Safety Topic

Safety News State Compensation Insurance Fund Issue Three, 2008

Tool Safety

Construction work often involves the use of power tools such as saws, drills, routers, planers, sanders, and lathes along with hand tools such as chisels, carvers, and augers. When working with these tools, keep safety in mind. Get training on the power and hand tools that you work with on the job. Read the power tool manuals and make sure that you understand and follow the instructions.

Always inspect your tools before each use. Make sure that power cords are in good shape with proper grounding. Tag-out, discard, or repair the tools if they are not in good working order. Make sure that cutting blades and surfaces are clean and sharp to give you the best control. Conduct periodic maintenance on the tools depending on the amount of use they get.

Wear appropriate, close-fitting clothing and tie back long hair. Avoid jewelry and loose clothing that could be pulled into moving and rotating parts. Wear slip-resistant footwear to prevent falls. Safety glasses protect your eyes from sawdust and flying objects. Dust masks and a well-ventilated work area protect your lungs from inhaling small wood particles. Hearing protection is required around tools that produce excessive noise both in the shop and on the worksite. Close-fitting work gloves, when appropriate, can protect your hands when handling materials.

Use safe work practices when working. Think first before you place your materials or your hands near a cutting blade. Pay attention to the cutting blade the entire time until your cut is completed. A distraction can lead to a lost finger or hand. Keep your hands away from the blade or moving parts by using push sticks or other guides to move materials into the cutting area.

Always remove nails, burls, or other imperfections and additives that could cause the materials to jam or "kick-back." Secure your materials to the work surface to avoid having the material and/or the cutting blade slip when you apply pressure to it. Always give the power tool time to run down and the blade to completely stop before you try to handle it. Turn the power off completely and lock-out and blockout before you clear a jam or clean a machine. Never leave powered cutting equipment running while unattended. ❑

TOPIC REVIEW

Instructor_____

Date _____

Location _____

Attended By

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Safety Recommendations

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Safety News

News about Occupational Safety and Health in Construction

STATE COMPENSATION INSURANCE FUND
Loss Control Services
P.O. BOX 420807
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94142-0807

Please forward to the person responsible for your safety program

Employer Education Series

State Fund continues to promote community educational outreach by increasing the quantity and frequency of employer seminars. These seminars are produced and sponsored by State Fund and are open to State Fund policyholders. The seminar topics cover all aspects of worker's compensation and are offered statewide.

As part of State Fund's Employer Education Series, the local State Fund Loss Control departments offer safety seminars dedicated to loss prevention. They feature safety training targeted to specific industries and safety topics of interest to California employers. Various programs in the series are developed in conjunction with State Fund insured Group Programs and external affiliates and partners. Some of these partners are occupational safety and health providers such as Cal/OSHA Consultation Service, the Department of Health Services, and the University of California.

The goal of State Fund's Employer Education Series is to present valuable information from recognized safety and health experts to enable employers to reduce the frequency and severity of workplace injuries, facilitate regulatory compliance, and increase business profits.

The program venues provide the opportunity for attendees to have their workplace safety questions immediately and personally answered by industry experts. The typically half-day seminars are usually held at regional State Fund offices. To learn what programs are scheduled in your area, visit www.scif.com and click on Seminars. ❑

Reporting Work-Related Injuries

State Fund's Claims Reporting Center (1-888-222-3211) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for policyholders to report injuries as soon as they occur. Agents will do the necessary paperwork to get the claim started and refer the injured to the designated physician or provider.

Within 8 hours of any serious illness or injury (requiring hospitalization over 24 hours, other than for medical observation or where there is permanent employee disfiguration) or death occurring in the workplace or in connection with employment, employers must report the incident to the Division of Occupational Safety and Health. ❐

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News About Occupational Safety and Health in Construction

Safety News

ISSUE THREE, 2008

STATE COMPENSATION INSURANCE FUND

Raise Scaffold Safety Awareness

Scaffolds – such as suspended systems from buildings, supported systems from the ground, and aerial systems on mobile equipment – are common to many construction projects and allow workers to do their jobs at elevated heights. But, those who work on scaffolding systems are at risk for falls or falling objects that could cause serious or even fatal injuries and employers can be cited and fined. However, when workers have received proper training and education in scaffold systems, fall protection equipment, and proper scaffold work practices, they can work safely and feel safe at elevated heights.

A Cal/OSHA-defined "qualified person" should inspect the scaffolding before each use to see that all components are in good condition and that it's plumb, level and in firm contact with a stable surface. To avoid electrocution hazards, power lines should be at least 10 feet away the scaffold. To prevent falls, a defined "qualified person" should study the load, bracing, and safety code requirements for each job site. Properly designed scaffolding systems have work levels that are decked with regulation-sized planks and have appropriate worker access. Depending on the height of the scaffold, fall protection can include safety harnesses and guardrails. Toeboards shall be provided wherever workers are required to work or pass under the scaffolds.

