

Alaska Chapter NECA

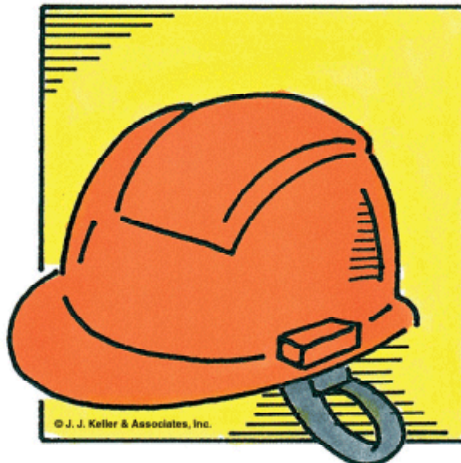
December 23, 2005
Alaska Chapter, NECA www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

December 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS!
January 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR!
January 3	Anchorage JATC
January 10	Safety Committee
January 11	Board Meeting / Membership Meeting

Tool Box Talks

January 02, 2006	Aerial / Scissor Lifts
January 09, 2006	Arc Blast / Fault Hazards
January 16, 2006	Assured Grounding / GFCI Protection / Temporary Power
January 23, 2006	Blood Borne Pathogens
January 30, 2006	Ceiling and Overhead Work

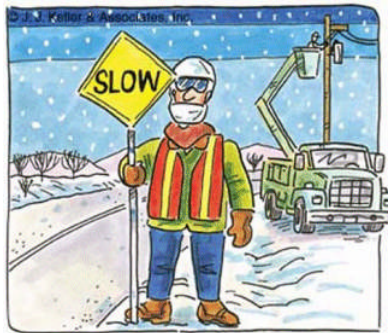


Maintaining your hard hat

As a utility worker, there's a good chance that at least occasionally you must wear protective headgear. It probably goes without saying, but this equipment must be maintained to ensure you are protected.

Protective headgear should be inspected everyday. Here are some suggestions on maintaining your headgear:

- Check your helmet for cracks (even hairline cracks), dents, and wear every time it is worn. Cracks and dents can reduce the degree of safety a helmet provides. Exposure to temperature extremes, sunlight, or chemicals can shorten the life of thermoplastic helmets. Discard helmets that are cracked, or look chalky or dull.
- Wash your helmet (especially the sweatbands and cradles) monthly in warm, soapy water and rinse thoroughly. You may need to use a solvent to remove tar, paint, oil, or other materials. However, some solvents can damage the shell, so consult the helmet manufacturer to find out what solvents should be used. Replace worn sweatbands, if needed.
- Avoid painting your helmet. Paint contains solvents that may reduce the dielectric properties or affect the actual shell.
- Pay special attention to the condition of the suspension system. This is important because it helps absorb the shock of a blow. Look for torn cradle straps, broken sewing lines, loose rivets, defective lugs, and other defects.
- Safety helmets do not provide complete head protection from side, rear, and severe impact blows. Prevent objects from falling by inspecting the work area for items that have been placed where they could fall, and move them to a safer location.



The weather outside is frightful!

As we move into January, many parts of the country must brace for cold temperatures. For utility workers, such cold conditions must be addressed, as outside work is performed.

How cold temperatures affect us

When the body is unable to warm itself, cold related stress may result. This may include tissue damage and possibly death. Four factors contribute to cold stress:

- Cold air temperatures,
- High velocity air movement,
- Dampness of the air, and
- Contact with cold water or surfaces.

A cold environment forces the body to work harder to maintain its temperature. Cold air, water, and snow all draw heat from the body. Wind chill is the combination of air temperature and wind

speed. For example, when the air temperature is 40°F, and the wind speed is 35 mph, your exposed skin receives conditions equivalent to the air temperature being 11°F.

While it is obvious that below freezing conditions combined with inadequate clothing could bring about cold stress, it is also important to understand that it can also be brought about by temperatures in the 50s coupled with some rain and wind.

What preventive measures should you take?

Plan for work in cold weather. Wearing appropriate clothing and being aware of how your body is reacting to the cold are important to preventing cold stress. Avoiding alcohol, certain medications, and smoking can also help to minimize the risk.

Protective clothing is the most important way to avoid cold stress. The type of fabric also makes a difference. Cotton loses its insulation value when it becomes wet. Wool, on the other hand, retains its insulation even when wet. The following are recommendations for working in cold environments:

- Wear at least three layers of clothing. An outer layer to break the wind and allow some ventilation (like Gortex® or nylon). A middle layer of down or wool to absorb sweat and provide insulation even when wet. An inner layer of cotton or synthetic weave to allow ventilation.
- Wear a hat. Up to 40% of body heat can be lost when the head is left exposed.
- Wear insulated boots or other footwear.
- Keep a change of dry clothing available in case work clothes become wet.
- Do not wear tight clothing. Loose clothing allows better ventilation.

