electrical safety "how-to" book, NFPA 70E.

The History of 70E

NFPA 70E standard was the first nationally recognized standard for electrical safety in the United States, and was the reference document used for the Electrical Safety-Related Work Practices (ESRWP) regulation (OSHA 29 CFR 1910.331 through .335).

In 1976, a committee was formed with the specific purpose to "assist OSHA in preparing electrical safety standards that would serve OSHA's needs." One reason this was necessitated was that OSHA was confronted with several areas that conflicted with the NEC, including such things as:

- Updating the NEC could create conflict with existing OSHA regulations.
- The NEC is primarily for those who design, install and inspect installations. OSHA addresses employers and employees.
- Some detailed provisions of the NEC are not directly related to employee safety.
- Requirements for electrical safety-related work practices are not found in the NEC.

The current edition of the 70E standard is the seventh edition of the standard, NFPA 70E 2004 Edition. Historically, the time line of the various editions is as follows:

1976 OSHA asks the NFPA to develop a consensus electrical safety standard
1979 First NFPA 70E edition of standard
1981 Second edition
1983 Third edition
1988 Fourth edition
1995 Fifth edition
2000 Sixth edition (introduction of the hazard/risk tables)
2004 Seventh edition (safe work practice emphasis)
October 2008 Next (eighth) 70E revision due (NFPA 70E 2009 Edition)

The 2004 edition of NFPA 70E has an introduction, four chapters and 13 annexes. The first chapter, "Safety-Related Work Practices," is the part most of us need to be familiar with and understand. This covers critical safety-related items such as training requirements for qualified and unqualified persons. So, how does OSHA define a qualified employee? In 29 CFR 1910.399, it states: "One familiar with the construction and operation of the equipment and the hazards involved."

NFPA 70E has a definition that states: "Qualified Person One whom has the skills and knowledge related to the construction and operation of the electrical equipment and installations and has received safety training on the hazards involved."

So, are your employees qualified? OSHA says they have to be, 70E says they have to be and they have to receive training on the hazards involved. If your employees are not trained and do not understand all of the hazards involved with an assigned task, then you are entering into areas of non-compliance that put both the employee and the company at risk.

If you do not comply with 70E, can OSHA cite you for it? The short answer: Yes. If your employees are involved in a serious electrical incident, OSHA likely will present you with several citations. Think about it: If you were following safe work practices and properly protecting your employees through training, hazard awareness, personal protective equipment or by de-energizing equipment, the likelihood of an electrical incident occurring is very small. So, when an incident occurs the two likely areas of non-compliance are: 29 CFR 1910.335(a)(1)(i), which requires the use of protective equipment when working where a potential electrical hazard exists; and 29CFR 1910.132(d)(1), which requires the employer to assess the workplace for hazards and the need for personal protective equipment.

Since both of these regulations are written without much guidance as to how to actually comply with the hazard assessment or how to properly outfit your people with the proper PPE, the 70E standard steps in with guidance and help on how to maintain compliance with these very important OSHA regulations.

The Tables

One of the best features of 70E are the tables, and specifically, Table 130.7. This will assist you in choosing what PPE would be required for standard tasks that electrical workers perform. Each general type of equipment is grouped and common tasks are listed. For each task is a hazard/risk category (HRC) from 0 to 4, with 4 being the highest (and most hazardous). Protective clothing characteristics are defined in 70E.

For example, choosing from the table, insertion or removal (racking) of 600-volt class switchgear with power circuit breakers from cubicles, doors closed, shows an HRC of 2. With the doors open it would be an HRC 3. It is very critical that the notes section at the bottom of each table be reviewed and understood. The tables cannot be used outside of the stated limitations; otherwise injury or death could result.

One last thought on this topic: Electrical equipment maintenance. All the ratings, calculations and applications of the tables are performed with the expectation that the protective devices will function properly in the timeframes as designed and are properly coordinated and set to your protective device coordination study.

Experience has shown that this often is not the case. In nearly every facility, there are breakers and switches that are too slow or non-functional, primarily due to lack of maintenance. This could increase the time of exposure to an arc from 4 to 6 cycles (0.067 to 0.1 seconds) to 1 to 3 seconds or greater. Under these circumstances, because of the extended time and exposure to incident energies, there is no PPE that could protect a worker. Proper maintenance of equipment is as critical to safety and proper operation of the equipment as the selection of PPE is to the protection of the worker.

