



Alaska Chapter NECA

January 08, 2004
Alaska Chapter, NECA
www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

January 13	Safety Committee Meeting
January 13-16	IBEW NECA National Benefits Conference
January 21	Board Meeting 4:30pm Membership Meeting 6pm
October 16-19	National Convention
December 11	Annual Meeting



Get involved with safety!

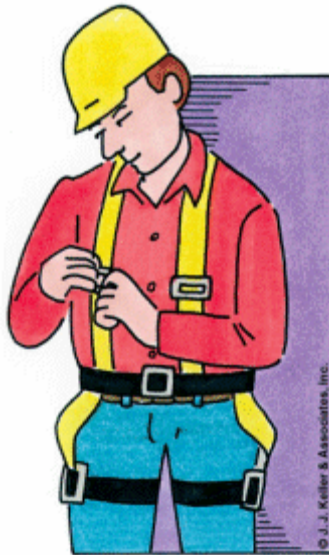
The best worker safety and health protection occurs when everyone at the worksite shares responsibility for protection. You have unique knowledge to help find problems and resolve them. In addition, no one else has as much at stake to avoid accidents as the people who are likely to be injured. The more that you are involved in a variety of safety-related activities, the more you will appreciate the potential hazards that exist at the worksite, the more likely you will avoid unsafe behaviors, and the more likely the overall safety culture of the organization will strengthen. Without your involvement and cooperation, accidents are difficult to prevent.

How can you get involved?

Some things you can do to increase your involvement in safety include checking out the following possibilities:

- Volunteer to conduct site inspections.
- Analyze routine hazards in each step of a job or process, and prepare safe work practices.
- Volunteer to help develop and revise safety rules.
- Participate as trainers for current and new hires.
- Participate in accident/near miss incident investigations.
- Participate as safety observers and safety coaches.
- Report hazards and be involved in finding solutions to correct the problems.

Talk to your safety manager or supervisor about getting involved in safety at your company!



A fall protection success story

A Des Plaines, Ill., contractor has added his company's name to the many who attest to the life-saving value of fall protection for workers.

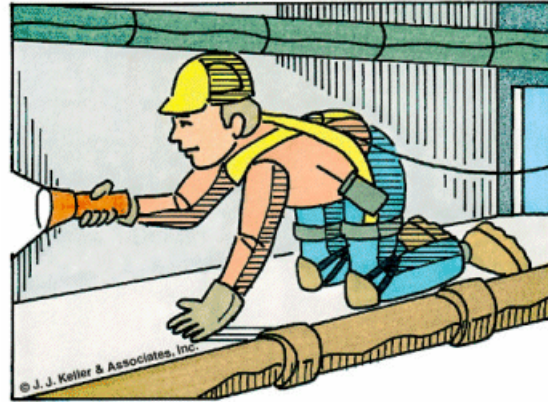
Reliable Brothers, home improvement specialists in roofing, siding, windows, and carpentry in the Chicago suburb, was cited in March 2002 for not having adequate fall protection on its worksites. The employer did not contest the citation. In fact, he purchased necessary fall protection equipment, including harnesses, on the day of the inspection.

That equipment came in handy two months later, when the employer reported that one of his workers fell off a 27-foot-high roof—but was saved from almost certain death by the safety harness he was wearing.

The employee suffered only minor injuries and was back to work in six days.

Lesson to be learned

While your employer will be responsible for providing you with personal protective equipment, such as fall protection, you have a responsibility to wear it



properly!

Crouching worker, hidden hazard

Performing prolonged or repeated work activities in the crouching/kneeling position causes reduced blood flow to the lower extremities and contact pressure injuries to the part of the knee coming into contact with hard surfaces.

Possible solutions

- Knee pads or foam padding should be used by workers performing prolonged kneeling activities.
- Stools should be used instead of crouching.
- When lifting in a cramped area, such as in many utility work areas, it is best to perform lifting tasks from a kneeling position and push/pull tasks from a crouched position.

Push and pull safely to avoid back injury

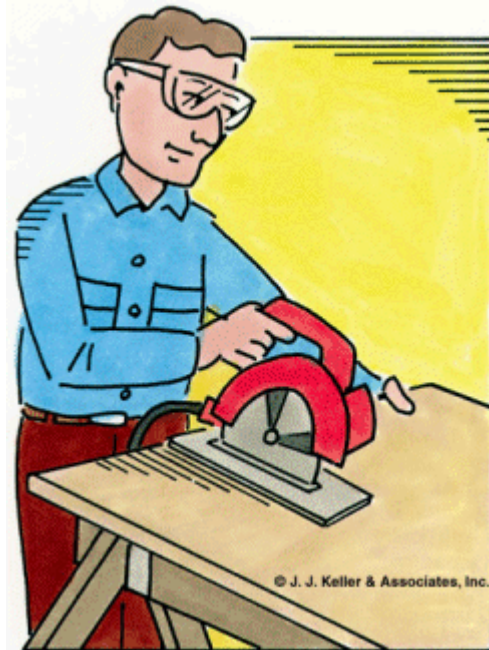
Pushing and pulling loads, such as carts, dumpers and gurneys, places stress on the back, especially when generating sufficient force to start and stop the devices. Factors such as the weight being moved, height of the handles, maintenance of equipment and flooring surfaces can greatly increase the risk of injury.



