



Under Construction

your safety & health awareness monthly news

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January 2012

NAWIC—The National Association of Women in Construction

Special points of interest:

- National Eye Care Month
- New Year's Resolutions
- Best Practice in Construction—Silica Dust Prevention
- Safety Education Idea—Masonry Wall Bracing
- Safety Excellence Competition

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Working Safely—A Habit for Life

WOW! Where did the time go...it seems I just finished editing December's newsletter and here it is the 3rd of January in a new year. I hope everyone had a safe and healthful New Year, with your friends and family. The header at the top of the page has a poignant message—a habit for life.

As I was out and about between Christmas and New Years, I heard of at least two construction-related fatalities., and I started to reflect how those deaths will affect people for the remainder of their lives, and had to think of lives lost too soon.

We still have too many people seriously injured and dying on our projects and in our line of work.

Beware of Carbon Monoxide

Every year we hear of someone succumbing to the hazards of carbon monoxide.

Carbon Monoxide (CO) is colorless and odorless and is produced by processes involving the incomplete combustion of carbon-containing substances. When inhaled, CO combines with oxygen-carrying hemoglobin and prevents the transport of oxygen to

Does construction make us think we are invincible? I know I see the eyes roll when I tell another group of orientees to be aware of their surroundings, to use



fall protection, to be conscientious about house-keeping, etc. Does my audience think that pain and suffering will never happen to them? One day, I hope to see that everyone on my project(s) will have the habits in place to make their work safe for life.

I hope everyone has an opportunity to see the

latest, greatest IMAGE. Pat Stagno, great article as well as cudos to Suzanne Tollefson of the greater Phoenix chapter and Tulsa member Julie Lovelace for their safety insights.

It's also great to see comments in the faces of the industry from the likes of Vickie Aviles, Tracy Hadwin and September Bickmore reflecting on their greatest safety challenges. We certainly all do have those challenges out there, but reading our member's messages, I know that NAWIC has some of the most diligent safety advocates in the industry.

It's appreciated now as much as ever in this new year.

Thanks and Be Safe—Kat

Kathi Dobson—Detroit, Region 4

cells and tissues throughout the body, which can lead to death.

To minimize employee exposure, be certain that you monitor and keep CO levels at less than 50 PPM (8 hour time weighted average.)

Use proper engineering controls—be certain that gas and propane equipment is well maintained

and work areas have adequate ventilation.

Use administrative controls to minimize employee exposure time and conduct periodic air monitoring with properly calibrated equipment.

Finally, conduct training on the hazards of CO poisoning and how to identify signs of exposure.

National Eye Care Month



January brings with it new resolutions, and one resolution that makes sense is taking care of your eyes.

That means getting a routine eye examination which includes a vision screening exam, evaluation for a variety of disease processes and testing for glaucoma.

As we age, our eyes naturally lose the ability to see items which are close. Those of us who are over the age of 40 or 45 know the feeling of having to stretch our arms out to read a magazine or menu. This natural aging process

trumps even the best LASIK surgeries and may mean that folks who have had LASIK or similar procedures still end up having to wear glasses to see items up close.

Another examination which is important at any age is the glaucoma test—the “puff” of air into the eye evaluates pressure. Glaucoma is an abnormal elevation of pressure in the eye that can occur at any age. If untreated, it can lead to blindness.

The optometrist or ophthalmologist will also check your eyes for signs of cataracts,

macular degeneration and retinal damage. All of these tests are done in addition to checking peripheral vision and the vision screening.

Most eye conditions can be treated by an eye specialist, or ophthalmologist. Some specialize in treating certain types of eye disease and others are generalists.

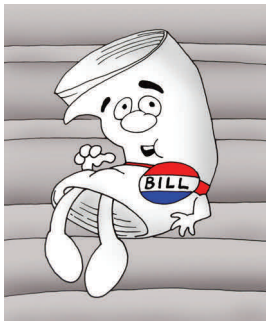
Since we are already thinking about eye care, let’s also look at eye protection, especially for the workers who face potential eye injuries every day.

Over 90% of work-related eye injuries occur when material enters around or under the protective lenses

Improving Workplace Eye Safety from PRWeb

1. Check eyewear fit and appropriateness. Over 90% of eye injuries occur when workers wearing eye protection have material enter around or under the protective lenses. This sometimes means the eyewear did not fit well or it was not worn properly.
2. Provide anti-fog. Most workers say that fogging was the number 1 reason for not wearing their safety glasses
3. Provide a variety of safety glasses—people fit differently, and in order to protect, we need to provide.
4. Evaluate the expense of inexpensive lenses. If they scratch and degrade and you are constantly replacing them, the long-term cost may not be as cheap as you think.
5. Provide lanyards to keep glasses close at hand. Workers may leave their glasses at a break table, but if they are around their neck, the glasses go with them.
6. Use experienced workers as mentors to inexperienced workers who may not see the benefit of safety glasses.
7. Train all workers—and reinforce the training with postings and tool box talks.

