

Excerpts from JJ Keller's Online Weekly Updates

– ESH News and Alerts –



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OSHA identifies 14,000 workplaces with high injury and illness rates

Approximately 14,000 employers have been notified that injury and illness rates at their worksites are higher than average and that assistance is available to help them fix safety and health hazards, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced.

In a letter this month to those employers, Jonathan L. Snare, Acting Assistant Secretary of Labor for OSHA, explained that the notification was a proactive step to encourage employers to take steps now to reduce those rates and improve the safety and health environment in their workplaces.

"This identification process is meant to raise awareness that injuries and illnesses are high at these facilities," Snare said. "Injuries and illnesses are costly to employers in both personal and financial terms. Our goal is to identify workplaces where injury and illness rates are high, and to offer assistance to employers so they can address the hazards and reduce occupational injuries and illnesses."

Establishments with the nation's high workplace injury and illness rates were identified by OSHA through employer-reported data from a 2004 survey of 80,000 worksites (the survey consisted of data from calendar year 2003). The workplaces identified had 6.5 or more injuries or illnesses resulting in days away from work, restricted work activity, or job transfer (DART) for every 100 full-time workers. The national average during 2003 was 2.6 DART instances for every 100 workers.

Employers receiving the letters were also provided copies of their injury and illness data, along with a list of the most frequently violated OSHA standard for their specific industry. Snare also offered the agency's assistance in helping turn the numbers around, suggesting, among other things, the use of free safety and health consultation services provided by OSHA through the states, state workers' compensation agencies, insurance carriers, or outside safety and health consultants. The 14,000 sites are listed alphabetically, by state, on OSHA's web site at: http://www.osha.gov/as/opa/foia/hot_11.html.

The list does not designate those earmarked for any future inspections. An announcement of targeted inspections will be made later this year. Also, the sites listed are establishments in states covered by federal OSHA; the list does not include employers in the 21 states and one territory (Puerto Rico) that operate OSHA-approved state plans covering the private sector.

OSHA's data collection initiative is conducted each year to provide the agency with a clearer picture of those establishments with higher than average injury and illness rates. Snare said that information obtained from the survey "gives OSHA the opportunity to place inspection resources where they're needed most" and also "helps us plan outreach and compliance assistance programs where they will benefit most."

BLS provides industry detail on 2003 injury survey

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) has published a summary report providing industry detail on results of the 2003 Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses.

Private industry reported approximately 4.4 million nonfatal injuries and illnesses in 2003, with trade, transportation and utilities accounting for about 27 percent of the cases (approximately 1.2 million), and manufacturing accounting for about 22 percent (approximately 1 million) of the cases.

The tables in the report provide detailed industry information (incidence rates and numbers of cases) on nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses for five and six-digit industries (for example, electrical contractors, concrete pipe manufacturing, and family clothing stores), as defined in the North American Industry Classification System Manual, United States, 2002. Data for industry sectors (such as construction, retail trade, and health care and social assistance) were published in December 2004.

May 1 - May 7 set for North American Occupational Safety and Health Week

Equip. Educate. Empower. That's the theme for this year's event spanning Canada, the United States, and Mexico. Companies looking for reasons to promote safety at work can turn to www.naosh.org, as well as www.asse.org for information on events and ideas.

Two organizations focus on sleep apnea

A day devoted to raising awareness about the symptoms of sleep apnea and the importance of treatment will take place March 31, 2005, during National Sleep Awareness Week 2005. "Sleep Apnea Awareness Day" is the focus of a special collaboration between the National Sleep Foundation (NSF) and the American Sleep Apnea Association (ASAA). "Sleep Apnea Awareness Day marks the first time NSF has teamed up with another organization to spotlight a particular sleep issue during National Sleep Awareness Week, our annual health promotion campaign," says Richard L. Gelula, NSF's CEO. "We hope this new awareness effort will help people recognize the symptoms of this serious and debilitating sleep disorder and seek treatment."

"It is estimated that about 18 million people have sleep apnea, but millions of these adults and children have no idea that they have this problem. They suffer needlessly from a common and potentially life threatening medical disorder, which can be treated," says Edward Grandi, ASAA's executive director. "That's why we feel this new initiative with NSF during National Sleep Awareness Week is so important — it's all about raising awareness."

Sleep apnea is characterized by pauses in breathing during sleep, which can result in both sleep disturbance and reduced oxygen delivery to vital organs. Common symptoms include snoring, daytime sleepiness, weight gain, and un-refreshing sleep. While everyone who snores does not necessarily have sleep apnea, a recent NSF poll found that more than one-third of America's adults reported they snored frequently, a problem more prevalent among men than women. Sleep apnea is more than just a noisy nuisance; it is associated with hypertension, **automobile accidents**, mood and memory problems, and heart disease.

