



# Safety

# Gram



A Publication of Safety Environmental Engineering, Inc.

Summer 2006

## PUBLIC EDUCATION OFFERED ON FLU PANDEMIC

Experts worldwide are watching the avian flu with an eye toward pandemic influenza, a global outbreak when a new influenza A virus appears in humans, causes serious illness and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

Past influenza pandemics (such as the oft-mentioned 1918 outbreak) have led to high levels of illness, death, social disruption and economic loss. This is different from seasonal outbreaks caused by strains of influenza by viruses similar to those of past years.

No one can predict when a pandemic might occur, but many scientists believe it is only a matter of time before the next one arises. Vaccine development efforts are under way to protect humans against a pandemic influenza virus that might develop from the current bird flue virus in Asia.

In the meantime, become more aware of how to minimize the risk of pandemic influenza. For information, call (703) 246-2411 or visit the Fairfax County Health Department Web site at [www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/hd).

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*The Safety Gram is published six times a year by Safety Environmental Engineering, Inc. (SEE, Inc).*

*SEE, Inc. feel that safety is the foundation of a successful industry.*

*For more information on any of these topics or how we can help you, feel free to contact us:*

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# EDITORIAL

By Bob Woodward  
VP Founder/Editor

The recent Sago Mine tragedy in West Virginia very publicly illustrated how and how not to respond to crisis involving loss of life. Such lessons had already been painfully illustrated by a host of other catastrophes going back to the 1984 Union Carbide Bhopal chemical release that killed an estimated 7,000 people. These incidents share one characteristic: No one expected a catastrophe.

Meticulous advance crisis-control preparation, or the lack thereof, largely determines the extent of long-term corporate harm. Certain principles govern every crisis, be it sexual harassment allegations against a CEO, union pickets alleging a subcontractor's use of undocumented workers, or a major structural failure:

## Plan Ahead

Systematically and regularly audit areas of potential crisis, and prioritize and develop plans to avoid problems where possible.

## Plan for Safety

Develop site control, safety and evacuation plans in advance.

## Develop a Plan

Create simple, site-specific crisis response and communication plans, and then test them out, as if performing a fire drill.

## Take Action

Move swiftly, get leadership onsite, communicate openly and frame the portrayal of events.

## Keep Control

Fully cooperate, but maintain control and lawfully limit government investigators, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), fire marshals, insurance adjusters and others; it is still your worksite.

## People First

Focus first on people issues, including meeting basic needs of affected families and keeping concerned employees informed.

## Gather Information

Continuously gather facts, crisis situations evolve quickly, and recognize that the initial OSHA investigation may be the appetizer for a subsequent suit asserting wrongful death, business, criminal or class-action claims.

## Do The Right Thing

Recognize that often the morally right action is also the best legal and business response, as well.

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## EL NUEVO CONSTRUCTOR (The New Builder)

**El Nuevo Constructor** is the nation's first magazine written in Spanish for Spanish-speaking construction tradesmen and professionals, and its first monthly magazine hit the streets (mailboxes) with its October/Fall issue (2002).

On the **Editorial Page**, it had this to say about this publication: "We call you **the new builder** because of the tremendous growth in the number of Spanish-speaking construction workers and business owners over the past ten years."

Readers interested in subscribing FREE to this Spanish-language constructor magazine should write to the publisher's office, requesting that you be put on their mailing list, as follows:

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*El Nuevo Constructor, One Thomas  
Circle, Suite 600,  
Washington, D.C. 20005*

## NEW HEARING CONSERVATION BULLETIN

OSHA recently issued an information bulleting on hearing conservation for hearing-impaired workers.

According to the agency, the bulletin raises awareness about issues associated with protecting hearing-impaired workers in noisy environments and provides employers, workers and professional organization guidance on accommodating hearing-impaired workers who are exposed to high levels of noise.

