

NC Industrial Commission
Safety Bulletin

4339 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-4339
919-807-2603

parnell@ind.commerce.state.nc.us

"What you risk reveals what you value." —Jeanette Winterson

November - 2005

Greetings Friends in the Name of Safety:

WOW! Can you believe the year is almost over? With everyone so busy, time seems to fly right by. As you begin to look toward your 2006 training schedules, now is a good time to consider the NC Industrial Commission Safety Education Section to fill those needs. We offer a wide variety of topics geared toward ACCIDENT PREVENTION as it relates to lowering your Workers' Compensation CLAIMS and COSTS. It's no charge for our courses except First Aid/CPR (\$11 per person) and Defensive Driving (\$3 per person). Call Alvin, Mel, Eric or Randy today! And a HUGE "Thank You" for over 53,000 employees who have attended our training within the past 12 months!

We are still waiting to post the four new positions that the General Assembly approved. As you know, they are fee-based and as fees are collected the positions will open. Hopefully by March we will be posting these positions and we will notify you via email.

As always, we continue to update our email list. These mailings are the life-blood for attendance of our Eight Regional Safety Councils and without good contacts; the word will not get out. If you know of someone who might wish to receive these mailings, please send their contact information along to me at parnell@ind.commerce.state.nc.us or to their area Safety Representative as soon as possible. For those of you with SPAM software, you will need to add brantomail@blast.com to your "ACCEPT ALWAYS" list. Your Internet Provider service can help you with this. If that is not an option, provide us with a personal email address if you have or can create one.

Drug Testing

Since the inception of drug and alcohol testing in the late 1980's, testing and collection protocols have become more and more sophisticated. Collectors have become more aware of the many ways being used to defeat a urine drug test...and donors are becoming more aware of products and practices being advertised to defeat the test. Urine collection has always been considered to be "The Gold Standard" and this method is still the most cost effective and acceptable way to collect a drug test specimen.

Technology however, marches on and now we have oral fluid testing available and with this method you have several plus factors. Every collection is observed. The donor cannot cheat on the test. There is nothing that can be done to adulterate the specimen. Long waits for the donor to provide

a urine specimen don't apply. 5 to 6 minutes and the employee is back on the job. There is no travel time to a collection site or a collection fee. Sounds good and it is a very good test and collection method! Log on to www.cmdrugfree.com for more information.

Insight...

- Road sense is the offspring of courtesy and the parent of safety. ~Australian Traffic Rule, quoted in Quotations for Special Occasions by Maud van Buren
- The first recorded example of "scat" singing, where the words are replaced by playful nonsense syllables, is found in Heebie Jeebies, recorded on Feb. 26, 1926 by Louis Armstrong and his Hot Fives. The story goes that halfway through the song; Louis dropped the music and simply improvised pure nonsense for the rest of the take, instead of stopping altogether. The person doing the recording liked the result so much that he suggested they keep it - and the "modern" era of scat singing was born.
- Heart attack is the leading cause of non-infectious death in infants under a year old, in North America.
- At any given time, about one quarter (25%) of the adult population of North America is suffering from back pain. In one quarter of these (over 6% of the population), the pain is chronic (i.e., long-term) and unceasing.

WARNING!

Workers In Trenches: Beware Of Cave-In

Seven workers lost their lives while working in trenches over the past three years in Iowa. Most were buried in narrow trenches when the walls caved in. Five men were working on sewer lines 8-10 feet deep. Wet soil is unstable, unpredictable, and extremely heavy. If trench walls collapse, there is no time to react. It is impossible to escape quickly from a deep, narrow trench. The pressure of the ground is easily capable of crushing or suffocating the buried worker. Rescue is very difficult and takes precious time which increases the risk of serious or fatal injury. When a worker is standing at a depth of 8-10 feet, he may feel safe enough; however, when crouched down working on a pipe, there is 6-8 feet of dirt above him. (Remember the phrase, "six foot under"!)

