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The Workplace Experts

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SAFETY

Safety During Oil Spill Response

Oil spill workers are on the front lines of the nation's response to the Deepwater Horizon disaster. At this time, there are over 13,000 cleanup workers employed by BP or its contractors; and more than 1,800 Federal employees are directly involved in the cleanup operations over four states. These workers can face hazards from heat, falls, drowning, fatigue, loud noise, sharp objects, as well as bites from insects, snakes, and other wild species native to the Gulf Coast area. Workers may also face exposure to crude oil, oil constituents and byproducts, dispersants, cleaning products and other chemicals being used in the cleanup process. OSHA is working as part of the coordinated federal response which includes the U.S. Coast Guard and other agencies that deal with health and the environment and BP to ensure that workers are protected.

- OSHA is working with the NIOSH and the National Institute of Envir. Health Sciences (NIEHS) to ensure that appropriate training is provided to workers that BP is hiring to help cleanup the oil.
- OSHA personnel have been deployed to all 17 staging areas in LA, MI, AL and FL. Every day, 20-25 OSHA compliance officers travel to all staging areas to ensure that workers are protected from safety and health hazards.
- When OSHA finds safety problems on site visits or learns about them from workers, it brings them to the attention of BP and makes sure they are corrected. OSHA also raises its concerns through Unified Command so they are addressed across the entire response area.



Monitoring Chemical Exposures

Potential health effects from inhaling chemicals such as oil, weathered oil, oil dispersants, cleaning agents, and others are a concern that OSHA is continuing to monitor, assess and characterize. Aside from those workers on ships directly adjacent to the leak who are exposed to fresh oil, most cleanup workers are exposed to weathered oil, where the toxic volatile substances have evaporated. OSHA is analyzing the "soup" of crude oil, oil by-products, dispersants, and any other material to determine what hazards the mixture might present workers.

Protecting Workers from Chemical Exposures

OSHA is aware that reports of health symptoms experienced by some workers have raised concern about short and long-term health effects of the oil products and dispersants, and that there have been questions about why OSHA is not at this time recommending the use of respiratory protection. Based on monitoring data collected by OSHA and other government agencies such as EPA, as well as BP, OSHA has found no exposures to toxic chemicals (including oil and dispersants) that would necessitate the use of respirators for cleanup workers. Should OSHA find that the hazard characteristics of the oil change or should OSHA identify any other toxic chemical threats to worker health, we will immediately reassess and readjust our training and worker protection requirements accordingly. OSHA is also working with ASPR and NIOSH to establish a long-term health surveillance program for the workers involved in this event.

Source: osha.gov

Welcome

Renewals

Don Tanguay Construction
Goergen Mackwirth Co.
National Air Duct Cleaners
Assoc.

Small Business Safety Assoc.
*Compliance...
affordable & accessible*

ENVIRONMENTAL

Final Rule

Requirement for protecting workers from hexavalent chromium exposure

OSHA is confirming the effective date of June 15, 2010 for the direct final rule requiring employers to notify their workers of all hexavalent chromium exposures. The rule revises a provision in OSHA's Hexavalent Chromium standard that required workers be notified only when they experienced exposures exceeding the permissible exposure limit. Workers exposed to this toxic chemical are at greater risk for lung cancer and damage to the nose, throat and respiratory tract.

Occupational exposures to hexavalent chromium can occur among workers handling pigments, spray paints and coatings containing chromates, operating chrome plating baths, and welding or cutting metals containing chromium, such as stainless steel. Workers breathing hexavalent chromium compounds in high concentrations over extended periods of time may risk developing lung cancer, irritation or damage to the eyes and skin.

OSHA requested public comments on the revised requirement in response to a Third Circuit Court's decision that the agency failed to explain why it departed from the proposed rule that would require notifying workers of all hexavalent chromium exposures. The Agency received no significant adverse comments, therefore it is proceeding with the Direct Final Rule and withdrawing the accompanying Notice of Proposed Rulemaking.

OSEA industrial hygienists have been monitoring our clients who have been overexposed to hexavalent chromium. If you are concerned about possible exposures, please contact us so that we can evaluate your workplace for this chemical that is suspected of being carcinogenic (cancer causing).

An agency review has concluded that OSHA's methylene chloride standard (1910.1052) is effective and should continue without change. The review found the standard annually prevents about 34 deaths and may protect up to 54,000 workers from respiratory and nervous system damage from methylene chloride exposure.

OSHA is requesting comment as part of its review of the bloodborne pathogens standard (1910.1030). The agency is asking for comment on the necessity of the standard and if it could be modified to reduce employer burden. It is also seeking comment on needlestick prevention advances, exposures in non-hospital environments and emerging health risks from bloodborne pathogens.

Exposing employees to chemical hazards

OSHA has cited a manufacturer of petroleum additives for 22 workplace safety violations, including exposing employees to chemical hazards. Proposed penalties total \$88,500.