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To view the bulletin go to:  
[www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib122705.html](http://www.osha.gov/dts/shib/shib122705.html)

## SAFETY BUZ WORDS!

1. Why stupid people get hired? You?
2. How much harm can an employee complaint cause?
3. OSHA deadline for all companies February 1 (OSHA Form 300-A)
4. The safety cost of avian flu in the workplace
5. Safety agencies: Tough enforcers or paper tigers?
6. New rule would affect how you keep evidence after an accident
7. Safety training audio conferences
8. Posters and forms
9. Gifts and Incentives
10. Your colleagues and Peers

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## OSHA OFFERS HAZWOPER DOCUMENT

A new Web-based safety and health document is now available at  
[www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardouswaste/application\\_worksiteresponse.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/hazardouswaste/application_worksiteresponse.html)

to assist workers and employers in determining whether an activity is, or should be considered, an "emergency response" activity under OSHA's Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response standard.

According to the agency, the document provides an overview of the conditions in which a response or cleanup activity may fall under HAZWOPER requirements, and is divided into two sections: "The Application of HAZWOPER to Worksite Response and Cleanup Activities" and "Employee Training for Worksite Response and Cleanup Activities."

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# ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Company \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Name of injured \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Accident/Time \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

How Long Employed on this or similar operation \_\_\_\_\_

Location of Accident \_\_\_\_\_

Date Reported \_\_\_\_\_

Was first aid given \_\_\_\_\_

By Whom \_\_\_\_\_

Was Employee sent to Doctor \_\_\_\_\_

Was Time Lost \_\_\_\_\_

Photos taken \_\_\_\_\_

How many days \_\_\_\_\_

## IDENTIFICATION OF THE ACCIDENT FACTORS

Injury and/or Damage \_\_\_\_\_

Brief Description of Accident (what happened) \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Accident Type** (Check One)  Struck By  Struck Against  Overexerted  Fall-Same Level  Fall-Different Level  Caught-in, On, Between  Inhalation  Ingestion  Absorption  Contact With Electrical Current  Exposure to Temperature Extremes  Rubbed or Abraded

## ACCIDENT CAUSES

What specific acts or conditions caused this accident? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Witnesses: \_\_\_\_\_

Reasons why the unsafe act was committed and/or why did the unsafe condition exist?

Lack of knowledge/experience  Improper Attitude  Human Limitation  Condition

## CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

What do you suggest be done to prevent a similar accident?

Instruction/training  Motivation/Discipline  Proper Placement  Repair/Eliminate  Recommended To Mgmt.

What action have you taken? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_


## SAFETY COMMITTEE COMMENTS

Recommendations \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Secretary \_\_\_\_\_


Date \_\_\_\_\_

# MEMO TO ALL SEE. INC. CLIENTS




One of the most often asked question, following an accident on a jobsite, is “Where do I get a good Accident Report Form?”

One answer would be “From Your Corporate Insurance Carrier.”



Whenever you have an accident on a company project, you want details, details, details. Attached is a SAMPLE **Accident Investigation Report Form**, which covers approximately 40 ingredients in your insurance files.



Every jobsite foreman, superintendent, or project manager, should have at least one of these FORMS in their on-site office trailer...where it would be immediately available to your site representative. Get the details while the data is fresh, reliable, and timely. No matter how trivial an accident/injury may be, you need to get this data recorded on the same day of the accident/injury.

STEP **number two** would be to call your company’s insurance carrier, to see if they have a costumed-designed corporate **Report Form**. No matter how trivial the accident seems to be, complete this entire FORM, and send it to the home office for filing, and/or follow up.

If any questions, call SEE, Inc. at (703) 273-7333 (**SEE Accident Investigation Report**)

## Public Safety Training Center Opens

The new state of the art training center in the City of Fairfax will provide training for personnel of the Fairfax Volunteer Fire Department (FVFD) and the city’s fire and police departments.

Named in honor and memory of former fire chief for the city and FVFD, the Charles F. “Chic” Seay Public Safety Training Center is located near the Citgo Tank Farm property on Pickett Road. The property was donated by Citgo.

The facility will include, among other areas, an environmentally friendly propane fed burn building to conduct live exercises and a high-bay building to conduct training during all weather conditions.

The center’s design features individual training areas to allow two or more activities to take place at the same time.

The facility will be used to train volunteer and career staff, police officers, as well as those in the tank farm complex and other city personnel.

The project was cooperative effort funded by both the city and the FVFD. For information:

**CALL >>>>>>>>**



(703) 385-7940

# OSHA REVOKES STEEL ERECTION STANDARD

WASHINGTON – In January, OSHA announced it was revoking a provision of the steel erection standard that addresses the slip resistance of walking surfaces of coated structural steel members (Notice appeared in the Jan. 18 Federal Register).