What Can You Do?

To protect your workers from electrical shock and, possibly, electrocution, follow this to-do list:

1. Develop a zero-tolerance policy toward energized work. Do you work on energized electrical equipment? Get serious about no "hot work." Troubleshooting, infrared scans and the like are not considered to be energized "work," nor is operating electrical equipment in a manner for which it was designed. However, this does not eliminate the need for conducting an electrical hazard analysis. Some tasks, such as racking circuit breakers, even though they don't seem to have a hazard associated with them, actually do. Racking circuit breakers in and out of their cubicles involves making and breaking electrical connections (their stabs), which has the danger of arc flash. Therefore, some level of arc flash PPE is required when racking breakers.

2. Get out in the field or plant and see what your workers are doing. Develop checklists or other methods for tracking who is qualified to perform what tasks. Some companies have gone so far as to conduct job task analysis. While they can be somewhat expensive and time-consuming, they help provide a blueprint of your employees' activities.

3. Train your employees. To be qualified to perform any task, they must know the construction, operation and hazards associated with certain types of equipment. Workers may be qualified to do certain tasks, but unqualified to do others. It is up to supervisors to know what employees safely can do.

- 4. Develop safe work practices and procedures.** Energized electrical work permits, clearance procedures, switching orders, etc., are not called for in the regulations, but help document that the correct steps were taken. This can be especially important if there is an accident.
- 5. Perform periodic safety audits.** If your workers know they will be subject to random safety audits, they will try to keep up with safe work practices and procedures.
- 6. Implement job briefings.** If the job scope changes significantly, introducing new or different hazards than what were first anticipated, conduct another job briefing.
- 7. Be very careful how you implement any safety awards program.** OSHA has issued numerous citations when they believe the awards program discourages accident reporting. Even if the program is designed in good faith, make certain it cannot be misconstrued.
- 8. Get up-to-speed on the regulations and the NFPA Standard 70E.** Let's throw in the IEEE 1584-2002, Guide for Performing Arc Flash Hazard Calculations, as well. What you don't know will kill you, and those who work under your supervision.
- 9. Document, document and document.** Everything. If you don't have it in writing, you never did it.
- 10. Show good-faith effort.** This is one thing OSHA really keys in on. If they think you are making good-faith effort, it will save you a lot of pain. If OSHA doesn't think you're serious or, worse yet, thinks you're trying to put one over on them, watch out!

Latest and Best

The real reason we should apply the OSHA regulations and NFPA 70E is because they contain the latest, and best, research and methods for working on electrical systems rated 50 volts or higher.

No one wants to see another person injured or killed. However, if we make decisions based on a lack of knowledge, it can have a very negative consequence on our employees' lives and on our future.

Lessons Learned: OSHA Cites Mississippi Manufacturer with 16 Safety Violations (Safety.BLR.com – 7/23/08)

OSHA has proposing \$78,100 in penalties after an inspection at a Mississippi manufacturing facility revealed six serious and 10 repeat safety violations.

"Operating cranes with defects and allowing employees to work on unsafe scaffolds and gangways threatens the safety of the more than 300 people employed at this plant," said Clyde Payne, director of OSHA's Jackson Area Office.

OSHA found serious safety violations with employees operating cranes with broken, missing, and leaking parts. Inspectors determined that monthly safety inspections were not being performed. Plywood planking on the scaffolds was damaged with cracks and splits, wood timbers lacked a guardrail system, and compressed gas cylinders were not secured.

The company is being cited with repeat violations that include allowing employees to work around electrical hazards and on structural beams without guard rails. Safety equipment was missing or not being maintained properly, and an employee was sighted driving a front-end loader under a load suspended by a crane. The location had been cited for similar violations in 2007.

Lessons Learned: Ownership, Engagement Focus of HR Strategy (Tracey Pitsenberger, HR and Safety Officer at PrintingForLess.com shared the company's HR strategy with Workplace HR & Safety).

