

TRANSNEWS

Safety Tips



Volume 35



TRANSPORTATION AGENCY, L.L.C.
INSURANCE AGENTS & BROKERS
A member of Post Financial Services Group, L.L.C.

Stone Transportation Agency, offers unsurpassed resources to assist in your commitment to safety and loss control. If there are any questions please contact us.

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Regular Health and Safety Communication is Informative

Safety communication is a two-way process between employer and employees. Many traditional safety programs emphasize top-down communication and virtually overlook communication from the bottom up. To establish an effective safety program, you must incorporate bi-directional communication process – one that includes encouraging employees to identify and report obstacles to safe work without fear of reprisal. It is crucial that you nurture a system of open and honest communication for a

proactive safety culture to evolve. Soliciting employee participation on workplace safety issues will do more than simply help the organization communicate more effectively. Encourage employees to share their ideas and concerns on safety matters. Involving employees in the decision making and problem solving process will contribute to more successful outcomes. This type of empowerment can also result in higher morale and productivity.

Whatever communication

strategies you use, employee concerns and suggestions must receive timely and appropriate responses. Employees must feel they are being heard and that their opinions matter. The following program ideas may help to enhance your safety communication processes:

One on one discussion: The supervisor sits down with each employee on a scheduled basis to solicit safety concerns, suggestions or ideas.

Informal discussion: Inform employees that the safety

Communication (Continued on Page 2)

Are Your Drivers "MedWise?"

The FMCSA recently conducted a Large Truck Crash Causation Study – among the conclusions on frequently truck driver crash factors were prescription (Rx) drug use (26.3%) and over-the-counter (OTC) drug use (17.3%). This substantial overlap between the use of Rx drugs, OTC medications, and herbal supplements is a concern for motor carriers because of the potential side effects and drug interactions that can occur, which could adversely affect a

driver's ability to safely operate a motor vehicle.

The NTSB reports that many Rx and OTC medications have been known to cause drowsiness and/or impairment in users. It also has recorded hundreds of vehicle, boat, and airplane accidents, which are all linked to the use of legal Rx and/or OTC medications. Most of these medications come with labels warning against taking them if you are going to be driving or operating heavy machinery, but

many people do not read or heed the warnings.

Due to the concern a special website has been made to promote a better understanding about this:

www.bemedwise.org.

The Be MedWise website explains that drug interactions occur when a drug interacts or interferes with another drug. This can alter the way one or both of the drugs act in the body or cause unexpected side

MedWise (Continued on Page 2)

QUICK TIPS

Set S.M.A.R.T Goals

Goals you set for yourself, or others, should be:

Specific,
Measurable,
Achievable,
Realistic, and;
Time-based.

Communication (Continued from Page 1)

coordinator is available to confidentially discuss their safety suggestions.

Suggestions: Establish a safety suggestion program. Install a safety suggestion box in the work area and ask employees to contribute their comments and suggestions. Consider providing a form for

employees to use when submitting their suggestion.

Group discussion: Provide opportunity for supervisors and employees to discuss safety issues. Regularly schedule meetings to share information and seek input.

Safety bulletin boards: Use for posting safety related policies, notices, articles,

safety committee minutes, etc.

Safety signs: These are constant visual reminders of safe work practices, dangerous conditions and precautions. Safety signs are often posted as reminders near entrances to the work or high hazard areas.

MedWise (Continued from Page 1)

effects. A common misconception is that only Rx medications have the potential to interact with each other. The truth is that OTC medicines also may result in interactions when combined with Rx or with other OTC medicines, vitamins, or herbal products. Not all drug interactions are equal. Sometimes potentially deadly drug interactions occur, resulting in a dangerous drop in blood pressure, a fast-paced irregular heartbeat, a buildup of toxins that damage the heart or liver, etc.

Particular caution is required when taking any medicine for the first time. A person may be seriously affected at first but later become able to tolerate it. Also be aware

of other dangerous combinations—even one drink of alcohol can multiply the effects of certain drugs. A cold remedy added to the effects of the illness itself can result in significant and dangerous drowsiness.

Some medications, including over the counter, can give you side effects that will prevent you from safely operating your vehicle. Follow the directions from the label, your doctor, and pharmacist.