Possible solutions

- Limit the weight of loads to be moved manually. Generally, loads that require more than about 50 pounds of force to move require mechanical assists.
- Use powered movers such as tugs to move heavy loads.
- Keep carts, hampers, gurneys, etc., well maintained to minimize the amount of force exerted while using these items.
- Use carts with large, low rolling resistance wheels. These can usually roll easily over mixed flooring as well as gaps between elevators and hallways.
- Keep handles of devices to be pushed at waist to chest height.
- Keep floors clean and well maintained.
- Use a pendant handle when performing pulling tasks. This allows operators to lean away from the load so their body weight can assist in moving the load. This also reduces the chance of the cart running into their legs.
- Push rather than pull whenever possible.





Use electric tools safely

Employees using electric tools must be aware of several dangers. Among the most serious hazards are electrical burns and shocks.

Electrical shocks, which can lead to injuries such as heart failure and burns, are among the major hazards associated with electric-powered tools. Under certain conditions, even a small amount of electric current can result in fibrillation of the heart and death. An electric shock also can cause the user to fall off a ladder or other elevated work surface and be injured due to the fall.

To protect the user from shock and burns, electric tools must have a three-wire cord with a ground and be plugged into a grounded receptacle, be double insulated, or be powered by a low-voltage isolation transformer. Three-wire cords contain two current-carrying conductors and a grounding conductor. Any time an adapter is used to accommodate a two-hole receptacle, the adapter wire must be attached to a known ground. The third prong must never be removed from the plug.

Double-insulated tools are available that provide protection against electrical shock without third-wire grounding. On double-insulated tools, an internal layer of protective insulation completely isolates the external housing of the tool.

The following general practices should be followed when using electric tools:

- Operate electric tools within their design limitations.
- Use gloves and appropriate safety footwear when using electric tools.
- Store electric tools in a dry place when not in use.
- Do not use electric tools in damp or wet locations unless they are approved for that purpose.
- Keep work areas well lighted when operating electric tools.
- Ensure that cords from electric tools do not present a tripping hazard.

In the construction industry, employees who use electric tools must be protected by ground-fault circuit interrupters or an assured equipment-grounding conductor



program.

Why is OSHA necessary?

You have probably heard a lot about OSHA since you've been on the job. After all, many utility jobs and tasks have specific OSHA regulations. Ever wondered what OSHA is, or why it's necessary?

Until 1970, no uniform or comprehensive provisions existed to protect against workplace safety and health hazards. At that time:

- Job-related accidents accounted for more than 14,000 worker deaths,
- Nearly 2.5 million workers were disabled by workplace accidents and injuries,
- Ten times as many workdays were lost from job-related disabilities as from labor strikes, and
- The estimated new cases of occupational diseases totaled 300,000.

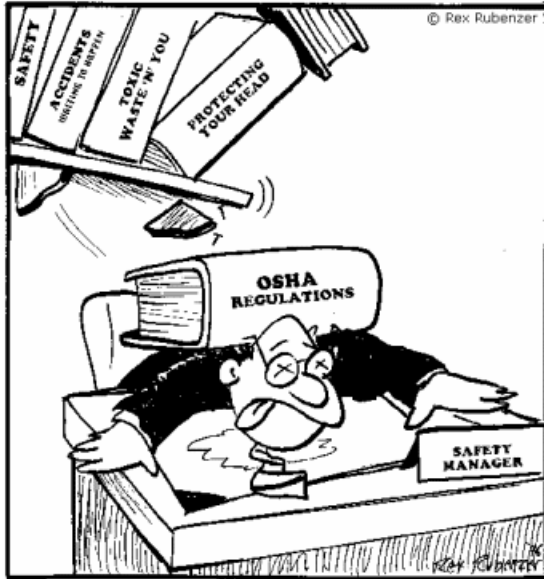
In terms of lost productivity and wages, medical expenses, and disability compensation, the burden on the nation's commerce was staggering. The human cost was beyond calculation.

Today, OSHA helps to safeguard the right to a safe and healthful work environment for nearly 115 million workers—America's most valuable national resource.

OSHA's impact

Since OSHA's creation in 1970, the nation has made substantial progress in occupational safety and health. OSHA and its many partners in the public and private sectors have:

- Cut the work-related fatality rate by 62 percent,
- Reduced overall injury and illness rates by 42 percent,
- Virtually eliminated brown lung disease in the textile industry, and
- Reduced trenching and excavation fatalities by 35 percent.



Does Sherlock Holmes work at your company?

Equipment, processes, supplies, surroundings, and people do not always behave or react as expected. Too often, these mishaps result in injury, illness, or property damage, and the natural response is to ask why an incident occurred. Unfortunately, incident investigations come too late to prevent the injuries and property damage that triggered the investigation.

So, why does your company investigate workplace incidents? There are many reasons, but probably the most important one is to prevent repeat incidents from happening. Conducting thorough investigations helps to preserve the health and well-being of all employees.

To really get the most out of incident investigation and analysis, the investigation team needs the cooperation of every worker. You need to see that the company wants to prevent future incidents and protect employees from injury by performing complete incident investigations. By working with the investigators, you can help improve the overall safety and health environment at your company.