“Our philosophy is to make our HR department a facilitator and advisor of the HR and safety program. The PrintingForLess.com (PFL) HR department handles the following: recruiting, benefits and terminations. We have cross-trained our direct managers to handle performance measurement, mentoring, coaching and employee development. If managers need assistance or help, they use HR as a resource.

“We not only care about what our employees think here at PFL, we act upon their ideas. For example, prior to building our new facility, we launched a safety-related blog and asked our employees what they wanted to see in our new building. We implemented several suggestions from our employees, including a humidification system to help promote a healthy environment, radiant-heated concrete throughout the facility, a fire proof wall and state of the art fire suppression system, an air exchange system, and natural lighting throughout the building. By listening to our employees needs, we are now able to promote a healthy and safe work environment. Plus, we are able to give employees a sense of ownership, which helps to increase engagement.”

How to Improve Your Safety Training Program (by Barbara Semeniuk, Safety X Change, October 29, 2008)

Is your safety training simply an information dump? You're not alone. Many trainers feel that the more information they present, the better the session will be. Others simply let regulations determine what they teach because these classes are an easy sell. And these same trainers hope for happy participants in a well-attended class who rate the instructor as good to excellent. They also expect these participants to demonstrate their commitment to this new knowledge by applying it on their own time under their own steam.

The reality is that to facilitate the effective transfer of knowledge from the instructor to the class, instructors need a well-designed course, using simplicity and variety. It's a process that requires a bit of planning.

Conduct a Gap Analysis Before Training Begins

The instructor and the students both participate in the learning process and they learn in the most realistic and systematic fashion. To ensure that this occurs, it's helpful to first conduct a gap analysis. Why? A gap analysis may determine that:

- Middle management is uncertain of their roles and responsibilities in a Health and Safety management system;
- Location management may not have built a strong relationship with the trainer to allow for shared safety expectations and goal-setting. Decisions are not done in a collaborative fashion;
- Workers are frustrated with the perceived level of resources allocated towards Health and Safety;
- Workers are frustrated because some of the rules don't make sense at their location or work environment.

How to Identify Gaps

Look at your safety training program and ask yourself the questions below. (*Note: These questions are performance factors adapted from Rummler and Brache's research on performance factors by the Hile group.*) If the answer to any of these questions is "No" or "Don't know" there is a gap in performance.

1. Does the safety program have the necessary corporate support in place? Does everyone have what they need to do what they are supposed to do?
2. Training sessions need to set clear performance expectations. Do your trainees know what they are supposed to be able to do after training and can they do it?
3. Are trainees measured on their performance and are there consequences for good and/or bad performance?

When performance gaps occur, you have a failure in the management system and a barrier to transfer of knowledge. You also have an opportunity for improvement

Conclusion

Management, trainers and participants need to be honest about any barriers to safety training and devise methods to surmount them. Next week, we'll look at some ways to achieve that.

Safety Training Strategies: Young Workers at Higher Risk of On-the-Job Injury (by Stephen G. Minter – EH&S Today, 1/2/08)

Just 54 percent of businesses surveyed by Accident Fund Insurance Co. of America, a workers' comp insurer based in Lansing, Mich., planned to provide any safety training for their student workers. Yet, these same businesses say that workplace safety is a high priority. The survey included more than 600 small- to mid-sized businesses in Michigan.

According to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), some 70 teenagers die each year from work-related injuries and nearly 70,000 are injured severely enough to be taken to the emergency room. In an effort to decrease these injuries, Accident Fund developed "WorkSafe Students," a free student workplace program for use in high schools and businesses. The interactive 45-minute program is designed to help students and employers understand child labor laws and potential workplace dangers. The program includes a teaching guide, student booklet and short video, "Lost Youth: Four Stories of Injured Young Workers."

"We want to reinforce to this age group that accidents can and do happen," said Keith Adkins, vice president of marketing at Accident Fund. "We also want business owners to make sure they are taking the right steps toward student safety. Workplace safety is our passion, and this program empowers students to know their rights and make safe decisions on the job."

Safety Training Strategies: Ten Fingers Safety Game (By Jeanie Gaines from Temple-Inland Corrugated Packaging).