The technical developments that needed to occur for employers to comply with the provision by its

July 18 effective date have not occurred, OSHA said.

According to OSHA, rulemaking comments indicated the test methods are not likely to be completed by the effective date because the required validation process will not have been completed.

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## CELL PHONE SAFETY

Human Factors experts have identified four types of driver distraction. Cell phones provide distraction in all four areas:

### Visual

Includes looking away from the road, such as when searching for your cell phone.

### Biomechanical

Includes manipulating a control, such as dialing your cell phone.

### Auditory

Includes unusual or unexpected noises, such as the ringing of your cell phone.

### Cognitive

Includes when your thoughts turn away from the task at hand, such as when you become engrossed in a phone conversation.

- Delays reaction time
- Impairs stopping decision
- Declines lane control
- Lessens the amount of time spent examining instruments and mirrors

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### **SOURCES:**

*Insurance Information Institute*

[www.ii.org/media/hottopics/insurance/cellphones](http://www.ii.org/media/hottopics/insurance/cellphones)

## MOTIVATIONAL SAFETY SYSTEM

In 2000, the NASA's safety program was operating at the "OK" level. Thanks in part to NASA's emphasis on safety, the group decided to restructure its safety commitment by developing the Target Zero Motivational Safety System. Transitioning from a safety dominated/controlled safety program to a system with strong employee ownership/motivation /buy-in required a daily commitment to implement the nine core elements of the system:

- 1) Management leadership and involvement;
- 2) Teamwork;
- 3) Safety leadership and professional development;
- 4) Positive recognition and praise;
- 5) Ownership and commitment;
- 6) Education and administration;
- 7) Effective communication;
- 8) Creative motivation and sharing the bottom line;
- 9) Focus on improvement.

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# SAFETY INCENTIVES



What is a good way to publicize a safety incentive program that is just starting up?

**IF NO SAFETY INCENTIVE** program has existed, or if the existing program is changing, getting the word out and making sure everyone understands the criteria can be tricky. "Pay-check stuffer" notices often go unread by the majority of employees, as do newsletters and bulleting boards. Sending notices out for distribution by supervisors does not guarantee employees will actually get them. If the work force is not centrally located, the logistics of publicity are made even tougher.

**IN MOST ORGANIZATIONS, WORD OF MOUTH** works best. Nothing travels faster than gossip. Recruiting volunteers from among the employees to explain the criteria and details of the program helps to ensure everyone finds out about it. Once the program is explained, it will generate conversation among the employees. Plenty of flyers or program outlines should be available as companion pieces and for future references.

**IMMEDIATE AND UNEXPECTED DISTRIBUTION** of an incentive is also a great way to demonstrate the new program, and word will spread quickly about who received it, and why. Whether done with a large group as a kickoff campaign or by crew locations, this can be a fun and informative way to get the message out.

\*\*\*\*\*

**IF AN INDIVIDUAL OR CREW IS REWARDED** for past behaviors that meet the new incentive criteria, it shows that the program guidelines are achievable and will encourage participation in the future. An unexpected incentive will be remembered, and it will help to raise enthusiasm and interest in achieving future incentives.

\*\*\*\*\*

# OSHA'S TOP 10 VIOLATIONS FOR 2005

Scaffolding  
**Standard 1926.451**

Hazard Communications  
**Standard 1910.1200**

Fall Protection  
**Standard 1926.501**

Respiratory Protection  
**Standard 1910.134**

Lockout/Tagout  
**Standard 1910.147**

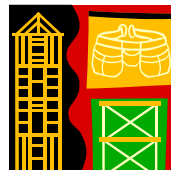
Powered Industrial Trucks  
**Standard 1910.178**

Electrical – Wiring  
**Standard 1910.305**

Machine Guarding  
**Standard 1910.212**

Electrical General Requirements  
**Standard 1910.303**

Ladders  
**Standard 1926.1053**



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# AED Signage and Labels

Just having AED (Automated External Defibrillator) devices is not enough. This vital piece of emergency equipment must be clearly identified so that it may be easily located in emergency situations. Chose from several designs intended to clearly identify AED storage locations.

Much like fire extinguisher signage, you can choose from flat style signs and labels or 3D plastic style signs that have 180 degree visibility.

