

Minnesota Safety Conference

The Minnesota Safety Conference is scheduled for May 8-10 at the Minneapolis Convention Center. The Exhibit Hall is open on Tuesday May 8 and Wednesday May 9 from 8 am until 2:30 pm. Let us know if you want a free exhibit hall pass.

Come see us in Booth 204. Play our Find-A-Hazard and win a prize!



What did you say?

Audiograms and Hearing Conservation

Companies that have noisy operations need to have hearing conservation programs. That must include providing hearing protection and annual audiograms (hearing tests). Audiograms are usually done by an occupational health clinic or a mobile unit. Only employees who are exposed to noisy environments must have the audiograms. OSHA defines a noisy environment as 85 decibels (dBA) for 8 hours, 90 dBA for 4 hours, 95 dBA for 2 hours, etc.



After the audiograms, the company who does the hearing tests will provide the employer with a report of the results. If an employee has shown a certain amount of deterioration in his hearing, called a threshold shift,

the employer and employee are notified. This could be a temporary shift, caused by such things as recent exposure to loud noise (loud music, a concert, a ball game), or it could be permanent. If there are doubts about whether it is permanent, the employer needs to arrange for a second audiogram within 30 days. If the employee has noise exposure and the audiogram shows a permanent shift, or if a follow up audiogram is not conducted, the threshold shift must be logged as an injury on the OSHA 300 log.

Medication Drop off

Let employees know that they can drop off their old, expired or unused medication at drop boxes throughout Hennepin, Scott, Washington and Ramsey counties. Most of the drop boxes are by a police or sheriff department. To find instructions and locations, do a search for the county and medicine disposal.



Where we will be

Janet will be presenting The Safety Basics Seminar for HRTrainingCenter.com. This is a one-day face to face training seminar that covers a lot of important safety issues.

On May 10, it will be in the Minneapolis/St Paul area and on June 12 Janet will be in Rochester.

For more information, go to

<http://hrtrainingcenter.com/HRTCSearch.asp>

Compliance Update

Minnesota OSHA will be updating the Minnesota **Right to Know** rules to comply with the new Federal Hazard Communication regulations. Minnesota expects to “retain the current, more effective requirements in its Employee Right to Know rules, while incorporating the GHS requirements.” Compliance dates will stay the same as in the Federal rule. For more information on that, contact us or see our prior newsletter.

The National Labor Relations Board poster mentioned in our last newsletter does not have to be posted by April 30. A judge has put that on hold.

OSHA 300 Summary must be posted through April 30. When you take it down, be sure you keep a copy in your files.

Workers' Comp

We have provided an ongoing series on workers' compensation. Past newsletters covered topics such as:

- "Workers' Comp" - Components of a basic safety program (March 2012)
- "Workers' Comp: Managing Claims Saves For You And Employees" (Fall 2011)
- "Workers' Comp: The Cost of Claims" (Summer 2011)
- "Workers' Comp: What Goes Into Premiums?" (Spring 2011)
- "When should a First Report of Injury be sent to the insurance company?" (Winter 2011)

Once you have a good safety program on paper, you need to make sure it exists in real life. Employees need to know what it requires. And it has to be followed, by your employees and by your management.

The one factor that determines if your safety program works is the example management sets. If the company owner/manager makes it clear that he or she takes safety seriously, that safety and compliance with safety programs are important, and that working safely is an integral part of the job, employees will work safer. When we've seen management send a message that production is more important than safety, we see injuries increase. And with that, costs increase.

A very simple example of the importance of a good, enforced safety program: A company doesn't enforce a policy on wearing safety eyewear. An employee gets rust in his eye, requiring a trip to an eye doctor. That trip takes time away from work, for both the



employee and for the supervisor or coworker who brings the employee to the clinic. Back at the shop, someone has to fill out the paperwork, and that takes time.

OSHA figures the average cost of an eye injury is over \$1400. At 5% profit, you need an extra \$28,000 in income to pay for that. A \$10 pair of safety glasses and enforcement of the use of safety glasses suddenly looks like a bargain.

The key message: writing down what you expect of your employees is the first step towards making sure they work safely. The second step: make sure they know what's expected of them, and hold them – and yourself – to that standard.

In the next newsletter we will discuss injury care and return to work programs.



Questions? Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have safety-related questions or just need more information about something or the services we offer. Please contact us by phone (651-481-9787) or email if you no longer want to receive newsletters or if you want them in a different format (email, mail).

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