

NC Industrial Commission

Safety Bulletin

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"Out of this nettle, danger, we pluck this flower, safety." ~William Shakespeare

December - 2005

Greetings Friends in the Name of Safety:

We would like to take this opportunity to say "Thank You" for your support this past year. We have had a very productive year with over 53,000 employees trained in North Carolina through our services. Our email list has grown, our Regional Workshops have proven to be an effective way of reaching the smaller businesses and we have developed several new partnerships. Beginning in 2006, we will partner with the NC Rural Water Association, offering another series of free workshops throughout North Carolina. Our partnership with the NC Northeast Partnership's Annual Safety Roundtable in the Northeast portion of the State continues to grow. We have hopes to expand our Industrial Safety Course at Western Carolina University to include NC A&T State University and East Carolina University and we are going to roll-out a new 10-hour & 30-hour Accident Prevention Certificate Program next year. Last but not least, we hope to add four new positions by late Spring!

These exciting additions would not be happening without YOU! We ask that you continue to support our efforts and to be patient as we *S-T-R-E-T-C-H* to meet your safety needs in North Carolina.

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 brontomail@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.

Shift Work - A Fact of Life

Shift work. It is not fun, but it is a fact of life. Most Industry is charged with running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year— without fail. That means that somewhere, someone is going to be working hours other than 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Working odd shifts can be problematic. Disrupting your body's normal circadian rhythm and interfering with your normal sleep pattern can produce the following effects:

- Chronic fatigue
- Reduced attention span

- Inability to concentrate
- Slower reaction time
- Gastrointestinal and digestive problems
- Disruption in family and social life

These can be contributing factors to increased accidents and injuries—and that makes shift work a safety concern.

There are two ways to address the problems associated with shift work. The first is *organizational*. There is no perfect shift work schedule. But the best one incorporates plenty of employee input along with a thorough understanding of the job(s) that need to be accomplished.

Organizational factors include the length of rotation (short or long), direction of rotation (moving from day shift to second shift or vice versa), and start and length of shifts. All of these factors should be considered when drawing up the shift schedule.

The second way to address shift work is *individual*. There are many steps that an individual shift worker can take to minimize the effects of shift work.

- Maintain regular eating patterns and, if working the night shift, eat lighter, healthier foods.
- Limit your intake of caffeine, alcohol, and salt.
- Try to avoid the use of sleep aids.
- Sleep on a regular schedule.
- Keep your sleeping area as dark and quiet as possible. If necessary, use earplugs and an eye mask. Turn off the telephone.
- Make sure your friends and families understand the importance of your keeping a regular schedule.
- Keep physically active during your off hours. Physical fitness can reduce stress, help impose regular sleeping patterns, and result in a deeper, healthier sleep.

Using these simple tips can reduce the stress and physical problems associated with shift work. And remember shift work has its benefits, too, like empty shopping malls and weekday tee-off times...but only if you are alert and well rested!

Insight...

- Margaret Corbin - 1779 --- 1st woman to be awarded a disability pension by US Congress. She fought in the Revolutionary War.
- André-Jacques Garnerin - 1797 --- 1st parachute jump. Dropped from about 6,500 ft. over Monceau Park in Paris in a 23-ft.-diameter parachute made of white canvas with a basket attached (Oct. 22).
- Annie Taylor - 1901 --- 1st woman to go over Niagara Falls in a barrel. She was aged 64 years at the time.
- Louise Brown - 1978 --- 1st test tube baby. (Lancastershire, England)
- The name of the horse in the American Christmas song "Jingle Bells" is Bob.

Instilling Safety Awareness...

Safety requires, and receives, a lot of attention here. The government has numerous safety programs and regulations that the company follows. Your company makes an effort to purchase equipment and design processes that reduce risk and improve safety. Your company also provides you with training and protective clothing and equipment, all with the goal of preventing accidents and keeping you safe and healthy.

However, all the regulations, training, and equipment in the world can't protect a person who doesn't look out for himself.

The sad fact is that most accidents are someone's fault. They're the result of carelessness, of someone not paying attention or not thinking safety is important on his or her job.

Your company provides you with a lot of safety tools, but the most important safety tools of all are the ones you bring to the job: your attitude and your common sense.

People can be the biggest hazards on the job. When someone gets careless, someone gets hurt: maybe the careless person and maybe an innocent bystander. The concept of no-fault doesn't really apply to on-the-job safety.

Most careless accidents can be pinned down to one of these causes:

- ***Complacency.*** That's what happens when someone has done the job so often that he thinks he doesn't have to think about it. But no job is so simple that it doesn't require following all the steps and paying attention. When you go on automatic pilot, you crash.
- ***Emotions.*** We all get angry or upset at things happening at home, an incident with someone here on the job, or even at some stranger who cut you off on the way to work. These are understandable emotions, but they distract you and make you careless. You just can't afford these emotions when you're working with complex machinery, hazardous chemicals, electrical power, and other things that can cause serious accidents if they're not handled with full precision and attention. You've got to learn to push these emotions back when you're at work; if you let them take over, you're only likely to create new and more serious things to worry about.
- ***Fatigue.*** Whether the cause is too little sleep, too long a shift, or maybe a second job, tiredness is a serious risk on the job. When you're tired, your physical and mental reactions are slower. You have trouble paying attention, remembering what to do, or actually doing it when and how you're supposed to.

You can't always prevent getting tired, but you can be aware of it and either slow down, get help, or switch to a task that doesn't require as much precision. Don't let too little sleep jeopardize your safety.

- ***Lack of knowledge.*** In our training programs, we try to cover all the things you need to know and do to be safe but sometimes it doesn't all get through. That may be because the training didn't provide information or procedures in enough detail. Or it may be that there was so much detail you couldn't take it all in. That, by the way, is one reason we have safety meetings, which are good refresher courses.

Sometimes the training is very good, but the trainees don't pay close attention or take it very seriously. And sometimes people think that having been through training means they're expected to remember every single thing, so they're afraid to ask questions.

The bottom line here is simple.

If you're not sure what to do, ASK.

If you're not sure how to do it, ASK.

If you're not sure how it works, ASK.

Don't go ahead unless you know what you're doing, what the risks are, and how to protect yourself.

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

Be aware of holiday dangers

Around the holidays, there are even more potential fire hazards to think about. If you use a real Christmas tree in your home, make sure to water it daily - electric lights strung on a dried-out tree are a recipe for disaster. All lights and lighted window ornaments should be inspected every year to make sure to be sure cords are not worn or frayed, and all candles should be used with care. According to the NFPA, the number of fires started by candles nearly doubles during the month of December.

Use candles safely

As decorative candles have become more popular, candle fires have been on the rise. If you light candles, keep them out of reach of children and pets, away from curtains and furniture, and extinguish them before you go to bed. Make sure candles are in sturdy holders that won't tip over and are made of non-flammable material. Don't let older children and teens use candles unsupervised in their rooms.

From our Family to Yours, Have a Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Dennis ☺

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**
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- **Dennis Parnell - Director Safety Education - 919-218-3000- Cell**
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We Are Working For You!

www.comp.state.nc.us

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Upcoming Events...

- Be on the lookout for our Regional Safety Talk contests coming soon!!!
- December 6, 2005 - Mid-State Safety Council General Meeting, Workers' Comp Case Management Ruth Barlow Health & Safety Consultant Optimal Outcomes 6:30 pm Murray's BBQ, 2751 Capital Blvd, Raleigh
- December 25th - MERRY CHRISTMAS!
- May 9-12, 2006 NC Statewide Safety Conference, Joseph Koury Convention Center, Greensboro, NC.