Work practices and planning are important preventative measures. Drink plenty of liquids, avoiding caffeine and alcohol. It is easy to become dehydrated in cold weather. If possible, heavy work should be scheduled during the warmer parts of the day. Take breaks out of the cold. Try to work in pairs to keep an eye on each other and watch for signs of cold stress. Avoid fatigue since energy is needed to keep muscles warm. Take frequent breaks and consume warm, high calorie food such as pasta to maintain energy reserves.

Engineering controls can be effective in reducing the risk of cold stress. Radiant heaters may be used to warm workers. Shielding work areas from drafts or wind will reduce wind chill. Use insulating material on equipment handles, especially metal handles, when temperatures drop below 30°F.

Training in recognition and treatment is important. Supervisors, workers, and coworkers should watch for signs of cold stress.



Scaffold use near overhead power lines

Many employers, contractors, and workers are unaware of the hazards of working with scaffolds near uninsulated overhead power lines. When scaffolds, conductive tools, or other materials contact overhead power lines workers receive serious and often fatal injuries.

Case No. 1 - One Fatality

A company owner and six workers were painting a concrete silo. A 5- by 7-foot tubular, welded-frame scaffold was erected to reach the top of the silo approximately 6 feet across from a 7,200-volt power line. Workers were using 8-foot aluminum poles with rollers to paint the side of the silo. A laborer who was painting from the scaffold pulled the aluminum pole back onto the scaffold to load more paint onto the roller. In doing so, he contacted the power line with the aluminum pole and was electrocuted.

Case No. 2 - Four Fatalities

A crew of four painters completed painting one side of a three-story structure. The crew was using a five-tier, tubular, welded-frame scaffold mounted on 5-inch, rubber-clad aluminum wheels. The painters and the crew chief attempted to move the 28.5-foot scaffold to the other side of the structure. The scaffold contacted one phase of a 12,000-volt power line that was approximately 27.5 feet above the ground. The contact created a path to the ground for the electric current. The four painters were electrocuted and the crew chief was severely burned.

Prevention

For both insulated and uninsulated lines keep the following minimum distances.

For insulated lines:

- If the voltage is less than 300 volts keep a three-foot distance.
- If 300 volts to 50 kv maintain a distance of 10 feet.
- If the voltage is more than 50 kv keep a 10 foot distance, plus 0.4 inches for each 1 kv over 50 kv (the other option is to keep a distance two times the length of the line insulator, but never less than 10 feet).

For uninsulated lines:

- If the voltage is less than 50 kv maintain a distance of 10 feet.
- If the voltage is more than 50 kv maintain a distance of 10 feet, plus 0.4 inches for each 1 kv

over 50 kv (the other option is to keep a distance two times the length of the line insulator, but never less than 10 feet).

Exception: Scaffolds and materials may be closer to power lines than specified above where such clearance is necessary for performance of work, and only after the utility company, or electrical system operator, has been notified of the need to work closer and the utility company, or electrical system operator, has deenergized the lines, relocated the lines, or installed protective coverings to prevent accidental contact with the lines.



Genesis of some New Year's traditions

The making of New Year's resolutions dates all the way back to the early Babylonians. Popular modern resolutions include losing weight or quitting smoking. What did those early Babylonians resolve? Mostly to return borrowed farm equipment.

Here in the United States, the Tournament of Roses Parade that is a New Year's Day tradition dates back to 1886, when members of the Valley Hunt Club decorated their carriages with flowers as a way of celebrating ripening of the orange crop there in California. The Rose Bowl football game wasn't played as a part of the Tournament of Roses until 1902; but then it was replaced by chariot races the following year. In 1916, the football game finally returned as the athletic centerpiece of the festival.