OSHA Standards Update—Final & Proposed Rule Stage Standards



◆ Electrical Power Transmission and Electrical Protective Equipment:

Revised to incorporate more applicable personal protective equipment and other equipment to improve the injury/fatality statistics related to power line work. It also addresses other construction activities in related areas of work (to OMB September 2011)

◆ Confined Space in Construction:

Construction activities have never been covered by an adequate confined space standard, even though general industry has had a standard (Subpart J—1910) since 1993. There are a couple vague references to closed or confined spaces in Subpart C and also in the Welding standard. (to OMB November 2011)

◆ Crystalline Silica:

Proposed Rule Stage: Exposures to high levels of respirable crystalline silica causes acute or accelerated forms of silicosis, may be fatal and is a recognized hazard. ASTM International and the Building & Construction Trades Division of the AFL-CIO have developed restrictive recommended standards which will be available for public comment (anticipated mid-late 2012)

A Best Practice: Silica Dust Exposure Reduction

Exposure to silica can cause silicosis, a debilitating lung disease caused by inhalation of dust containing silica particles.

Workers are exposed primarily in the construction and mining industries by jack hammering, sand blasting, drilling, concrete manufacture and mixing, brick and concrete cutting and sawing as well as demolition activities.

The key to prevention is control of the dust, which can be managed in a number of ways.

ALWAYS use water when cutting concrete, brick or rock.

Substitute other abrasives, such as aluminum oxide or steel grit for silica sand.

Use a dust collection system, and local exhaust ventilation to prevent dust from being released into the air.

Minimize exposures to nearby workers by using good work practices.

Respirators, as with any other method of PPE, is the last measure of protection. Respirators must be properly selected for the hazard and a respiratory protection pro-

gram must be part of your overall safety plan. It must include selection, medical evaluations, fit testing, training, etc.

If you know that your project has the potential to create silica dust, the time to prepare for how to control the dust is early in the project.

It is eye-opening to have an industrial hygienist measure the amount of silica in a single dry saw cutting event. The simple solution to reduce the amount of silica to levels below the permissible exposure limits was simply to add water.

“It’s not just dust—it’s silica” has been OSHA’s message to the public for many years.

Controlling Silica Exposures in Construction

1. Evaluate if the work will be in enclosed, semi-enclosed or open spaces.
2. Determine how many operations will generate silica dust.
3. What other environmental conditions are present (wind direction and speed as well as the amount of moisture in the atmosphere and on the ground.
4. Perform periodic exposure monitoring to confirm that your engineering and work practice controls are effective and that appropriate respiratory protection is used when necessary. A dust mask does not provide sufficient protective measures for silica.
5. Modification of equipment may be desirable, but be certain that equipment manufacturer’s recommendations are followed to assure that equipment performance and safety are not compromised.
6. Be certain that if you are using water to control dust that GFCI’s and water-tight or sealable electrical connectors are used

For further information, see this OSHA publication at www.osha.gov/Publications/3362silica-exposures.pdf



New Year’s Resolutions

Everyone knows that most people do not or cannot keep their New Year’s resolutions. I do not know why, but I have some ideas as to why people break their promises to themselves pretty quickly after the first of every year.

Primarily, most people select their resolutions out of pressure by others, or break them because they have no conviction behind the resolution they are attempting to keep.

My latest attempt at a resolu-

tion failed miserably as I had no plan for success, so I don’t set resolutions anymore, I make goals. It’s what I would do at work...during my annual performance appraisal, my boss doesn’t ask what I’d like to resolve, he asks what goals I want to accomplish.

So start out S M A R T:

Be Specific—what, why and how will you achieve your goal.

Have a Measurable outcome. If you can’t measure it, you can’t manage it.

Your goals should be Achievable—stretch, but never set a goal that is too hard to achieve,

Your goals should be Realistic (do-able) and finally, your goals should be Timely—putting an end point on the goal will allow you to set milestones and dates where you can evaluate progress.

Safety Excellence Competition

We hope by now you have received the application for NAWIC's 3rd Safety & health Excellence.

