

THE UOSH SAFETY LINE JUNE 2009



June Newsletter

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From left to right: Kiley Cox (Safety and Quality Manager), Kirk March (Utah Labor Commission OSHA Consultant), Sherrie M. Hayashi (Utah Labor Commissioner), Susan Johnson (President, Futura Industries Corporation)

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tions to:
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Futura Industries Corporation Receives SHARP Renewal

On June 24, 2009, Futura Industries of Clearfield Utah, was presented with a renewal of their SHARP status for a period of three years. Futura received their initial SHARP status in 2006, and has continued to be a leader in workplace safety in the state of Utah. So far, in 2009, Futura has had no reportable injuries, and are well below industry average rates of illness and injuries.

The Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) rewards small employers who operate an exemplary safety and health management system. Acceptance in SHARP distinguishes a business as being a member of a very select group of businesses that are models of workplace safety and health. The state of Utah has five companies that have received SHARP status. Kirk March (Utah OSHA Consultant) spent many hours with the employees and management of Futura to receive their SHARP renewal, and praised Futura for the way they have empowered their employees to be a major contributor in developing safety procedures.

Futura has received numerous awards including the Utah Department of Workforce Services "Utah's Best Places to Work: 2009 Work/Life Award" for the 10th consecutive year. Futura Industries is the first and only company that has won the award ten years consecutively and has been given the elite "Legacy" award.

During the presentation, of their renewal, the Utah Labor Commissioner, Sherrie M. Hayashi, commented on Futura's family friendly, safety conscience atmosphere, and noted that the Utah Labor Commission looks at them as one of the truly great companies in Utah.

Congratulations to Brent Lloyd (Owner) Susan Johnson (President), Kiley Cox (Safety and Quality Manager), Jared Bringham (Operations Manager), and their 195 employees for making Futura Industries Corporation one of Utah's leading small businesses, and an exceptionally safe place to work.



Heat Stress

As the June rain storms subside we move rapidly into summer, and the summer heat. Even though heat related deaths are preventable, hundreds of people die from extreme heat and heat related illnesses each year. As an employer, it is your responsibility to ensure a safe and healthful workplace for your employees. Fortunately there is a lot you can do to protect workers from heat hazards.

Acclimatize workers by exposing them to work in a hot environment for progressively longer periods. NIOSH (1986) suggests that workers who have had previous experience in jobs where heat levels are high enough to produce heat stress may acclimatize with a regimen of 50% exposure on day one, 60% on day two, 80% on day three, and 100% on day four. For new workers who will be similarly exposed, the regimen should be 20% on day one, with a 20% increase in exposure each additional day.

Replace Fluids by providing cool (50°-60°F) water or any cool liquid (except alcoholic beverages) to workers and encourage them to drink small amounts frequently, e.g., one cup every 20 minutes. Ample supplies of liquids should be placed close to the work area. Although some commercial replacement drinks contain salt, this is not necessary for acclimatized individuals because most people add enough salt to their summer diets.

Reduce the physical demands by reducing physical exertion such as excessive lifting, climbing, or digging with heavy objects. Spread the work over more individuals, use relief workers or assign extra workers. Provide external pacing to minimize overexertion.

Provide recovery areas such as air-conditioned enclosures and rooms and provide intermittent rest periods with water breaks.

Reschedule hot jobs for the cooler part of the day, and routine maintenance and repair work in hot areas should be scheduled for the cooler seasons of the year.

What kind of heat disorders and health effects are possible and how should they be treated?

Heat Stroke is the most serious heat related disorder and occurs when the body's temperature regulation fails and body temperature rises to critical levels. The condition is caused by a combination of highly variable factors, and its occurrence is difficult to predict. Heat stroke is a medical emergency that may result in death. The primary signs and symptoms of heat stroke are confusion; irrational behavior; loss of consciousness; convulsions; a lack of sweating (usually); hot, dry skin; and an abnormally high body temperature, e.g., a rectal temperature of 41°C (105.8°F). The elevated metabolic temperatures caused by a combination of work load and environmental heat, both of which contribute to heat stroke, are also highly variable and difficult to predict.