To start, all players put up their ten fingers. Then one player describes an unsafe act he or she has not done, such as "I've never walked across a conveyor." Anyone in the group who has done the act then puts one of their fingers down. Play continues with the next player in clockwise (or called upon) order. This continues until only one player (the winner) has a finger(s) still up.

A variation of the game includes (time permitting) having players tell the story behind each unsafe act they describe. (Another variation can include spectators asking the questions: "Have you ever . . .?") . It's a fun game and a great way to start a safety meeting since it gets employees to think about their behavior.

Safety Training Strategies – "New Employee Training Tool" (from "The Neophyte's Nightmare" by Richard Hawk Inc.)

Here are some suggested ways to make sure new employees work safely (or are looked out for) while they become experienced. The following outline is designed as a guide for supervisors/foremen to use when training a new employee on tool use. The format will work for any other topic such as lifting techniques or hazard identification.

EXPLAIN:

- The responsibility everyone has to use tools properly.
- What employees should do if they can't get the proper tool or don't know what is the proper tool to use.
- The company's responsibility to provide the proper tools.

SHOW:

- The list of tools he or she might have to use. (If you don't have one, make one.)
- Ways to tell if the tool is defective (rust and cracks, sharp edges, bent or missing parts, rounded edges or dull blades, etc.).
- How to use each tool properly.

- Several things NOT to do with the tool. (Obviously don't do this in a way that will cause any risk. Example: You can demonstrate that you shouldn't use a pipe wrench as a hammer without actually hitting anything with it.)

WATCH:

- Have the employee repeat your demonstration and explain his actions. (Don't expect perfection. Remember the employee may be nervous because you are watching.)
- The more complicated the tool or the higher the risk, the more important this step becomes. (For some power tools the employee may need more formal training before he can use it.)

ASK AND LISTEN:

- Do this throughout your session.
- Find out what tools on the list has the new employee used before? (Don't insult him by asking if he has ever used a pair of scissors, or a screwdriver. Let the person tell you the tools he has and has not used.)
- Ask if there is anything which you demonstrated that he feels uncertain about?

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

- About 5,700 people die in the U.S. each year from hit- and-run incidents.
- A nonsmoking bartender in a busy smoking-allowed bar typically inhales the equivalent of 36 cigarettes during an eight-hour shift.
- Motor vehicle with the best safety record in Europe: The moped.
- In ancient Egypt, warm donkey droppings were prescribed to alleviate sore eyes.
- Breaking news: It takes four times the distance to stop a car traveling at 60 mph as one doing 30.
- Nearly 2,000 people die each year from allergic reactions to jellyfish stings--most are children.
- **IT'S YOUR FAULT-YOU DIDN'T TELL ME!** When Marcy Meckler left Chicago's Old Orchard Mall in 2004, a squirrel jumped out of a bush and attacked her leg. As she tried to shake the rodent loose, she fell onto the pavement, suffering cuts, scrapes, and bruises. Meckler sued the mall for \$50,000, claiming the mall should have warned her that squirrels lived outside.
- **IT'S YOUR FAULT-YOU DIDN'T TELL ME!** In 2004 Shawn Perkins got struck by lightning in the parking lot of Kings Island amusement park near Cincinnati, Ohio. Did he sue God for this "act of God?" No. Perkins sued Kings Island, claiming the park failed to warn him not to go outside during a thunderstorm.
- Until the 19th century, an "accident" referred to anything that happened, good or bad.
- The heat wave that hit Europe during August of 2003 was responsible for more than 20,000 deaths.
- Archaeologists have found ancient "Beware of Dog" signs in Pompeii.

- A MAN WALKS INTO A DOCTOR'S OFFICE . . . A man walks into a doctor's office and asks to be examined. The doctor gives him a once-over and is astonished to find money stuffed into his ears. The money is taken out and the doctor counts it. "There's exactly one thousand, nine hundred and fifty dollars in there," says the doctor. "That sounds about right," says the patient. "I knew I wasn't feeling two grand."
- A MAN WALKS INTO A DOCTOR'S OFFICE . . . A man walks into a doctor's office with a sprig of green sticking out of his nose. "Doctor, I think I have a lettuce growing out of my nose" he says. The doctor examines the greenery and says. "I'm afraid I have bad news--it's only the tip of the iceberg."