Excavator operators are often tempted to dig a narrow trench, creating a spoil pile adjacent to the trench opening, making it easy to fill-in later. This may seem efficient, yet it is a dangerous practice, for unsloped walls may collapse and the pressure of the soil adjacent to the trench increases the risk. If excavation is through concrete, the hazard to workers is greatly increased.

OSHA standards require removing adequate soil on both sides, and placing the soil away from the opening. Another option is to use an approved trench box or shoring system designed to prevent cave-ins. For some contractors, or at certain job sites, sloping of trench walls may be more practical. Additional shoring may be required if an excavation is adjacent to back-filled soil, or if soil vibration is present, from highways, railroads, or other construction.

Employers should periodically review OSHA guidelines for trench work with employees doing construction or sewer work. Supervisors, foremen, and all excavator operators should be instructed to develop safe working habits when digging trenches. This includes using a shoring system or sloping the walls of the trench to prevent soil from falling and burying workers. This is required for all excavations of five or more feet deep. If an excavation will be over 24 feet deep, it must be reviewed by a qualified engineer prior to construction. This is to ensure that soil types and layers

are identified, and appropriate OSHA standards are used. Following are summaries of the seven construction worker fatalities related to trenching work.

(1, 2.) 19-year-old male, and 21-year-old male, were working in a trench to connect an apartment building to a sewer line. They used a backhoe to dig a 10 ft. deep trench, entering through a concrete parking lot. Dirt and broken concrete were placed too close to the trench and the walls caved in, completely burying the two men. One man was struck by a large piece of sharp concrete, then both were buried under dirt and mud which slid into the trench.

(3.) 62-year-old farmer was working in a 12-foot trench which was dug 6-foot wide, replacing a spill tube for a farm pond. Soil was wet but did not appear dangerous to the excavator operator, who was digging at the opposite end of the trench, 25 feet away from the victim. Suddenly a large section of the trench wall caved in, burying the farmer. His hired hand and the excavator operator also had been working in the trench, but luckily were not there when the wall collapsed, otherwise there would have been three deaths.

(4.) 49-year-old construction worker / plumber was operating a backhoe installing sewer pipe for a new house. He was working in the bottom of an 8-foot trench when the sides caved in and buried him. He died from asphyxiation and multiple rib fractures.

(5.) 39-year-old owner of a plumbing and electric company was installing an earth energy heating system at a lakefront home. The man was working in a 15 ft. trench when one side, under the dirt pile, collapsed and buried him. The trench was dug 30 ft. from the lake edge and the soil was wet hard clay. He was rescued and partially revived by off-duty firemen skiing nearby, but died the next day in the hospital.

(6.) 22-year-old plumber's apprentice was installing new sewer plumbing at a new residential construction site. The crew had dug an 8-foot deep trench outside the house and the victim jumped to the bottom of the trench. The walls immediately caved in and buried him. He was rescued within ten minutes, but suffered anoxic brain damage.

(7.) 26-year-old construction worker was helping a co-worker bury sanitary sewer pipes in a 10 ft. trench. They were using a backhoe and a 20 x 8 ft. steel trench box in the trench, trying to remove a concrete casing around a sewer pipe, using the bucket teeth. The victim was using hand signals to direct the operator who could not see the casing. The bucket suddenly slipped sideways off the casing and snapped back towards the victim, pinning him to the side of the trench box. The man received massive internal injuries to the chest and abdomen and died at the scene. The backhoe did not malfunction. The victim had put himself in a dangerous position, in line with the direction of force of the backhoe bucket.

For assistance with trench training, give the NC Industrial Commission Safety Education Section a call. We also provide a four-hour *COMPETENT PERSON TRENCHING* course, free of course!

From the Desk of Dennis Parnell, Director Safety Education...