Both NSF and ASAA will encourage their respective members to team up at the community level to raise awareness about sleep apnea on Sleep Apnea Awareness Day. These groups include sleep centers throughout the country that comprise NSF's Community Sleep Awareness Partners® (CSAP) program and ASAA's A.W.A.K.E. Network of support groups for people with sleep apnea.

A unique feature of Sleep Apnea Awareness Day will be a "Snore Score", a simple questionnaire developed by ASAA to help someone determine if he/she is at risk for the sleep disorder. Anyone answering 'yes' to any of the questions is urged to talk to a doctor to see if further evaluation is needed.

Survey: Workers appreciate recognition

The Academy Awards honor Hollywood's elite, but those walking the red carpet aren't the only ones receiving kudos for a job well done. A new survey suggests there's no lack of praise around the office, too. More than three-quarters (76 percent) of employees surveyed said their companies' efforts to recognize employee achievements are at least somewhat effective. Thirty-five percent believe their companies are very effective at acknowledging staff contributions.

The survey was developed by The Creative Group, a specialized staffing service that provides marketing, advertising, creative and web professionals on a project basis. It was conducted by an independent research firm and includes responses from 972 men and women 18 years of age or older and employed in professional environments. Those surveyed were asked, "How effective is your company at recognizing employee achievements?" Their responses:

Very effective	35%
Somewhat effective	41%
Not very effective	16%
Not at all effective	6%
Don't know/other	2%
	100%

"Most businesses realize that it takes more than a steady paycheck to inspire outstanding employee performance," said Tracey Fuller, executive director of The Creative Group. "Staff members who know their contributions make a difference — and are rewarded — are more engaged and, ultimately, more productive on the job."

Fuller noted that while many professionals rated their company's recognition programs highly, one in five signaled their firms could use improvement in this area. "Organizations that fail to adequately acknowledge staff achievements could see rising turnover as the economy picks up and more job opportunities become available," she said.

World Congress on Safety and Health coming to U.S. for first time

The 17th World Congress on Safety and Health at Work, an international gathering of safety and health experts, is being held September 18-22 in Orlando, Florida. This is the first time the triennial event is being held in the United States. The World Congress, jointly organized by the National Safety Council, the United Nation's International Labor Organization (ILO), and the International Social Security Association (ISSA), is expected to attract more than 3,000 leaders from around the world in government, labor, industry and academia. DuPont, a global science company, is the premier sponsor of the 2005 World Congress.

"The National Safety Council is honored to host this influential gathering of the world's foremost experts on occupational safety and health," said Alan C. McMillan, National Safety Council president and CEO and secretariat for the 2005 World Congress on Safety and Health at Work. McMillan said the NSC and other U.S. organizations began negotiating with the ILO and ISSA in 1999 to bring the World Congress to the United States. The NSC's offer to host the event was formally accepted in May 2001.

"This event will mark the culmination of a number of collaborative activities over the past four years aimed at enhancing the safety and health of workers around the world. Besides offering a unique forum for the international sharing of scientific research, technical information and best safety and health practices, the 2005 World Congress will provide an opportunity to celebrate the tremendous strides that have been made around the world in workplace safety and health.

"Our ultimate goal," McMillan said, "is to make the world's workplaces safe and healthy for workers in every country and in every occupation." For more information on the 2005 World Congress visit www.safety2005.org.

TSA adds lighters to prohibited items list

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) has announced that all lighters will be prohibited from sterile areas of airports and onboard aircraft. This action is in response to a provision in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004, which was signed into law by the President on December 17, 2004, and requires that "butane" lighters be added to TSA's Prohibited Items List.

After carefully evaluating the security threat, Congressional intent and operational considerations, TSA determined that passengers should be prohibited from carrying all lighters on their person or in carry-on luggage in the sterile areas of airports or onboard airplanes. The policy will be fully enforced beginning April 14, 2005. "TSA is moving quickly to implement this provision passed by Congress," said Rear Adm. David M. Stone, USN (Ret.), Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security for TSA. "By creating policy to add lighters to the Prohibited Items List we are closing a potential vulnerability in air travel security."

The agency also acknowledged the role passengers play in making the security process go more smoothly. "Travelers are a valuable partner in the screening process," said Rear Adm. Stone. "If they pack smart and avoid bringing lighters to the checkpoint, passengers can accelerate the screening process and allow us to focus on those individuals and items that may be a threat to their flight."

All lighters will be banned from sterile areas beyond security checkpoints at airports. This includes, for example, butane, absorbed-fuel (Zippo-type), electric/battery-powered and novelty lighters. TSA's mission includes preventing air piracy and use of an airplane as a weapon. TSA prohibits items that may be used to that end from being carried aboard an airplane. The lighter ban will fulfill Congress' intent as expressed in the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act and reduce security vulnerabilities, providing one more layer of security for the nation's travelers.

