PURCELL ENTERPRISES LTD.

OH&S INFO LINE

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Eleven Years in Print:

Purcell Enterprises wants your opinion!

Well, it has been eleven years of publishing this newsletter, first in the mail out form and then in the electronic form.

I also have over 40 articles on file from my activities writing for this publication, Worksite News, and Corporate Training Monthly. I'm thinking of compiling them into a collection ranging from creating incentives that work to dealing effectively with performance issues arising from Drug and Alcohol abuse. Let me know your burning OH&S issues so I can address them and perhaps mention you in my book. Drop me a line at:

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In This Issue

Hazard Assessment

Under the new Partnerships Audit protocol, Hazard assessments are more important than ever.

Under this new audit protocol, the employer is required to create a list of critical tasks with the Health & Safety hazards identified for each step of the occupation or task.

What is a critical Task?

A critical task is a task that is very high risk according to how your Health & Safety Hazards are assessed. Those would be tasks performed on a routine basis at the company. High risk tasks are working at heights for example. In the same way a medium risk task such as working in a swimming pool as a life guard or low risk task such as Office and administrative tasks must be identified and assessed according to risk as well but these are not deemed to be "critical" (or high risk).

The critical task inventory shows a list of occupations that are performed at the company, with all Health & Safety Hazards identified and assessed according to risk and prioritized on a worst first basis

What type of hazards must be assessed?

Health hazards are usually longer term acting hazards which have long term or chronic effects on human wellbeing such as exposure to fumes or chemicals or ergonomic hazards such as glare, awkward postures, back strain or repetitive motions.

Safety Hazards are those hazards that can injure a worker like slips & falls, pinch points, struck by or against for example. These are acute or short term in nature usually.

Your Company must always consider both Health and Safety hazards as the audit process gives them great weight. These are assessed according to risk on either a numerical scale from 1-4 say where 1 is low risk and 4 is high risk or quantatively using terms like high, medium or low. Exposure, (how often a worker works with the hazard present) probability (how likely a hazard is to happen) and severity (how bad an injury it can cause) are all factors which must be considered for risk assessments. Finally, you rank the health and safety hazards with the worst or critical hazards ranked first.

In a nutshell this is Barbara's quick and easy guide to creating a critical task inventory, assessing the hazards in terms of risk. The Health and Safety hazards are then ranked, the highest risk controlled first, in order to prevent incidents. In other words, they are prioritized or ranked in descending order: high risk hazards/jobs ranked first, then medium risk, then low risk hazards. It is important to note that you must rank your low risk hazards too because if you are injured by tripping on a cord in your office and breaking your leg, you are off for the same amount of time as if it had occurred for a high risk hazard.

Why a Certificate of Recognition (COR)?

A certificate of recognition is issued by Occupational Health & Safety, the certifying Partner for your Industry or the one you have chosen to represent you. A certificate of recognition is awarded for completing a basic health and safety program in your industry. It can range from eight to fourteen sections comprising a basic Health & Safety Management System that is scored according to criteria set by the audit protocol in, as a minimum of these elements:

1. Management Leadership and Administration.
2. Hazard Identification.
3. Hazard Control.
4. Inspections.
5. Orientation and Training.
6. Emergency Response.
7. Incident Investigations.
8. Program Administration.

Different Certifying partners may add elements customized to the type of work performed in their industry sector. Manufacturing has twelve elements, construction thirteen in Alberta. They may add: safe work practices/Job procedures/PPE/Ergonomics/Preventative Maintenance/Communication/Safety committees - the possibilities are endless.

In order to achieve a COR, each element must score at 50%, with an overall score of 80%. A limited scope audit can occur where a company has scored 70 – 79%. It must be completed within 90 days and the substandard areas re-audited after correction.

A COR may be a requirement for Companies to bid on work. COR certification also entitles the company to receive 10% off on WCB Premiums the first time they obtain a COR (to offset the cost of developing a Health & Safety program), reverting to an automatic minimum of 5% off WCB premiums thereafter with up to

20% off for being an industry leader in the Alberta Partnerships program.