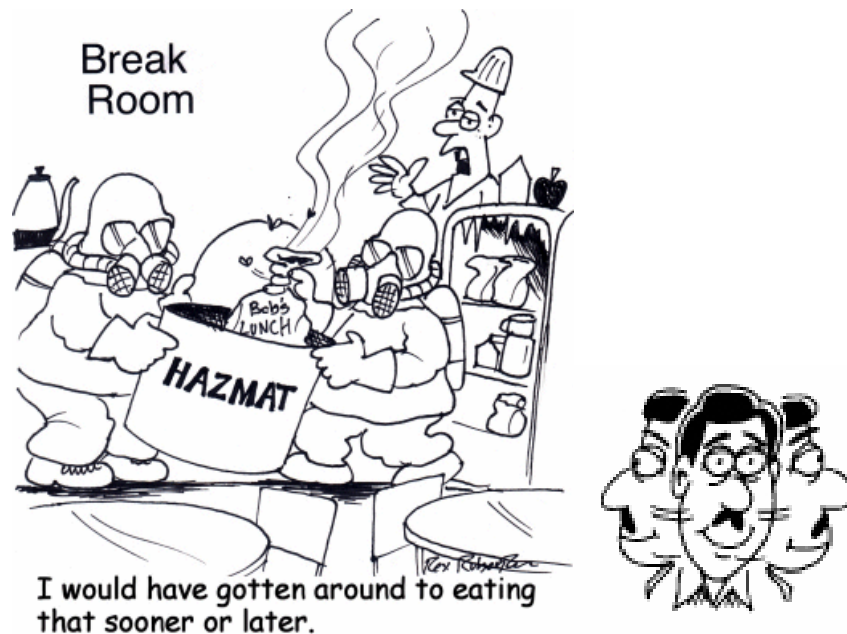
The tradition of using a baby to signify the new year can be traced to Greece around the year 600 BC. It was a tradition at that time to celebrate the god of wine, Dionysus, by parading a baby in a basket, representing the annual rebirth of the god as the spirit of fertility. In early Egypt a baby was also used as a symbol of rebirth. Although early Christians first denounced the practice as pagan, popularity of the baby as a symbol of rebirth forced the Church to reevaluate its position. It finally allowed members to celebrate with a baby, but it was to symbolize the birth of the baby Jesus. The image of a baby with a New Years banner was brought to America by the Germans since they had used that symbol since the fourteenth century.

Luck in the new year

Traditionally, it was thought that you could affect the luck you would have in the coming year by what you did or ate on the first day of the year. Therefore, it became common for to celebrate the brand new year with family and friends. Parties can still last into the middle of the night after ringing in the new year. It was once believed that the first visitor on New Year's Day would bring either good luck or bad luck the rest of the year.

Many cultures believe anything in the shape of a ring means good luck because it symbolizes "coming full circle," completing a year's cycle. That's why the Dutch believe eating doughnuts on New Year's Day will bring good fortune. Many areas in the US celebrate the new year by eating black-eyed peas. They are accompanied by either hog jowls or ham. Black-eyed peas and

other varieties of legumes are considered good luck in many cultures. The hog and its meat are considered lucky because they symbolize prosperity. Cabbage is another “good luck” vegetable consumed on New Year’s Day. Cabbage leaves are considered a sign of prosperity, representing paper currency. In some areas, rice is a lucky food eaten on New Year’s Day.



Why do you procrastinate?

Lots of people procrastinate, but few people understand exactly why they participate in a behavior that often makes them unhappy. Dr. Gail Saltz, a psychoanalyst in private practice and a published author, says that 20% of Americans can be considered “chronic procrastinators.” Saltz says that almost everyone procrastinates some of the time. It seems that both genders suffer from anxiety when they procrastinate, but women also suffer from guilt – at nearly twice the rate that men do.

It’s important to understand that procrastination is not laziness, but is fear-based. Understanding why you procrastinate is a step in the process of getting “unstuck”, says Saltz. Here are some common reasons why people procrastinate – see whether any sound familiar to you:

- **Fear of failure.** Are you so paralyzed by the fear of failure that you’d rather just not try at all?
- **Fear of success.** Do you think if you succeed at something then the bar will be set so high that you will never get over it again? Or do you feel on some level that you don’t deserve success?
- **Do you have a need to be defiant?** Do you believe generally that life is a battle for control? Did you grow up in a household that was authoritarian and controlling? Are you now trying to passive aggressively control the world by procrastinating?
- **Are you a thrill-seeking procrastinator?** Are you trying to avoid the boredom of daily tasks? Are you a drama seeker? Does boredom terrify you? Do you need a crisis to keep things interesting?

Understanding procrastination will help you break the paralyzing habit of putting off things that you really need to do. Once you figure out why you procrastinate, make a plan of action that includes the following steps:

- **Prioritize.** If you don't do this, you will get overwhelmed. Create "to-do" lists and figure out what's really important.
- **Figure out your belief system.** Do you think you're better off working under pressure?
- **Control impulsiveness.** Try to avoid jumping from task to task without finishing anything.
- **Give yourself time to improve.** Don't expect to be a different person overnight. Try shooting for one change a week. You will likely be surprised by the progress you make.