Fire Hazard: Filling gas can in pickup truck with plastic bed liner. In recent incidents reported to the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), fires spontaneously ignited when workers or others attempted to fill portable gasoline containers (gas cans) in the backs of pickup trucks equipped with plastic bed liners or in cars with carpeted surfaces. Serious skin burns and other injuries resulted. Similar incidents in the last few years have resulted in warning bulletins from several private and government organizations.

These fires result from the buildup of static electricity. The insulating effect of the bed liner or carpet prevents the static charge generated by gasoline flowing into the container or other sources

from grounding. The discharge of this buildup to the grounded gasoline dispenser nozzle may cause a spark and ignite the gasoline. Both ungrounded metal (most hazardous) and plastic gas containers have been involved in these incidents.

The Safe Practice is to always place gas can on ground before refueling. Touch can with gas dispenser nozzle before removing can lid. Keep gas dispenser nozzle in contact with can inlet when filling. Avoid getting back into the vehicle until you are finished filling your container.

With the winter months ahead, please use caution and good SAFETY SENSE while fueling your gasoline/kerosene containers.

Have a SAFE and HAPPY Thanksgiving! Dennis ☺

Workplace Violence Intervention Security Measures **"You know he is coming back. How do you prepare?"**

By Johnny Lee, Director of Peace at Work

When I was with the Asheville Police Department, one of the most frustrating aspects was that law enforcement can not take action until a crime has been committed. As one responsible for the safety of workers, you are not bound by this rule. The following tips are meant to provide a range of additional precautions management can take when there is a specific, identified threat of violence coming from outside the facility, whether it is from an ex-employee, an ex-partner of an employee or a disgruntled client. These guidelines are only meant to provide a list of ideas and suggestions and should not be taken as direct advice for any particular case. Every incident needs to be thoroughly assessed by a competent management team with the support of appropriate community resources. The first step is to contact your local law enforcement for their advice and consultation.

There are 4 basic components in preparing for a potential assault.

1. Consider what legal measures (criminal and civil) are available.
2. Target-harden the facility.
3. Target-harden any "targets".
4. Have a response plan when the offender arrives.

Legal Measures

- Criminal charges: Law enforcement can advice what charges are possible including: Communicating Threat, Assault, Damage to Property and Telephone Harassment. Additionally, if the subject continues to harass you while the case is pending, they can be arrested for Intimidating a State's Witness.
- Civil Actions: (Note: confer with your legal consul for any of these actions)
 - A trespass order can be obtained through contacting your local law enforcement or magistrate's office. Send a certified letter to them notifying them that they can be criminally charged with Trespassing if they come to your property.
 - Restraining orders: Domestic Violence (for ex-intimate partners) and Stalking (for strangers) Trespass Restriction Orders (TRO's) can only be obtained by the victim, though the order can apply to their workplace. Obtain a copy, if possible. The Workplace Restraining Order can be obtained by a company or organization but it is advised to have your attorney submit the motion. Only the Domestic Violence TRO has an automatic

criminal charge if violated and it also prohibits the defendant from possessing a firearm.

- If the person has been incarcerated in jail or prison, register with the automated notification system called SAVAN (www.ncsavan.org) to have your phone called the moment they are released, transferred or escape.

Target-harden the facility

Again, law enforcement or a security consulting firm can advise on these engineering/environmental controls. Consider implementing, installing or developing:

- Request increase of patrols from local law enforcement.
- Distribute descriptions of the offender (and their car) to security, ground keepers and front desk personnel and ensure that they know the response protocol.
- Increase/implement security features and engineering controls such as: brighter lights, barriers, shaded windows, convex mirrors, secure doors and windows, panic alarms, fencing and CC/TV Surveillance cameras.
- Reduce access to the building; utilize a single, monitored entrance, if feasible.
- Or, all doors can be kept locked (meeting local fire codes) and let visitors in one at a time.
- Install buzzer alarms and/or panic buttons.
- Hire off-duty law enforcement officers as security (may be able to park their squad car in front of facility).
- Hire security consultant services to provide extensive, customized and expert advice and support on security measures, which may include use of an investigator to track the offender's movement.