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# NINE TIPS FOR DRIVING SAFELY IN WORK ZONES

1. Expect the unexpected
2. Slow Down
3. Don't tailgate
4. Keep a safe distance between you and the car ahead of you
5. Pay attention to the signs
6. Obey road crew flagger
7. Stay alert and minimize distractions
8. Keep up with traffic flow
9. Schedule enough time to drive safely and check radio, TV and Web sites for traffic information.

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*U.S. Department of Transportation, Office of Public Affairs*

[www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm](http://www.dot.gov/affairs/briefing.htm)



# DBI/SALA ANNOUNCES ARC FLASH HARNESSES

New from DBI/SALA are the ExoFit XP Arc Flash Harnesses and the Delta II Arc Flash Harnesses.

Both of these new product lines are made with 7000 lb nylon or Nomex / Kevlar webbing options.

These products are specifically researched, engineered, tested and manufactured to meet the ASTM F887-04 Arc Flash standard and the needs of utility, telecom and municipality workers.

[www.salagroup.com](http://www.salagroup.com)

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# EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

Want extra copies of SEE, Inc.'s quarterly **SAFETY GRAM**?

Call us at (703) 273-7333, and we will add you to our list of additional mailings of our outstanding safety newsletter. Free subscription to this safety newsletter can be ordered by phone.

Here are some ideas for your use of extra copies:

- \* Post on Company Bulletin Board
- \* Put Copy in Waiting Room
- \* Distribute to Foremen
- \* Distribute to Superintendents
- \* Distribute With Pay Checks
- \* Provide to Safety Committee
- \* Jobsite Trailers.

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## FDA UNVEILS ELECTRONIC DRUG LABELS

The Food and Drug Administration now requires drug manufacturers to submit prescription drug information to the agency in electronic format.

According to FDA, the new format will allow health care providers and the general public to access product information found in the FDA-approved package inserts for all approved medicines in the U.S.

FDA said the drug information will be available in a "structured product labeling" format that uses standardized medical terminology in a readable, accessible format.

Using embedded computer tags, prescribing and products information in the SPL format allows users to search for specific sections of a drug label, including product names and descriptions, indications, dosage and administration, warnings, active and inactive ingredients, and how the drug is supplied.

Product labels for most approved prescription drugs will be on DailyMed within one year, according to the agency.

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## OSHA UPDATES CONSTRUCTION TOOLS FOR SPANISH-SPEAKING WORKERS

A popular and important web-based training tool has been restructured to aid Spanish-speaking construction workers.

OSHA recently posted a new version of its construction eTool (eTool de Construction – La Prevencion De Fatalidades) that will help employers and workers identify and avoid hazards that commonly cause the most serious injuries in construction including electrical, falls, struck-by and trenching.

The updated version uses safety and health terms from OSHA's English-to-Spanish and Spanish-to-English construction dictionaries, and includes a glossary of construction safety and health terms.

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## MEMORIAL DAY 2006

On this Memorial Day 2006, SEE, Inc. salutes all those individuals who have served this great nation, and thanks not only those who gave their lives, but all those who are serving, or have served in the military on active duty in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, or Coast Guard.

To each of them, in our own way, we thank you and

### GOD BLESS AMERICA!!!

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## CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

Although everyone has responsibility for ensuring his or her own safety and well-being, we also depend on each other to help create a safer world. Creating a culture of safety in the workplace, at home, in the community, and on the roads and highways requires cooperation from every individual at every level.

The challenge to the safety and health industry is to capitalize on the progress that has been made during the past century by influencing both employees and their facility "to adopt and maintain safe and healthy practices and behaviors in all aspects of their lives."

Creating a culture of safety should be every one's jobs.

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# COMPANIES RELY ON BACKGROUND CHECKS

Background checks often can help an employer discover if a person has a history of harassment, property damage, robbery, rape, assault or other anger-related incidents.

Other important legal issues employers should be concerned about include compliance with federal law called the Fair Credit Reporting Act, which regulates background screening by third parties on the federal level. The act is designed to balance an employer's need to exercise due diligence in hiring, and an applicant's right to accuracy and privacy. Under FCRA employers must:

- \* Clearly disclose to the applicant that a background report is being prepared.
- \* Obtain a signed release from the applicant before checking records, such as criminal convictions, pending criminal case, driving records, credit reports or educational credentials.
- \* Provide a copy of the background report and a notice of legal rights to an applicant, if employment is denied based on the report.