Anyone who takes any medication should follow the “3 Rs” of using medicines correctly:

Risk - Recognize that all medicines (Rx, OTC, and herbal supplements) have risks

as well as benefits, and you need to examine these risks and benefits carefully for every medicine you take.

Respect - Respect the power of your medicine and the value of medicines properly used.

Responsibility - Take responsibility to learn how to take each medication safely and about the side effects. Read the label and the fine print on the information sheet accompanying the medicine. Follow this important rule: when in doubt, ask first. Your healthcare professional and pharmacist are the best reliable sources to help you get the facts you need.

Chemical Training - A must with Dangerous Chemicals

Becoming properly and knowledgeably trained before working with chemicals is very important. If there are chemicals being used at your facility, your company should be providing training to your employees to handle these potentially dangerous chemicals.

This training should totally prepare your employees to know the chemicals they are working with and to handle them properly. This is not an area where "I'm sure it will be all right" applies. Chemicals can kill, and your employees must feel comfortable in their knowledge before approaching them.

Training can be divided into different areas, although many basics apply to all the ways you can come into contact with chemicals. You can learn to handle and use chemicals, transport or store them, work with them, or dispose of them. The specific training depends on the type of job you intend to do. Obviously learning to dispose of chemicals, where you may have to pour them into something is not the same as driving along a road with tons of them sitting behind you.

There are some basic things that apply to anyone having contact with any chemical; stability or how it reacts to the [environment](#) or movement, how each chemical can enter the body, what risks are associated with it, and are the risks long-term or short-term?

Training should teach people how to handle, use and dispose, but it should also include how to deal with accidents quickly and effectively. The amount of damage done in the case of a spill can often depend on the amount of time the chemical is "free". If it is cleared up quickly and (and any leak sealed), there will be a smaller quantity around to do damage or injure an employee. The smaller area, the less chance for exposure to it and less chance it can affect an employee! Training should also include some first aid, or emergency response procedures, as these can be vital in making a difference while waiting for the authorities to send an ambulance and expert team if an employee becomes ill or affected by a chemical ingestion or exposure.

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If you have any questions or comments about this newsletter, or any ideas for future issues of **SAFETY TIPS**, contact Brad Post at:

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Workplace Safety

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How to Handle Chemical Spills

Your safety training helps ensure things go right when you do your job. Your training also includes what to do when things go wrong. For those working with chemicals (a broad term), the goal is to prevent spills, but you should also know how to respond to a spill – especially a large one.

An unplanned release of a chemical can have devastating effects. Skin and eye burns, damage to the lungs, fire and explosion, corrosive damage to materials, pollution of air, soil and water, and danger to the public are just some of the possible consequences of a chemical spill.

Chemical spills can be in the

form of liquids, solids such as pellets, gases and vapors. They can be flammable (quick to burn or explode), corrosive (damaging to human tissue or other materials), or toxic (poisonous to humans and other living things).

The time to deal with a chemical spill is long before it happens, by rehearsing what you will do and obtaining the supplies you will need for self-protection and cleanup. Most chemicals used in transportation operations are not exceedingly dangerous, but they still do have harmful potential.

Being knowledgeable about the chemicals you use is the first

step. What are the hazards? What would happen if the chemical is spilled, exposed to a spark or mixed with other chemicals in the area? Is the chemical corrosive, causing burns to human tissue?

If breathed in, could it damage the respiratory system, cause unconsciousness or death? You can get this type of information from the product label, the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS), and training

Here are some basic procedures you can learn for dealing with a spill. Be sure to get the specific steps you should take for the chemicals you work with.

- Alert people in the area of the

Spills (Continued on Page 2)

How to Protect Yourself from Workplace Falls

Whatever kind of activities you do, there is always the chance that accidents happen. When they do, they oftentimes catch people off guard. The best thing you can do to do to protect yourself from all these problems is to stop them before they have the opportunity to occur. Falls are one of the most common accidents that can happen in the workplace.

Fall protection is a must-do safety measure that should be practiced by workers. Most

workplaces contain very real fall accident dangers. Some businesses use safe work processes and statements to help workers understand how to go about their jobs without compromising their protection. Protecting employees from dangers is important to responsible Employers, so every little step in managing and avoiding falls is valuable. Employees should be educated to take vital precautions while operating on heights and at the

same time, the machines and equipment being utilized should be consistently checked to avoid having any deficient guard or protections which can result to fall.