The audit process is customized to the industry and hazards you are likely to encounter.

Companies with COR should avoid complacency and practice continuous improvement. Remember any health and safety hazard is dangerous and the eight, or twelve or thirteen sections of a Health and Safety management system act to reduce the level of risk and hence chance of incidents at your company.

Under the new audit protocol you must create a list of all your jobs in your company break them into steps and assess the health and safety hazards associated with each step of your job according to risk, rank the steps and/or job in terms of risk and deal with the worst jobs, first. In this manner, the likelihood of losses and hence incidents is greatly reduced. Alberta and BC are two provinces which issue a Certificate of Recognition and offer incentives on WCB premiums. However, many other provinces recognize the Certificate of Recognition process and companies with COR are 23% better than those without in terms of having incidents. The COR program started in earnest around 1991 in Alberta so it is twenty years old now and has resulted in lower injury rates.

Health and Safety programs are not mandated in Alberta: it is still voluntary to have one —- but they work, as does the COR program.

Thanks for your patience and now you have a basic primer on the importance of hazard assessments to the health and safety management systems in Alberta, BC and throughout Canada and other countries such as the USA. ✯

A Globally Harmonized System for Chemicals

By Barbara Semeniuk

In 2003, the United Nations' Economic and Social Council gave the go ahead to a framework for a globally harmonized system (GHS) for classifying and labeling chemicals that it hopes will be implemented by September 2011 in the USA. Canada will follow suite within a year; therefore in 2012 the GHS system will become law in Canada. This should allow for consistency and the universal use of symbols and labels throughout the international community helping to reduce some of the terrible costs due to exposure by chemicals. It is estimated that one in four Canadians are exposed to chemicals on the job and that it costs the Canadian taxpayer over 600 million dollars a year due to improper use, handling, transportation, and storage of chemicals.

This means that the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) will become an international system much like the Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG) is today. Its symbols will be international as will its labelling and Material Safety Data Sheet requirements.

The chemical classification criteria will change as well under the international system so the federal and respective provincial governments and other stakeholders are readying themselves for developing and implementing the new standards.

The changes due to GHS will affect WHMIS, TDG, consumer chemicals, and pest control products. According to Kim Headrick, International Harmonization and Senior Policy Advisor at Health Canada's Policy and Programme Services office, the objectives of GHS are "harmonization to the greatest extent possible of WHMIS, TDG, consumer chemicals and pest control products as well as with the NAFTA trading partners, the United States and Mexico".

- Changes include changes to the classification and labeling systems such as the Consumer Chemical and Containers regulations—CCR to allow for the different GHS classifications and/or labeling requirements.
- The Controlled Products Regulation under the Hazardous Products Act would change as well to allow for differences in the WHMIS symbols.
- Under TDG the labels for the nine classes would remain unchanged under GHS but there may be the addition of a new symbol for environmentally hazardous substances.
- A federal, provincial, and territorial committee on pest management and pesticides would be created to deal with modifications to the act that would harmonize existing classification systems with the GHS system.
- Consumer products would have to undergo some reclassification if GHS goes ahead as well.

In short, the adoption of the GHS would bring Canada in line with international standards but caution must be advised against a situation that exists with the USA and the metric system. Canada adopted it and the USA did not. The adaptation of the GHS could raise barriers to external trade to the USA and Mexico if these countries do not also harmonize their system as well. However, movements are underway in these countries too, to try to create a universal, harmonized system to deal with the effects of chemicals internationally.

A consistent, universal approach would mean inconsistencies that exist between countries on how chemicals are used, stored, disposed of, and transported would be lessened and that the best practices could be utilized by all countries to try to mitigate some of the harmful effects of chemical exposure to the worker, the public, emergency personnel, and the environment. ✯

Be Brave – Be Innovative

I cannot tell you the number of times I hear Safety Professionals proudly saying "I have 20 years experience and know everything in safety there is to know!"

Usually these Safety practitioners are not big proponents of Life Long Learning either. Usually, they have one or two safety courses and hang out a shingle as a consultant and buyer beware! There is no requirement to be a Health and Safety professional and many institutions offer Health and Safety courses - some relevant some as money grabs.