This award recognizes companies who have the right stuff to keep their workers and workplaces safe. Entirely revamped this year, the application and award focuses not only on just parent companies, but the divisions and groups in which our members work.

(we identified that there was sometimes a large variance between what was being done at the corporate or parent level versus what was happening in the field or satellite offices).

We also broke out the award into a couple additional classes—for the general contractor with less than 100 or more than 100 employees as well as subcontractors who have less than 100 or more than 100 employees.

I think we did a good job with our definition of construction-related company, which was an area of confusion in the past.

Every member is encouraged to recognize her company by completing the application form and submitting it to her chapter no later than February 1st, 2012.

Chapters then have the month of February to select their top choice for sending along an application for the regional



recognition which will take place during the region's Spring Forum. (HINT: Chapters can choose to recognize their top selections at a chapter event.)

The application has been entirely revamped for 2011-2012.

Who will take the prize at Convention?

From the region's winners, the national winners will be selected by a panel of impartial judges, including past National Safety & Health Awareness Chairpersons.

As noted in the January Connection, the winners will be named at the Saturday Gala Dinner. What a special treat to have our winners recog-

nized at the same event honoring our Crystal Vision and Crystal Achievement winners.

This was a real challenge to put a whole new award application out and a number of the Region Safety & Health Awareness Chairpersons share in the efforts. A special thanks from Terri and I to Lynda Dodson and our

own Safety Doctor, Isabel Perry. Additional special thanks to Karen Kreitlow and Cathy Brady whose eagle eyes caught errors that four or five others missed!

The application is also posted on the NAWIC web site—sign in to the Members Only section, select committees, then go to the Safety & Health Awareness page.

In 2010, the average OSHA Recordable Incident Rate for Construction (NAICS category 23) was 4.0

WE ARE MOVING FORWARD WITH THE OSHA ALLIANCE!!!

It was the right thing to do, and on December 11th, I received an e-mail from President Judy DeWeese that the executive committee had given their approval to move forward.

The alliance is designed to:
Build trusting, cooperative relationships with the agency
Network with other groups committed to workplace safety and health

Leverage resources to maximize worker safety and health protection, and

Aid in gaining recognition as a proactive leader in safety and health

The next step is setting up a meeting with OSHA and establishing a task force from the membership to support and promote the efforts we set forth.

We will have to develop short and long-term goals

which fall into the categories of:

Training and Education,

Outreach and Communication and

Promoting the National Dialogue on Workplace Safety and Health

I look forward to working with the membership to make this a success!



**NAWIC—The National Association of Women
in Construction**

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NAWIC National Headquarters
327 S. Adams Street
Fort Worth, TX. 76104

Kathi Dobson—National Safety & Health Committee
Chairperson—Detroit, Region 4
Phone: 734.367.2560
Fax: 734.367.2635
E-mail: kdobson@alberici.com

Terri Piasecki—National Co-Chair—Raleigh, Region 11
Phone: 866.697.7334
E-mail: terri@charmandhammer.com

Work Safe - For Life



You can place a mailing label here

We're on the web! Go to www.nawic.org, sign in and in the members only section find our bulletin board in the member services section as well as our committee information under "committees".

NAWIC's Safety & Health Committee is here to help you resolve safety & health issues affecting your work within the construction industry.

We are also here to help with ANY safety or health issues affecting women.

NAWIC builds, and we believe this committee holds a major role in not only *building* a safe work environment, but we'll also help you go beyond compliance to help you *build* a culture of safety in your organizations where safe work is automatic and becomes a conscientious routine and expected of all, no matter where you work or what your company does.

Baby it's Cold Outside!



OSHA's Cold Stress Card provides a reference guide and recommendations to combat and prevent many cold weather-related illnesses and injuries. Available in English and Spanish, this laminated card is free to employers, employees and the public.

Tips on how to protect employees include:

- o Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that may be dangerous.
- o Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses and injuries and what to

do to help employees.

- o Train employees about cold-induced illnesses and injuries.
- o Encourage employees to wear proper clothing for cold, wet and windy conditions, including layers that can be adjusted to changing conditions.
- o Be sure that employees in extremely cold conditions take frequent, short breaks in warm dry shelters to allow their bodies to warm up.
- o Try to schedule work for the warmest part of the day.

o Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.

- o Use the buddy system: Work in pairs so that one employee can recognize danger signs.
- o Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports-type drinks) and avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, sodas or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- o Eat warm, high-calorie foods such as hot pasta dishes.
- o Remember that employees increase their risks when they take certain medications, are in poor physical condition or suffer from illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension or cardiovascular disease.