Maintaining the environment neat and tidy is another safe work practice which can be very helpful in preventing falls at the workplace. All of the tools, equipment, and machinery should be kept clean, functional

Falls (Continued on Page 2)

Inside this issue:

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- How to Protect Yourself from Workplace Falls **1**
- Extension Cord Safety **2**

Workplace Safety Edition

Spills (Continued from Page 1)

spill.

- Call the appropriate emergency numbers if it's a large spill or has a high hazard potential to person or the environment.
- Attend to any injured persons, removing them from the area and getting proper treatment (MSDS sheets also provide treatment information).
- Depending on the nature of the chemical, you might need to open windows and doors to provide ventilation, close up the affected area to contain spills or turn off heat and other ignition sources.
- If you know how to safely and properly, use the appropriate materials to absorb or contain the spill. For instance, you might have kits to neutralize spilled acids or bases. For other chemicals, you could be required to sprinkle an absorbent litter on a spill, or surround

the spill with a dam.

Do not attempt cleanup under these circumstances:

- You don't know what the spilled material is.
- You don't have the necessary protection or the right equipment to do the job.
- The spill is too large.
- The spill is highly toxic.
- You feel symptoms of exposure.

Extension Cord Safety

Each year about 4,000 injuries associated with electric extension cords are treated in hospital emergency rooms. About half of the injuries involve fractures, lacerations, contusions or sprains from people tripping over extension cords. It is also estimated that about 3,300 residential fires originate in extension cords each year, killing 50 people and injuring about 270 others. The most frequent causes of such fires are short circuits, overloading, damage and/or misuse of extension cords.

Here are some tips for use of extension cords:

- Use extension cords only when necessary and only on a temporary basis. Do not use extension cords in place of permanent wiring.
- Do not remove the prongs of an electrical plug. If plug prongs are missing, loose, or bent, replace the entire plug.
- Do not use an adapter or extension cord to defeat a standard grounding device. (e.g., Only place three-prong plugs in three-prong outlets; do not alter them to fit in a two-prong outlet.)
- Use extension cords that are the correct size or rating for the equipment in use. The diameter of the extension cord should be the same or greater than the cord of the equipment in use.
- Only use cords rated for outdoor use when using a cord outside.
- Do not run cords above ceiling tiles or through walls.
- Keep electrical cords away from areas where they may be pinched and areas where they may pose a tripping or fire hazard (e.g., doorways, walkways, under carpet, etc.).
- Always inspect the cord prior to use to ensure the insulation isn't cut or damaged. Discard damaged cords, cords that become hot, or cords with exposed wiring.
- Never unplug an extension cord by pulling on the cord; pull on the plug.
- In locations where equipment be pushed against an extension cord where the cord joins the plug, use a special "angle extension cord" specifically designed for use in these instances.

Falls (Continued from Page 1)

and stored properly. Routine cleaning of your work areas can also be very helpful. Spills or slippery areas can lead to falls and should be looked out for and avoided by every staff member. Keeping the tools and equipment in their proper places is also important to prevent falls. Safety harnesses should be kept clean and functional if your workplace requires the use of such equipment.

In addition to falls, there are also other safe work processes and procedures that put emphasis on preventing other accidents and injuries. Hazards are often marked by

signage or other training - you should make sure you follow the safe work procedures and heed warnings posted in any potentially hazardous areas.

It doesn't matter how complicated the safety rules of your company are, everyone should keep in mind that it's always better to be safe than to be sorry. An obvious or known hazard, such as a wet floor or open pit, should be addressed immediately once discovered. Do not assume everyone else will see the hazard or that the Supervisor will see it eventually and take care of it - lives and more importantly, family

livelihood will be put into a compromising situation if everyone assumes it's someone else's problem to deal with. Working safely is easy - and rewarding - for those who are naturally watchful and eager to make a workplace a safety place for themselves and their fellow workers.



Driver Fatigue

The Sleeping Killer

John died in his sleep. He was warm, comfortable and driving 70 mph on the highway.



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