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# OSHA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM BROCHURE AVAILABLE

OSHA has published a new brochure on its Strategic Partnership Program featuring information on how partnerships work and their role in helping to improve workers safety and health management systems.

The brochure can be downloaded at [www.osha.gov/publications/osha3251.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/publications/osha3251.pdf) or ordered by calling (202) 693-1888.

According to OSHA, the Strategic Partnership Program's intent is to move away from traditional enforcement methods and embrace collaborative agreements.

Through the program, OSHA and its partners agree to work cooperatively to address critical safety and health issues.

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# OSHA ALLIANCE

OSHA has formed new alliances with the following:

- \* American Chemistry Council, Arlington, VA
- \* American Forest & Paper Association, Washington, D.C.
- \* International arwash Association, Chicago
- \* Pulp and Paper Safety Association, Portage, IN
- \* Skills USA, Leesburg, VA
- \* Society of the Plastics Industry, Inc.

- \* Abbott Laboratories, Abbott Park, IL
- \* American Association of Occupational Health Nurses Inc., Atlanta, GA.
- \* National Association of Home Builders, Wash. D.C.
- \* National Lumber and Building Material Deals Association, Wash., D.C.

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# A SURETY USER'S CHECKLIST

A long cycle of inexpensive and easily obtained surety credit ended in 2001 with the onset of unprecedented losses in the surety industry. Since then, well-managed construction firms have often felt they were paying for the sins of others, both in terms of underwriting conditions, as well as in the rate paid for surety bonds.

Today, a stable, responsive surety relationship requires an investment of time by clients. The benefits of a stable, reliable surety relationship can generate great returns-on-investment for contractors committed to the process. This investment takes the form of meeting with underwriters on a regular basis to explain the business plan, financial results and projections, and anticipated surety needs of the firm.

Surety credit remains one of, if not the most, economical sources of capital support a contractor can utilize in its business. Contractors can follow a checklist to make sure they are doing their part to be more than passive investors in this important business partnership.

**Q:** Am I completely familiar with the broker's surety submission and the ongoing work product representing my company?

✓ The work product that constitutes a submission to a contractor's surety or prospective surety is the "set of specs" an underwriter uses to determine the initial interest in working on a given surety account opportunity. There is a direct correlation between the quality and transparency evident in a submission and the level of surety support a surety buyer can obtain.

**Q:** How does a surety analyze a company?

✓ Many contractors do not have access to a surety's financial analysis and its scorecard for extending credit. This analysis, in many instances today, is plugged into a credit model that drives the amount of bonding extended and the price a surety charges for its capacity.

**Q:** What level of reinsurance support does my surety rely on to service business? Have there been any changes to my surety's single project and aggregate program capacity?

✓ Understandably, many contractors do not delve into the details of a surety's own business relationships, but reinsurance is one factor that can directly impact a surety's ability to support a construction company's business plan.

**Q:** What are my surety's financial ratings? Have there been any recent changes to its parent company's ratings?

✓ This issue, more than most, holds the potential to affect a contractor's bond program through no fault of its own. Rating agencies are more diligent today in assessing the adequacy of reserving practices and the value of investment assets.

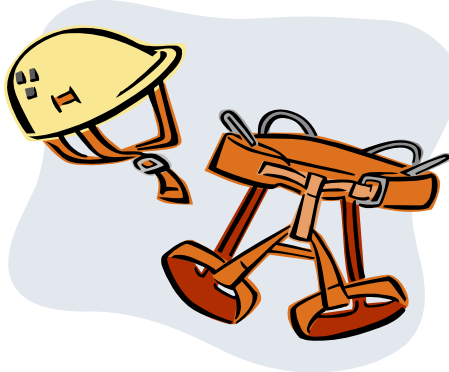
**Q:** Have recent personnel changes taken place within my surety at the local or national level?

✓ Relationships matter. Whether it results from relocation at the local level or a merger that changes a contractor's contacts at the corporate level, the support a surety offers may be at risk when the underwriting of a contractor's account changes hands.

