



Alaska Chapter NECA

February 23, 2004
Alaska Chapter, NECA
www.alaskaneca.org

Chapter Calendar

February 25-27	Pension Meeting
March 9	Safety Committee Meeting
March 10 4:30pm	Board Meeting
	Membership Meeting 6pm
October 16-19	National Convention
December 11	Annual Meeting



Protect yourself while working in the cold

With the onset of cold weather, it's important to take necessary precautions to prevent and treat cold-related health problems.

Prolonged exposure to freezing or cold temperatures may cause serious health problems such as trench foot, frostbite, and hypothermia. In extreme cases, including cold water immersion, exposure can lead to death. Danger signs include uncontrolled shivering, slurred speech, clumsy movements, fatigue and confused behavior. If these signs are observed, call for emergency help.

Safety tips

- Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that lead to potential cold-induced illnesses and injuries.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-

Tool Box Talks

March 01, 2004	Confined Space Pre-Planning
March 08, 2004	Cranes and Hoists Rigging and Slings
March 15, 2004	DMM (Digital Multimeter) Safety Test Equipment
March 22, 2004	Emergency Response
March 29, 2004	Excavation

induced illnesses/injuries.

- Select proper clothing for cold, wet, and windy conditions. Layer clothing to adjust to changing environmental temperatures. Wear a hat and gloves, in addition to underwear that will keep water away from the skin (polypropylene).
- Take frequent short breaks in warm dry shelters to allow the body to warm up.
- Perform work during the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Use the buddy system (work in pairs).
- Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports-type drinks). Avoid drinks with caffeine (coffee, tea, or hot chocolate) or alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods like hot pasta dishes.

You are at increased risk when...

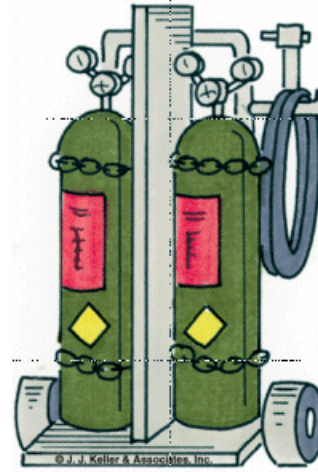
- You have predisposing health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes, and hypertension.
- You take certain medication (check with your doctor, nurse, or pharmacy and ask if any medicines you are taking affect you while working in cold environments).
- You are in poor physical condition, have a poor diet, or are older.

Use compressed gases safely

Compressed gases of all types are very common in our everyday lives. We use compressed gas to keep food cold in the refrigerator, in anesthetics for surgery, to provide oxygen to patients who need it, to manufacture products, cut metal, and to heat our homes.

Compressed gases are hazardous because of the high pressure at which they are stored in

cylinders and pressure tanks. The compressed gases can be flammable, poisonous, corrosive, or any combination of these.



How can they hurt me?

Mishandling of compressed gases has been responsible for fatalities, serious injuries, and property damage that have amounted to millions of dollars.

Flammable compressed gases:

- Explode if handled roughly or exposed to heat.
- Ignite by heat, sparks, or flames.
- Flash back if vapors travel to a source of ignition.
- Produce irritating or poisonous gas when burning.

Non-flammable compressed gases:

- Explode when in a mixture with fuels.

Health effects of compressed gases

Compressed gases:

- Are harmful if inhaled.
- Have extremely irritating vapors.
- Can cause cryogenic burns to skin and eyes.
- Produces irritating or poisonous gas when burning.
- Causes dizziness, unconsciousness, or suffocation.

Handling compressed gas cylinders

Compressed gas cylinders require careful handling to prevent damage. When handling cylinders:

- Move cylinders (securely fastened, in as near an upright position as possible) on special hand trucks.
- Don't drop or bang cylinders together.
- Don't roll, drag, or slide cylinders and never use cylinders as rollers or supports.
- Don't lift cylinders by their caps.
- Don't use magnets to lift cylinders.
- Cradles or platforms can be used to lift cylinders only if the cylinder was manufactured with lifting attachments.

Compressed gas storage

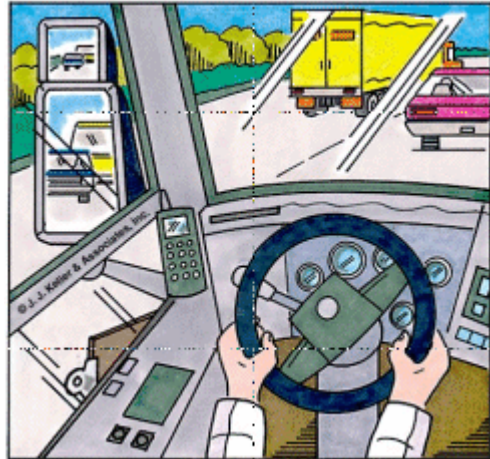
Some general guidelines in storing compressed gas cylinders include:

- Store cylinders in an upright position.
- Store the cylinders in a safe, dry, well-ventilated place that is clean and free of combustible material.
- Avoid areas where cylinders can be knocked down or damaged.
- Store the cylinders in a position that ensures that the safety relief device is always in direct contact with the cylinder's vapor space.
- Store oxygen compressed gas cylinders at least 20 feet from flammables or combustibles, or separate them by a 5 foot, fire-resistant barrier.