Target-harden any "targets"

If any employees (or employers) are specifically targeted, additional measures for their safety are recommended.

- Change the target's parking spot to a safer location.
- Escort the target to her/his car.
- Reassign the target to a different shift, workspace, facility or duties to safer conditions.
- Develop a "code word" for discreet calls for support/help.
- Provide emergency cell phones (available from most domestic violence shelters).
- Screen target's incoming calls and/or provide new extension and email.
- Keep previous phone or email extensions to record offender's messages as evidence.
- Provide support for the target's home security or other safety planning.
- Remove from the workplace during crisis periods.

Have a Response Plan when the Offender arrives

I have seen too many plans where the only response is to call the manager. A more detailed and comprehensive response needs to be developed specific to the facility layout, personnel and public access and nature of the threat. Any legal prohibitions, such as restraining or trespass orders, will mandate law enforcement's response. It is vital that security, front-desk and maintenance personnel be prepared with a description of the subject, instructed on their response and have the ability to communicate warnings instantly. Options include:

- Call Law Enforcement! (always an option even if there is no direct threat or court orders against them).
- Notify management and security, if available.

- Lock all entrances to the facility.
- Warn the targeted individuals(s).
- Notify all personnel, discreetly and without causing panic.
- Utilize an escape route or go to a pre-designated, safe location.

Peace at Work (www.peaceatwork.org) is a non-profit agency that helps companies prevent violence before it becomes a threat. To receive their free, monthly e-newsletter on workplace violence or for questions regarding these recommendations, please call Johnny Lee at 919.719.7203 or jlee@peaceatwork.org.

The *NC Industrial Commission Safety Education Section* stands ready to assist you with your Safety training needs. We offer a variety of courses, designed to suit your needs. Please give one of our Industrial Safety Representatives a call...

- **Mel Harmon- Mid-State Area and Defensive Driving Instructor-**
919-218-3374- Cell 919-545-0641- Office harmonm@ind.commerce.state.nc.us
- **Alvin Scott - Eastern and Southeastern Carolina Areas -**
919-218-2792- Cell 252-291-1370-Office scotta@ind.commerce.state.nc.us
- **Eric Johnson - Western Carolina, Blue Ridge & Southern Piedmont Areas**
919-218-3567- Cell 704-933-2414- Office johnsone@ind.commerce.state.nc.us
- **Randy Cranfill - Western and Central Piedmont Areas -**
919-218-2986- Cell 336-679-8493- Office cranfilr@ind.commerce.state.nc.us
- **Anne Hill - Program Assistant - 919-807-2603**
hillq@ind.commerce.state.nc.us
- **Dennis Parnell - Director Safety Education - 919-218-3000- Cell**
919-807-2602- Office parnell@ind.commerce.state.nc.us

We Are Working For You!

www.comp.state.nc.us

[CLIP AND SAVE]

Upcoming Events...

- **November 3-4, 2005 -- Western North Carolina Safety and Health School For information contact: Rebecca Israel @ 336-761-4420 or 919-218-4083**
- **November 9, 2005 - Northeast Partnership Safety Roundtable - Metal Tech, Murfreesboro, NC 8 AM-4 PM**
- **November 13-16, 2006 - NC AWWA/WEA 85th Annual Conference Sheraton Four Seasons Hotel / Koury Convention Center Greensboro, NC**
- **November 17-18, 2005 -- N.C. Safety and Health Congress and Annual Meeting For information contact: S&H Council of North Carolina, Matt Thompson @ 1-800-868-8777 x 126**
- **November 24-25, 2005 - Thanksgiving Holiday!**
- **November 30, 2005 - Southeastern Safety Council - Quarterly Meeting, TBA**
- **December 6, 2005 - Mid-State Safety Council General Meeting, TBA**
- **May 9-12, 2006 NC Statewide Safety Conference, Joseph Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, NC.**