In response to a complaint related to a chlorine release at the facility, the company has received citations for violations related to a deficient process safety management (PSM) system; failure to establish and implement written procedures required to manage any changes to technology, facilities, equipment and procedures that can potentially impact a chemical process. The PSM is intended to prevent or minimize the consequences of a catastrophic release of toxic, reactive, flammable or explosive chemicals from a process. A process is any activity or combination of activities including any use, storage, manufacturing, handling or the on-site movement of highly hazardous chemicals.

Occupational Safety & Environmental Assoc., Inc. serves construction, industrial, manufacturing clients, municipalities and Health care agencies in the U.S. and abroad For more information, contact the Buffalo office

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The reader should continue to seek the services of competent professionals when required.

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News on
OSHA reviews

CONSTRUCTION

Proposed Fall Protection/PPE Rule

OSHA has announced its plans to require improved worker protection from tripping, slipping and falling hazards on walking and working surfaces.

The current walking-working surfaces regulations allow employers to provide outdated and dangerous fall protection equipment such as lanyards and body belts that can result in workers suffering greater injury from falls. Construction and maritime workers already receive safer, more effective fall protection devices such as self-retracting lanyards and ladder safety and rope descent systems, which these proposed revisions would also require for general industry workers.

Current standards also do not allow OSHA to fine employers who let workers climb certain ladders without fall protection. Under the revised standards, this restriction would be lifted in virtually all industries, allowing OSHA inspectors to fine employers who jeopardize their workers' safety and lives by climbing these ladders without proper fall protection.

OSHA notes that most of its existing standards for walking-working surfaces are more than 30 years old and inconsistent with both national consensus standards and more-recently promulgated OSHA standards addressing fall protection.

Presently, the agency's standards for fall protection on walking-working surfaces in general industry differ from the comparable standards for construction work. In most instances, employees use similar work practices to perform similar tasks, irrespective of whether they are technically doing construction or general industry work. Whether OSHA's construction or general industry standards apply to a particular job depends upon whether the employer is altering the system (construction work) or maintaining the system (general industry work). For example, replacing an elevated ventilation system at an industrial site would be construction work if it involves upgrading the system, but general industry work if it involves replacing the system with the same model.

Since the work practices used by the employees would most likely be identical in both situations, it is desirable for OSHA's general industry and construction standards to be as consistent as possible. Under OSHA's existing requirements, however, different requirements might apply to similar work practices, e.g., an employer overhauling two or more ventilation systems may have to comply with two different sets of OSHA requirements if one project is considered construction and another general industry. The existing inconsistencies between the construction and general industry standards create difficulties for employers attempting to develop appropriate work practices for their employees. For this reason, employers and employees have told OSHA that they would like the two standards to match more closely. This proposal attempts to achieve that result.

See attached [Fact Sheet](#)

Source: [ohsonline.com](#)

Disposable Glove—Myth

Gloves Remain Safe Throughout Use—Throughout use, gloves can develop holes due to degradation and wear. According to one study, after only 12 minutes of simulated clinical use, natural latex and vinyl glove defect rates increased to 9% and 35%, respectively. Without proper curing and cross-linking, nitrile can swell and develop holes and defects over time. Failure is commonly observed in the crotch between the thumb and forefinger. In addition to formulation and process, use factors such as average wear time and application affect the in use defect rate. Buyers should consider the potential defect rate increase and the risk imposed. They should ask their glove suppliers for supporting studies on in use testing. Reality: **Gloves degrade during use.**



Existing inconsistencies between the construction and general industry standards create difficulties for employers

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OSEA July Training**Buffalo**

- 16 Fall Protection
- 19-23 24/40-Hr Hazwoper
- 22 Trenching & Excavation
- 22 Confined Space
- 23 DOT HazMat Transportation

August 6

8-Hr Hazwoper Refresher**Syracuse**

- 16 8-Hr Hazwoper Refresher
- 19 Fall Protection
- 30 OSHA 10-Hr Construction

August 9-13

24/40-Hr Hazwoper**Charlotte**

- 9 OSHA-What to Expect in 2010
- 20 Bloodborne Pathogens
- 23 8-Hr Hazwoper Refresher

August 12-13

OSHA 10-Hr General Industry

Call us at 716-821-0091
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Or online at www.osea.com

HIGHLIGHTS

OSEA Staff in the Spotlight!

Congratulations to OSEA EH&S Consultant/Trainer, Leo Gibbons, who had great success in his first entry into the New York State Empire State Senior Games. Serious training and lots of hard work earned Leo 3 Silver and 2 Bronze Medals in the swimming events held in Cortland on June 8-13, 2010. The Senior Games attracts nearly 2000 athletes from across New York State.

Leo will now go on to compete at the Empire State Summer Games being held July 21-25 in Buffalo. Let's all cheer him on!

