

Wholesale and Retail Trade: NORA Sector Council Bulletin: Fall 2010, Volume 1, Issue 2



We are listening!

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Inside the MMH Workshop Planning Committee

Note from our 1st Manual Material Handling (MMH) Planning Committee: **“How do we coach our associates as to what are risky behaviors?”**

Here is a thought-provoking series of questions raised in September during our first manual materials handling conference call: When thinking about improving MMH activities in your business, what single issue is the most problematic? Is it efficiency? Is it equipment? Is it personnel? Is it cost? Is it safety or injury? Is it time or some combination of the above?

In fact, the larger question is **“can we teach adults to change their behaviors?”**

Maybe it is not as easy as we think.

One prominent psychologist dismisses the notion that “learning is fun,” especially for adults. He suggests that organizations must find a method to deal with the anxiety adults experience when they are

The High Cost of Overexertion

Overexertion injuries are among the most costly and disabling work-related injuries in the United States. According to the 2007 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index, overexertion injuries were responsible for \$12.7 billion in direct costs to U.S. employers in 2005—more than any other type of injury.



How not to lift!

Within private sector retail establishments, a total of 47,350 overexertion-related injuries resulting in days away from work in 2006, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS).

[Read More in the Retail Merchandiser](#)

forced to “unlearn” what they know and learn something new (Coutu, 2002, p.6).

He suggests that “learning will only happen when survival is greater than learning anxiety.” One can reduce the anxiety of learning, by creating a safe environment where the consequences of failure are minimal.

“Survival anxiety” can be increased by linking job advances and rewards to successful training achievements, such as changes in behavior. Remember the principles for successful safety training:

1. Adults need to know **why they are learning something** – make safety personal.
2. Adults **learn through doing**- they remember what they say and do.
3. Adults **are problem-solvers**- get them involved in identifying solutions to hazards.
4. Adults learn best when the subject is of **immediate use – just in time**- capturing the perfect teaching moment.

The 2nd MMH Planning Conference Call started with the basic question: “**What will it take to make the MMH workshop a success?**”

- One suggestion was to get potential workshop participants’ attention by highlighting the costs associated with problems caused by MMH activities and by offering solutions using applied science. The workshop might be marketed as a forum which can help participants pick the right tool (i.e. solution) for the right job/context.
- Another suggestion was related to the structure of the workshop. It was proposed that we start with providing participants with the

What makes a Healthy Workplace?



As you may know, “healthy workplaces” usually have some common features and operate according to some basic principles of good management. These principles include the following elements:

- Management commitment and employee involvement
- Worksite analysis
- Hazard prevention and control
- Safety and health training

Do you need some content for a presentation on how to establish a cost effective safety and program?

We have a set of 20 slides that outline the keys to a healthy workplace. Feel free to download this set of slides and customized them for your use.

- Place click here: [Elements of an Effective Safety and Health Program](#)

What's New at OSHA?

“OSHA is trying to improve accurate reporting of Injuries”

Readers of this News Bulletin are unlikely to be too concerned about efforts to “level the playing field.” Let’s face it there are employers who go out of their way to discourage workers from reporting injuries or seeking medical treatment that would lead to an OSHA-recordable incident. Whereas, the great majority of employers are following the rules. I learned as a kid, often the hard way, you can’t make up your own rules. Hence, employers who are playing by the rules should be able to support OSHA’s attempt to level the playing field.

“big picture”, describing the magnitude of the problems caused by MMH activity along with the direct and indirect costs associated with MMH-related injury. The workshop could then move toward a discussion of specific problem areas and solutions to address those areas.

- For the “solutions” portion, the workshop might showcase engineering control case studies or behavioral-based training programs. The benefit of these solutions could be shown through return on investment (ROI) estimates or through other “business or success metrics.”

Specifically, we have all heard of companies that use incentives, such as worker parties, and raffle prizes to ensure a “zero injury record.” You probably have seen some of those outdoor signs posted by businesses/ plants proudly proclaiming that they have gone XXXX number of hours without an injury. My first reaction is “pity the poor guy who walks into the nurse’s office with a recordable injury and breaks that streak. “ No free turkey for those employees!

Certainly, every company wants to drive down the injury rates; but the reality is that injuries will happen, no matter how big the prize or pressure. Hopefully, those injuries are minor. Such injuries can serve as an early detection system, often resulting in a simple intervention, before a more serious injury occurs. The real goal is to drive down “lost time from preventable injuries.” I think that is what David Michaels is concerned about “leveling the playing field.” What do you think?

Let us know your thoughts on OSHA’s Recording Initiative

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**Save the Date: The next WRT Sector Council meeting will be July 12-14, 2011, in Cincinnati, OH
Please see below for our Contact Information: We want to hear from you...**

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National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)
4676 Columbia Parkway
Cincinnati OH 45226
513-533-8319
VAnderson@cdc.gov
www.cdc.gov/niosh/DraftWRT

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