**Q:** What are my surety's underwriting results?

✓ A surety's results affect everything from its access to capital support for its business to the pricing it offers clients. Many established sureties have dealt with recent industry conditions and remain committed to supporting the construction industry.

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# FALL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

Each year, more than 100,000 injuries and deaths are attributable to work-related falls. According to the National Safety Council, falls are one of the leading causes of deaths in the workplace.

In addition to permanent injuries and lost lives caused by falls, businesses lose billions of dollars each year from significant increases in insurance premiums, worker's compensation claims, product liability costs, and other related expenses.

## **Has Anyone Noticed?**

The manufacture and sales of fall protection products have steadily grown over the past decade, however, the number of injuries and deaths associated with falls from heights has also increased.

## **What's the Problem?**

Several factors have contributed to these alarming and disturbing statistics:

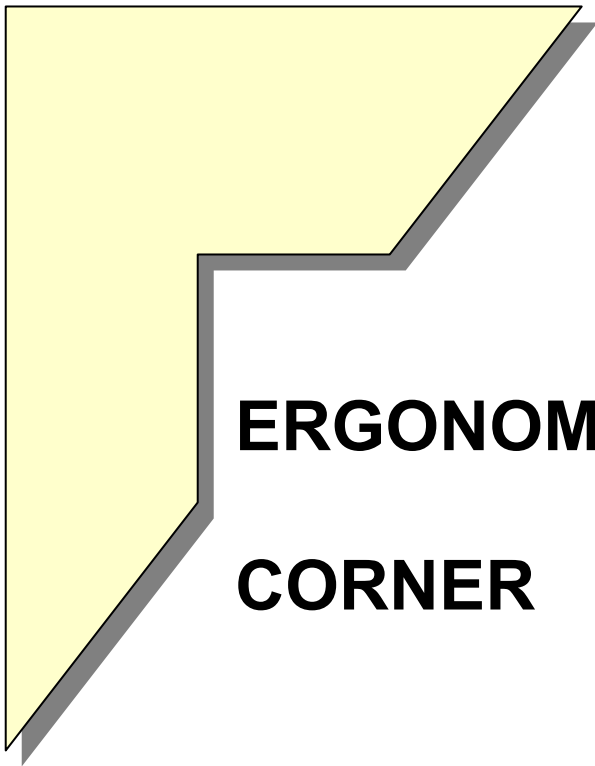
- All fall protection equipment deteriorates with use and exposure over time, regardless of brand and/or manufacturer.
- Equipment is not inspected often enough for wear and damage.
- Proper training is not provided often, the wrong equipment is selected for a particular situation, and equipment is not worn properly.

Those specifying or using fall protection equipment know these factors to be valid (at least at some subliminal level). Yet it is very likely a high percentage of equipment used on job sites throughout North America today would fail to meet industry standards if exposed to a fall.

- The recent test program focused on shock-absorbing lanyards from eight manufacturers and showed a variety of performance failures (lanyard test, 220 pounds at a 6-foot free fall)
- 100 percent did not pass visual inspection criteria (weld splatter, webbing cuts/abrasions, broken stitching, frayed/burned webbing, chemical damage, discoloration, deformed hardware (cracks/rough or sharp edges) and/or loose, distorted, or broken grommets, etc.)
- 6 percent, the webbing actually broke
- 24 percent elongated over the 42-inch standard
- 83 percent had fall arrest forces over 900 pounds (ANSI), with 9 percent over 1,800 pounds (OSHA)
- 6 percent were previously deployed but still in active service when removed from the jobsite
- 42 percent had hardware with visible defects
- 9 percent had snap hooks that opened during testing
- 9 percent had webbing that was knotted.

The safety community must recognize these facts and take a proactive approach. Workers are being seriously injured in falls with equipment that initially passed industry safety standards. More troubling, worn and damaged equipment is still accessible even though it will not perform as designed in the event of a fall

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# ERGONOMIC CORNER

## STRAINS AND SPRAINS

Strains and sprains in 2004, as in previous years, was the leading cause of nonfatal injuries in American workplaces. These types of injuries accounted for 4 out of 10 occupational injuries and illnesses in the United States in 2004, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Most of those injuries were the result of overexertion or falls on the same level.

According to CDC, the incidence of strains and sprains – particularly those affecting the back – can be reduced if employees use proper lifting techniques such as sizing up the load, ensuring they have enough space for movement, making sure they have solid footing, bending at the knees while keeping their backs straight, and gripping the load with the palms of the hands and fingers.