Minimize distraction while driving

Many utility workers must drive as part of their daily work. If you fall into this category, remind yourself that attention to the driving situation is crucial for safety. Various distractions, such as eating and cell phone use, can jeopardize safety if precautions aren't taken.

Some distractions affect the driver by requiring physical maneuvers that may threaten vehicle control, whereas others are mental distractions from sources inside or outside of the vehicle.



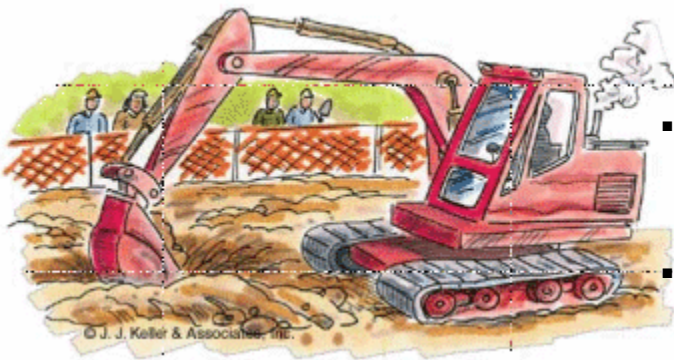
Safety tips

- Before heading to a jobsite (or leaving a jobsite) take care of necessary tasks that could be distractions while driving (check maps, fill out forms, make phone calls).
- Avoid placing or taking cell phone calls while operating a motor vehicle; especially in inclement weather, unfamiliar areas, or heavy traffic.
- Place calls from a stopped vehicle if at all possible.
- Allow a passenger, not the driver, to handle phone calls if possible. Alternatively, allow incoming calls to roll over to voice mail.
- Be aware of any local regulations governing cell phone use.
- Avoid activities such as eating, drinking, or adjusting noncritical vehicle controls while driving.

Work safely with hydraulic excavators and

backhoe loaders

A 28-year-old laborer died after he was struck by the bucket of a hydraulic excavator. The victim, a coworker, and the operator were using an excavator equipped with a quick-disconnect bucket to load concrete manhole sections onto a truck. The victim was on the ground to connect the manhole sections to the excavator while the coworker was on the truck to disconnect the sections after they had been loaded on the truck. The operator had positioned the excavator bucket near a manhole section while the victim attached a three-legged bridle to the manhole section for lifting. The bucket disconnected from the excavator stick and struck the victim. He was pronounced dead at the scene.



Don't let this happen to you

Workers who operate or work near hydraulic excavators and backhoe loaders are at risk of being struck by the machine or its components or by excavator buckets that detach from the excavator stick.

Below are some steps to take to help ensure safety while working with excavators or backhoe loaders.

Site set-up

- Contact local utilities and other responsible parties to locate overhead and underground utility lines before

beginning work. Avoid working near overhead power lines. If you must work near them, develop a plan to avoid contact and to follow OSHA regulations for minimum clearance.

- Do not permit hydraulic excavators or backhoes to be operated on grades steeper than those specified by the manufacturer.
- Make sure to position machinery at a safe distance from excavations such as trenches.

Equipment operators

- Be sure to follow manufacturers' specifications and recommendations.
- Continually evaluate safety programs to address changing conditions at the worksite.
- Clearly identify and label all machine controls and make sure that the manufacturers' safety features are working.
- Install and maintain equipment attachments and their operating systems according to manufacturers' specifications.
- Securely latch attachments (such as quick-disconnect buckets) before work begins.
- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for using positive locks on quick-disconnect equipment.
- Conduct visual and operational checks on all machine systems and operating controls before working the machine.
- Make frequent visual inspections of quick-disconnect systems—especially after changing attachments.
- Use the ROPS and seat belts supplied by the manufacturer. Do not remove the ROPS.
- Do not exceed load capacities when lifting materials.
- Lower the boom to a safe position with the bucket on the ground and turn off the

machine before stepping off for any reason.

Other site workers

- Recognize and avoid unsafe conditions and follow required safe work practices that apply to the work environments.
- Be aware of the machines' established swing areas and blind spots before the operator works the machine. Mark these areas with rope, tape, or other barriers.
- Before each work shift begins, review and confirm communications signals between machine operators and workers on foot.
- Keep the bucket as close to the ground as possible when workers are attaching loads for hoisting.
- Stay outside the hydraulic excavator swing areas and clear of attachments when using the machines for hoisting materials. Do not stand under suspended loads or suspended machine components such as the boom, arm, or bucket.
- Do not approach the hydraulic excavator or backhoe loader until the operator has been signaled to shut down the machine and acknowledgment is given from the operator.
- Use spotters or signal persons around operating equipment when necessary.
- Do not ride in or work from excavator or backhoe loader buckets.
- Use and maintain appropriate personal protective equipment.



On February 1, it will be time once again for us to post the annual summary of our occupational injuries and illnesses. This posting will consist of a summary of the OSHA 300 Log.

The summary is posted for your benefit. Please take time to look at the summary and give us your feedback. Even one workplace injury or illness is too many. What can we do to keep our injuries or illnesses to a minimum? You can be an important source for this type of information.

The summary will be posted from February 1 to April 30. Please call our safety director if you have suggestions for changes or improvements.