The Department of Transportation classifies lighters as hazardous materials, and prohibits them from being stowed in checked baggage. TSA will dispose of lighters brought to checkpoints. Passengers at some airports may be able to ship them via a private company for a fee, but TSA strongly urges passengers to thoroughly inspect their carry-on and checked baggage for these items before going to the airport. For more information regarding TSA, please visit the website at www.tsa.gov.

NHTSA report says cell phone use by drivers is up

More motorists than ever are using cellular phones while they drive, according to the latest survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). In 2004, at any given daylight moment, an estimated 8% of all motorists in the US, or about 1.2 million drivers, were using cellular phones (both hand-held and hands-free) while operating their vehicles. This compares to 6% in 2002 and 4% in 2000. The survey also estimated that 5% of

motorists in 2004, or about 800,000 drivers, were using hand-held cellular phones at any given daylight time, compared to 4% of drivers in 2002 and 3% in 2000.

The latest cellular phone use observations, conducted as part of the agency's annual National Occupant Protection Use Survey (NOPUS), compared 2004 wireless phone use estimates with data collected in 2002 and 2000. The observational survey was conducted between June 7 and July 11, 2004, at 1200 scientifically selected road sites across the country. In some instances, the roadside observational data were supplemented by NHTSA telephone surveys. Among the latest findings:

- Hand-held cellular phone use increased among drivers between the ages of 16 and 24, from 5% in 2002 to 8% in 2004.
- For all age groups, hand-held cellular phone use increased among female drivers, from 4% in 2002 to 6% in 2004. Men using hand-held cellular phones remained steady at 4% from 2002 to 2004.
- Motorists are more likely to use phones when driving alone. In 2004, 6% of drivers traveling alone were holding cellular phones, compared to 2% of drivers who had at least one passenger. However, drivers who had at least one child passenger (7 years old or younger) were as likely to use a hand-held cellular phone as were drivers with no children on board (both at 5% of observed drivers in 2004).

Complete results of the latest cellular phone observational survey are available on the NHTSA website at <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/RNotes/2005/809847.pdf>.

Corporations recognized for environmental leadership

For the first time, EPA is recognizing corporate-wide environmental leadership under its National Environmental Performance Track program. Historically a facility-based program, Performance Track has added this Corporate Leader designation to recognize companies that have demonstrated a commitment to company-wide environmental excellence.

EPA selected the following three companies as the first Performance Track Corporate Leaders:

- Baxter Healthcare Corp., a global medical products and services company, headquartered in Deerfield, Ill.;
- Johnson & Johnson, a global manufacturer of health care products, headquartered in New Brunswick, N.J.;
- and
- Rockwell Collins, a global provider of aviation electronic and communication solutions, based in Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

To qualify for Corporate Leaders, companies must have a substantial number of facilities in Performance Track. For example, 44 percent of Baxter's major U.S. facilities are Performance Track members, as well as 82 percent of Johnson & Johnson's and 57 percent of Rockwell Collins'.

Other Corporate Leader qualification considerations include:

- A strong record of compliance with environmental regulations;
- Robust corporate management of environmental issues;
- Past and future commitments to environmental performance improvement; and
- Public outreach and reporting on environmental achievements.

Based on these criteria, each year EPA expects to invite a limited number of companies to apply for the Corporate Leader designation.

▪ Improving performance of customers

The three companies promise to continuously improve their environmental performance and that of their suppliers and customers. Companies can improve the environmental performance of their customers by providing them information, such as how to use a product or how to recycle.

▪ Performance Track and environmental excellence

At EPA's recent Innovation Action Council (IAC) meeting in Washington, these corporations were recognized as Corporate Leaders. The IAC, which is comprised of EPA's top career officials, is responsible for advancing agency innovations. The Corporate Leaders will also be recognized at EPA's Performance Track Annual Awards Dinner in Chicago on April 12.

Since the program's inception in June 2000, Performance Track membership has grown and produced solid environmental results. The program currently has over 350 members in 46 states and Puerto Rico. To date, Performance Track members have collectively

- Reduced their water use by 1.3 billion gallons and their generation of solid waste by nearly 970,000 tons,
- Increased their use of reused or recycled materials by nearly 77,000 tons, and
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions by the equivalent of 67,000 tons of carbon dioxide.

Performance Track encourages participation by small, medium, and large facilities. The major industries are represented, with manufacturers of chemical, electronic and electrical, and medical equipment composing nearly 40 percent of the current members. The public sector is also represented by members such as national defense installations, postal facilities, and municipalities.

Performance Track provides incentives that promote high levels of environmental performance and a learning network in which best practices are shared. For more information on membership benefits, visit www.epa.gov/performancetrack/benefits.

For information on Corporate Leaders, visit www.epa.gov/performancetrack/corporateleaders.

**** For more information on these articles, contact JJ Keller Online at <http://www.kelleronline.com> or by calling 800-230-4094.***