\*\*\*\*\*

## SAVE YOUR BACK

The back is the most common injured body part, according to the National Safety Council's "Injury Facts."

Use proper lifting technique:

- √ Face the object. Place one foot behind the object and the other foot beside it.
- √ Bend your knees but keep your back straight. Grip the object firmly with both hands.
- √ Bring the object close to your body. Keep your chin, elbows and arms tucked in tight.
- √ Keep your body weight directly over your feet.
- √ Lift with your legs.
- √ Do the same in reverse when you set the object down .

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## LOW PARTICIPATION IN WELLNESS PROGRAMS

Efforts to help employees improve their health often originate in the human resources department. These efforts are often relatively passive and may include distributing brochures, hosting an annual health fair or providing Internet access to evaluate personal health factors.

While such approaches have value, they rarely lead to behavior change. The programs are usually voluntary and reside outside of the management process, resulting in low participation rates, no measurement process and negligible lifestyle changes.

It should also be noted that safety efforts focused on regulatory compliance and employee behavior are narrowly focused on unsafe acts and conditions.

As a result, they do not effectively address the lack of general fitness or the issue of aging and their impact on health care and related costs.

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# APRIL SHOWERS

April showers may bring May flowers, but flowers also bring a whole list of demands and upkeep! For those who enjoy Nature's toil, however, it is important to consider your own health and safety while gardening. A basic understanding of ERGONOMICS can minimize back and body strain while you tend your keep. A few tips to consider:

- (1) "*Ergonomics*" is a term that describes the way we interact with our work— therefore, it is *extremely important that you understand proper posture before you trace that tap root back to China*. As a general guide:

**Spine:** Your spine has natural curves—it is particularly important that you keep those curves (especially the arch in your lower back) when you work low to the ground. Learn to bend at your HIPS, not your back.

**Shoulders & Elbows:** Don't overreach--work at shoulder height or below, keep a slight bend at the elbow, minimize overhead work to less than 5 minutes at a time, use both arms or alternate.

**Wrists & Hands:** Work in "neutral"--this means thumbs pointing up when possible, wrists straight. Keep a steady but light grip.

**Hips & Knees:** Avoid deep bending ( > 60 degree angle) if you have joint problems, but DO use your legs to help lift heavier plants or tools.

- (2) Ergonomics also describes the way in which our work interacts with us. Because the government does not regulate the term "ergonomic" in consumer marketing, it can be difficult to assess what is really "ergonomic" and what isn't. A few things to look for:

- \* well cushioned knee pads / stools
- \* wide, round, contoured and rubberized grips on hand tools
- \* short vs. long handles--if you work close to the ground and need lots of hand leverage, go for short; if you are taller, or doing tasks with more full body motion (digging, pruning) go for long. The choice depends on task, person type of tool.

- (3) Ergonomics also covers a wide range of common-sense things that your mother probably told you:

- \* Pull weeds when the ground is wet, not during a drought (much easier)
- \* Stretch before, change tasks at least twice/hour, take breaks, drink water, use sunscreen!
- \* Keep tools sharp
- \* Use ladders or stools to reach high areas--sit or kneel to work low.
- \* If all else fails--plant rocks, hire a gardener, or see your local physical therapist. :)



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# AVOID MISTAKES AT THE GYM

Working out at the local gym helps relieve stress and keeps the heart healthy. But a workout also can be ineffective and cause injury if done incorrectly.

The San Diego-based American Council on Exercise has identified some common mistakes and offers tips on how to stay safe during your workout:

## Mistake

**Not stretching enough.** To prevent injuries, stretch immediately after aerobic activity while muscles are warm and pliable.

**Lifting too much weight.** Never lift more than muscles can handle. Gradual, progressive resistance is a far more effective – and safe – way to increase muscle strength.

**Not warming up prior to activity.** Muscles need time to adjust to the demands of aerobic exercise. Start slowly, and gradually increase intensity.

**Not cooling down after the workout.** Take a few minutes to lower the heart rate and stretch muscles. This improves flexibility and helps prepare the body for the next workout.

**Not drinking enough water.** The body is already on the way to dehydration by the time a person is thirsty; do not wait until that point. Keep a water bottle close at hand during exercise and throughout the day.