If a worker shows signs of possible heat stroke, professional medical treatment should be obtained immediately. The worker should be placed in a shady, cool area and the outer clothing should be removed. The worker's skin should be wetted and air movement around the worker should be increased to improve evaporative cooling until professional methods of cooling are initiated and the seriousness of the condition can be assessed. Fluids should be replaced as soon as possible. The medical outcome of an episode of heat stroke depends on the victim's physical fitness and the timing and effectiveness of first aid treatment.

Regardless of the worker's protests, no employee suspected of being ill from heat stroke should be sent home or left unattended unless a physician has specifically approved such an order.

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Heat Exhaustion signs and symptoms are headache, nausea, vertigo, weakness, thirst, and giddiness. Fortunately, this condition responds readily to prompt treatment. Heat exhaustion should not be dismissed lightly. Fainting or heat collapse which is often associated with heat exhaustion. In heat collapse, the brain does not receive enough oxygen because blood pools in the extremities. As a result, the exposed individual may lose consciousness. This reaction is similar to that of heat exhaustion and does not affect the body's heat balance. However, the onset of heat collapse is rapid and unpredictable and can be dangerous especially if workers are operating machinery or controlling an operation that should not be left unattended; moreover, the victim may be injured when he or she faints. Also, the signs and symptoms seen in heat exhaustion are similar to those of heat stroke, a medical emergency. Workers suffering from heat exhaustion should be removed from the hot environment and given fluid replacement. They should also be encouraged to get adequate rest and when possible ice packs should be applied.

Heat Cramps are usually caused by performing hard physical labor in a hot environment. These cramps have been attributed to an electrolyte imbalance caused by sweating. Cramps appear to be caused by the lack of water replenishment. Because sweat is a hypotonic solution ($\pm 0.3\%$ NaCl), excess salt can build up in the body if the water lost through sweating is not replaced. Thirst cannot be relied on as a guide to the need for water; instead, water must be taken every 15 to 20 minutes in hot environments. Under extreme conditions, such as working for 6 to 8 hours in heavy protective gear, a loss of sodium may occur. Recent studies have shown that drinking commercially available carbohydrate-electrolyte replacement liquids is effective in minimizing physiological disturbances during recovery.

Heat Rashes are the most common problem in hot work environments where the skin is persistently wetted by un-evaporated sweat. Prickly heat is manifested as red papules and usually appears in areas where the clothing is restrictive. As sweating increases, these papules give rise to a prickling sensation. Heat rash papules may become infected if they are not treated. In most cases, heat rashes will disappear when the affected individual returns to a cool environment.

Heat Fatigue is often caused by a lack of acclimatization. A program of acclimatization and training for work in hot environments is advisable. The signs and symptoms of heat fatigue include impaired performance of skilled manual, mental, or vigilance jobs. There is no treatment for heat fatigue except to remove the heat stress before a more serious heat-related condition develops. (Source: OSHA heat stress emergency preparedness guide)

For additional information go to: <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/heatstress/recognition.html>

Bureau of Labor Statistics

June is National Safety Month. In recognition of this event, BLS takes a look at data on work-related fatalities, as well as nonfatal workplace injuries and illnesses. What are the occupations with the highest fatality rates, what are the most common incidents leading to fatalities, and what are the differences in fatality rates by age? These are some of the questions answered in this BLS Spotlight on Statistics. BLS also sheds some light on workplace injuries and illnesses and how they vary by industry and take a look at a common problem among today's workers: musculoskeletal disorders.

The Safety and Health Spotlight is available online at http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2009/safety_and_health/

2009 marks the 125th anniversary of the establishment of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). President Chester A. Arthur signed into law the bill that established the Bureau of Labor which was later changed to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. The BLS became part of the Department of Labor when it was established in 1913. To celebrate this anniversary the BLS is highlighting some of the products that they offer on their website.

To look at what the BLS offers go to:

http://www.bls.gov/spotlight/2009/125_anniversary/

Ensure You're Insured

By law, almost all employers must cover their employees with workers' compensation insurance. In the event of a workplace injury, workers' compensation insurance will pay medical costs

wage replacement and partial disability during the injured worker's recovery. If the accident, worker may receive monthly benefits. Now, you can see if the company you work for has

Workers' Compensation Insurance. The database is updated daily. To see if you are insured go to: <http://www.laborcommission.utah.gov/IndustrialAccidents/POC.html>

If you suspect an employer is wrongfully operating without workers' compensation insurance, please contact the Utah Labor Commission, Industrial Accidents Division's WC Policy Section at (801) 530-5090.



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