Before a scaffold job begins, all workers should receive training on that particular scaffolding system and on any required personal fall protection equipment including its inspection, use, and replacement. Workers should practice safe behaviors on scaffolding at all times.

They should only climb the scaffolding from designated areas on the structure or on properly installed ladders. Good climbing techniques should be practiced including facing the rungs when climbing up or down; using tool belts or approved hoists to carry materials up to the jobsite and thus allow the use of both hands; and establishing solid footing and balance before climbing the structure.

Site supervisors should raise scaffold safety awareness and support safe work practices. ❑

In This Issue

STATE COMPENSATION INSURANCE FUND

The Expert's Corner

Smoke From Wildfires And The Workplace

When smoke from wildfires is in the air, employers may wonder if the smoke is a health hazard and if they can do anything to protect their workers.

Smoke is a complex mixture of gases and fine particles. These fine particles are the primary health concern, but chemicals in the mixture can also contribute to the irritating effects of smoke. Carbon monoxide in the smoke is typically only a concern for firefighters close to the fire line.

Health effects depend upon the level of smoke and the sensitivity of the individual. They can include irritation of the eyes and respiratory tract, cough, phlegm, wheezing, difficulty in breathing, and chest discomfort. People with asthma, lung disease, or heart disease are more likely to be affected by smoke. If workers experience symptoms such as chest pain, chest tightness, shortness of breath, or severe fatigue, medical attention should be sought.

Employers should stay alert. They should listen to local news, weather forecasts, and air quality alerts. Air quality advisories and news can also be found at www.airnow.gov.

Staying indoors is a common advisory. The heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system should be set to maximize the amount of recirculated air and minimize any fresh air being brought in. Portable room air cleaners can provide additional air

filtration. Some buildings are so "leaky" that the inside air is no better than the outside air. Other buildings may lack air conditioning and become too hot with all the windows and doors kept shut. If the inside environment is unacceptable, it may be appropriate for some or all employees to remain at home or at some alternate location.

Reducing physical activity may be recommended. Employers should review the level of physical exertion needed for all operations and limit or stop some activities if appropriate.

Air contaminants generated within the workplace can be a concern. If open doors and windows or mechanical ventilation with make-up air from outside are needed to reduce exposure to air contaminants from forklifts, welding, or other processes, it may be appropriate to limit or even stop some operations.

In general, the use of respirators or masks is not recommended for widespread use in areas affected by smoke. However, their use may be appropriate for some workers, such as those who need to be outdoors. Consult a safety and health professional before providing respirators for your employees. ❑

Beth Mohr, Ph.D., CIH, is a Certified Industrial Hygienist assigned to State Fund's San Francisco and San Jose Districts.

HazCom Programs – What You Should Know

Did you know that Cal/OSHA requires every workplace, which has or uses hazardous substances, to have a written and effectively implemented Hazard Communication (HazCom) Program that specifically addresses the potential hazards found at that particular site?

The written program – readily accessible to employees (or their representatives) and to Cal/OSHA – must describe the persons responsible for implementing, maintaining, and periodically reviewing the program and the procedures for meeting all the requirements including:

- **A list of all hazardous substances in the workplace** – The list may be compiled for the workplace as a whole or for individual work areas and can serve as a checklist to ensure that all hazardous substances in the workplace have have Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) and labels.
- **A completed MSDS for each hazardous material listed/used in the workplace** – The MSDS contains useful information on the nature of the hazards and how to use, store, and dispose of the material. It also describes what protective measures to take while using the material and what first aid measures to follow if an exposure to the substance occurs. MSDSs must contain all of the sections required by the standard and be readily available to employees.
- **Methods for employee training and**

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Inspect Fall Arrest Systems

Falls are a primary cause for injuries and fatalities in construction. Workers have fallen off edges of every description, especially floors and roofs, and through openings in floors, roofs, and walls.

To prevent accidental falls at worksites, guardrails or other effective barriers to falls should be used. Where guardrails or other barriers are not feasible, workers must use approved personal fall protection systems or positioning devices. In many instances, fall protection systems can prevent serious injury and save a life. That's why it's important for workers to ensure that their fall arrest system is in proper working condition before they use it.

It's critical that workers choose and use the right equipment for the job and that it's labeled as meeting the requirements of the American National Standards Institute (ANSI). If there's any question about what type of equipment is needed, they should ask their foreman.

A competent person should inspect the equipment at least twice annually in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions, making sure to document the date of inspection. Prior to each use, the worker should inspect the equipment thoroughly – even if it has been used daily and was inspected the day before. If the equipment is only used occasionally, it's even more important to inspect it prior to use to ensure that it wasn't put away in a damaged condition or that deterioration hasn't occurred while the equipment was in storage (e.g. weakening of straps or ropes by mold or mildew).

The equipment (including ropes, lanyards or harnesses) should be taken out of service and replaced, if it is found to be defective or if it was involved in a fall.