The field of Health & Safety is huge. It encompasses risk management, Industrial hygiene, construction Health & Safety, process Health & Safety, claims management, auditing, training in generic and specialized courses such as WHMIS, TDG and first aid for example. Other courses include and are not limited to:

- Confined space safety
- Respirator safety
- Fire Prevention
- Emergency Response Procedures.

The list is endless, as are the Learning Opportunities.

I have over 23 years experience in Health & Safety and am always amazed by how little I know. I have to work hard to stay ahead of my clients. Recently, I attended a conference in Chicago on health and safety. It was the 100th anniversary of the oldest health and safety organization in the world - The American Society of Safety Engineers. The Canadian Society of Safety Engineering is holding a conference this year in Whistler and this too should be a stellar event.

Health and Safety professionals with a Canadian Registered Safety Professional designation or CRSP must attend continuous learning activities and record points for them every five years in order to ensure that they have not ossified (and to keep their designation).

Health & Safety is a challenging field of endeavor. You are neither management nor a worker and you have to enforce rules and regulations, manage claims, train, and deal with all levels of employee with differing levels of enthusiasm. You will also have to speak to both management and workers in terms they will understand and relate to.

So here's to continuous learning and the expansion of knowledge.

With behavioral based safety, leading indicators, and human error reduction, the levels and techniques in Health & Safety professionals are only getting better.

Being Innovative - constantly refining and learning new skills enhances the benefits you can bring to your clients. Think inside the box and crayon your learning to brighten up your particular niche or think outside the box and invent a new method of tool which can aid in the science of incident prevention and/or the prevention of losses.

Innovation can come from studying how safety professionals deal with injuries and incidents in other countries, in other provinces, or in other industries. It can come from ideas from all levels of employees, safety professionals and other industry groups. It can be a brain wave or an error with great consequences. Be on the outlook for innovative ideas and one day a building may be named after you! Or better yet….you may save a life!

So, be brave, be courageous learn something new that stretches you as a person and then act to implement your ideas. You may end up with a competitive advantage because your company is safer and people want to work there!

Webnotes

Mobileye.com is the site of an organization that uses smart camera technology to aid in collision avoidance: just like jet airplanes but with trucks and/or automobiles. Dart Transit is putting these smart cameras in their vehicles: Volvo 630s with the I-Shift which has been optimized for fuel economy. The technology features forward collision warning, headway monitoring warning and lane departure warning, each alerting the driver to potentially dangerous situations. There are audible and visual warnings on the dash-mounted display unit. Dart Transit researched smart cameras for nine months before settling on purchasing the technology and the drivers have reacted positively to the system; some claiming it helped improve their driving. As well, another company, C.R. England, reported a 40% reduction in crash costs per mile driven.

Barb's Sound Bite

According to real time traffic statistics obtained by Drive Cam technology a dash mounted video camera that records substandard driving behaviors and can be used to substantiate the eye witness accounts of an incident.

The top driving error was failure to wear a seat belt and/or enforce its use amongst drivers. This was surprising given the fact it has been legislated for years in the USA and Canada. This simple act of not buckling up contributed to more traffic fatalities than anything else. The next most common driver error was failure to look far ahead and scanning of the rear and side mirrors - this resulted in the second most common cause of collisions. Driver distraction and being under the influence of alcohol/drugs are given a great deal of media attention as to causing driving incidents, but amongst the drivers Drive Cam technology monitors these behaviors have a low incidence of contributing to traffic accidents and/or fatalities.

...another note

I am glad to be back creating my newsletter.
Hope I did not lose a lot of people with my failure to create it. I have been very busy working in my business and not on it - a very common mistake!

...and here's a quote from Peter Drucker:
"The executive who works at making strengths productive—his own as well as those of others - works at making organizational performance compatible with personal achievement."
Something we all have to ponder.

Hope you are enjoying summer! Looking forward to fall though; one of my favorite times of the year with the beautiful colors of the leaves on the trees.