**Leaning too heavily on a stair stepper.** Leaning on a stair stepper is hard on the wrists and the back. Lower the intensity to maintain good posture while lightly resting hands on the rails for balance.

**Jerking while lifting weights.** When you have to jerk weights, you also are jerking your muscles. This can lead to strain and injury, especially in back muscles. Control the weight; do not let the weight control you.

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# HEART GROUP ISSUES NEW CPR GUIDELINES

Revised guidelines for resuscitating people whose hearts suddenly stop emphasize more and faster chest compressions, with fewer stops to breathe oxygen-rich air into the victim's mouth.

The new guidelines were published recently by the American Heart Association in its journal *Circulation*. They should make cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR, more effective and boost survival, doctors said.

Rescuers should give 30 chest compressions then two breaths to all adults, children and infants needing CPR. That is double the previously recommended 15 compressions for every two breaths in adults in the previous guidelines published in 2000.

It also simplifies the technique for children and infants who previously received one breathe for every five compressions.

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# WHAT YOU CAN DO BEFORE SEVERE WEATHER STRIKES

- Develop a plan for you and your family at home, work, school, and when outdoors. The American Red Cross offers planning tips on their Internet site: [www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/](http://www.redcross.org/services/disaster/keepsafe/)
- Identify a safe place to take shelter. Information on how to build a Safe Room I your home or school is available from the Federal Emergency Agency at [www.fema.gov/mit](http://www.fema.gov/mit).
- Have frequent drills.
- Know the county/parish in which you live or visit. The National Weather Service issues severe weather warnings on a county or parish basis.
- Keep a highway map nearby to follow storm movement from weather bulletins.
- Have a NOAA Weather Radio with a warning alarm tone and battery back-up to receive warnings.
- National Weather Service watches and warnings are also available on the Internet. Select your local National Weather Service office at [www.nws.noaa.gov/organization.html](http://www.nws.noaa.gov/organization.html) or go to the National Weather Service Home Page at [www.nws.noaa.gov](http://www.nws.noaa.gov).
- Listen to the radio and television for weather information.
- Check the weather forecast before leaving for extended periods outdoors. Watch for signs of approaching storms.
- If severe weather threatens, check on people who are elderly, very young, or physically or mentally disabled.

## **FAMILY DISASTER PLAN**

Discuss the type of hazards that could affect your family. Know your home's vulnerability to storm surge, flooding and wind.

- Locate a safety room or the safest areas of your home for each hurricane hazard. In certain circumstances, the safest areas may not be in your home but within your community.
- Determine escape routes from your home and places to meet. These should be measured in tens of miles rather than hundreds of miles.
- Have an out-of-state friend as a family contact, so all your family members have a single point of contact.
- Make a plan now for what to do with your pets if you need to evacuate.
- Post emergency phone numbers by your phones and make sure your children know how and when to call 911.
- Check your insurance coverage – flood damage is not usually covered by homeowners insurance.
- Stock nonperishable emergency supplies and a disaster supply kit.
- Use a NOAA weather radio. Remember to replace its battery every six months, as you do with your smoke detectors.
- Take First Aid, CPR and disaster-preparedness classes.

## **DISASTER KIT CHECKLIST**

(Although designed for hurricane preparedness, this list will prepare families for any natural disaster or terrorist attack.)

- Water – at least 1 gallon per person for three to seven days.

- Food – at least enough for three to seven days:  
Non perishable packaged or canned foods/juices. Foods for infants and the elderly  
Snack foods. Non-electric can opener  
Cooking tools/fuels. Paper plates, plastic utensils
- Blankets/pillows, etc.
- Clothing – seasonal/rain gear, sturdy shoes
- First-aid kit, medicine, prescription drugs
- Special items – for babies and elderly
- Toiletries, hygiene items, moisture wipes
- Flashlight, batteries
- Radio – battery operated and NOAA weather radio
- Cash (with some small bills). Banks and ATMs may not be open or available for extended periods
- Keys
- Toys, books and games
- Important documents – in a waterproof container or watertight re-sealable plastic bag. Include insurance, medical records, bank account numbers, Social Security card, etc.
- Tools – keep a set with you during the storm.
- Vehicle fuel tanks filled.