The time to find out that there is a problem with a fall arrest system is not when a fall happens – at that point it's too late. Proper maintenance and regular equipment inspection can help ensure workers will be protected in the event of a fall. ❑

Continued from previous page

awareness – Employees must receive training on the HazCom program requirements including its location and availability; the identification and location of hazardous substances; and how to read and understand MSDSs. Training should include how to read and understand label information including physical and health hazards of the substance; how to detect the presence or release of the substance; and what precautionary measures needed to protect themselves from hazards during normal use and in emergency conditions. Training must be done at the time of initial work assignment or when a new material is introduced. Training must be appropriate in content and vocabulary for the education, literacy, and language comprehension level of the employee(s).

- **Labels and hazard warning information –** Employers are required to use legible labels and other forms of warning to clearly and quickly communicate what's in a container, its hazards, the safety precautions, and the name and address of the manufacturer. Labels and other forms of warning are to be conspicuously placed on containers so that the message is readily visible. Labels should not be removed and if torn or defaced, they must be replaced.

Whatever the company activity or number of hazardous substances, it is essential that both employers and employees know how to identify potentially hazardous substances, understand the health hazards associated with the chemicals, and follow safe work practices. ❑

Sun Safety Tips

The sun's rays can cause serious skin problems when exposure is excessive. Besides sunburn, there are various types of skin cancer including deadly melanomas. When working outdoors, the best skin protection against the sun's harmful ultraviolet (UV) rays is to wear a long sleeved shirt, long pants, a neck scarf, and your hard hat.

For exposed skin, sunscreens help protect against the cancer-causing UV rays. The American Academy of Dermatology recommends that the sunscreen be reapplied regularly – at least every two hours – especially when there's heavy sweating. Although a sun protection factor (SPF) of 15 is a general recommendation, the Academy suggests using the strongest sunscreen for a person's particular skin type with higher numbers for very fair-skinned people. Having tanned or naturally dark skin does not eliminate the need for protection against UV rays.

Your eyes should be shaded from the sun with sunglasses, visors, caps, or a combination of these. Shading your eyes not only protects them from damaging UV rays but it also keeps you from squinting. Squinting lessens your field of vision and diminishes your ability to safely see what you're doing and spot potential hazards. ❑

Temas de Seguridad

Safety News State Compensation Insurance Fund Número tres de 2008

Seguridad en el uso de herramientas

Los trabajos de construcción con frecuencia requieren el uso de herramientas motorizadas tales como sierras, taladros, buriladoras, cepilladoras, lijadoras y tornos junto con herramientas de mano tales como escoplos, trinchantes y barrenas. Mientras se trabaja con estas herramientas se debe tener en mente la seguridad. Capacítese en el uso de las herramientas motorizadas y de mano que utiliza en su trabajo. Lea los manuales de las herramientas motorizadas y asegúrese de entender y cumplir con todas las instrucciones.

Siempre inspeccione las herramientas antes de usarlas. Asegúrese de que los cordones eléctricos estén en buenas condiciones y tengan buena conexión a tierra. Rotule y saque de servicio, deseche o repare cualquier herramienta que no esté en buenas condiciones de funcionamiento. Asegúrese de que las cuchillas y las superficies estén limpias y afiladas para brindarle el máximo control. Dé manteni miento periódico a las herramientas dependiendo de la cantidad de uso que reciban.

Vista ropa apropiada y ceñida y átese el cabello largo al hacer trabajos de carpintería. Evite usar artículos de joyería o ropa holgada que se puedan enredar en partes móviles o giratorias. Use calzado con suelas antideslizantes para evitar caídas. Los anteojos de seguridad le protegen los ojos contra el aserrín y objetos que vuelan. Una máscara contra el polvo y un área bien ventilada le protegen los pulmones contra la inhalación de partículas pequeñas de madera. La protección para los oídos es requerida cerca de herramientas que produzcan ruido excesivo, tanto en el taller como en el sitio de la obra. Guantes ceñidos, cuando sean necesarios, le protegen las manos al manejar los materiales.

Siga las buenas prácticas de seguridad en el trabajo. Piense primero antes de colocar las manos o los materiales cerca de una cuchilla de corte. Preste atención a la cuchilla de corte todo el tiempo hasta haber terminado el corte. Cualquier distracción puede hacer que pierda un dedo o una mano. Mantenga las manos alejadas de las cuchillas u otras partes en movimiento usando un palo u otra guía para empujar el material hacia el área de corte.

Siempre saque los clavos, nudos u otras imperfecciones y elementos que puedan hacer que el material se atore o "rebote". Sujete los materiales a la mesa de corte para evitar que el material y/o la cuchilla se deslicen cuando usted les aplique presión. Siempre espere a que la herramienta o cuchilla pare por completo antes de tocarla. Apague la máquina por completo, bloquéela y etiquétela antes de eliminar cualquier material atorado o antes de limpiar la máquina. Nunca deje una herramienta motorizada de corte en marcha y desatendida. ❑

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Ubicación _____

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Recomendaciones de seguridad

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