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BIE SAFETY ADVISOR

Analyzing Your Company's Accident History

Employee injuries are costly to your business. Injuries affect productivity, employee morale, and business expenses. An increase in the frequency of employee injuries can raise your Workers' Compensation experience modification factor, resulting in increased Workers' Compensation insurance premiums. In addition, a high experience modification factor may prevent your company from bidding on some construction projects. Accident analysis identifies your company's accident trends, which is a systematic approach to preventing employee injuries.

Once you have gathered all of your OSHA required accident and injury data and your company's accident and near miss reports, another resource is your insurance company or agency. Obtain 3 years of your company's Workers' Compensation loss data from your insurance agent or direct from the insurance company that writes your Workers' Compensation coverages. Many insurance companies and some insurance agencies have a risk control department that can not only provide you with your loss data, but can assist in analyzing the data and improving your loss control program to reduce both the frequency and severity of losses, which is the goal when analyzing your losses.

Look at your accident reporting and investigations. It is important to have good accident reporting as part of your accident investigation program. Accident reporting provides the information needed to conduct accident analysis. The root causes identified for each individual incident will help you discover trends in your safety data.

Now that you have collected all this data, how do we analyze it?

Accident analysis starts with grouping like incidents together to find a pattern using a simple spreadsheet. Focus on common aspects of accidents. These commonalities are the accident trends. Categories could include:

- Accident type (e.g., strain, sprain, laceration, burn, contusion)
- Accident cause (e.g., overexertion, struck by, struck against, caught in, caught between, falls)
- Job/operation being performed by the employee
- Job site/project where the injury occurred
- Day of the week the injury occurred
- Body part injured
- Machinery or equipment involved
- Experience on the job site
- Costs, both by your insurance carrier and your company's out-of-pocket expenses

Additional categories may be useful as part of the accident trend analysis. For instance, the name of the injured worker may reveal employees who are involved in multiple accidents. This analysis may help identify employees who have more hazardous job tasks or people who do not diligently follow safety procedures. A category indicating lost time or restricted duty helps you identify and focus on the most severe accident types.

Once you have categories selected and entered your data, tally the number and costs of the incidents in each category to identify patterns in your incident data. What trends jump out to you? For example, are back injuries a high percentage of body part injured, strains as a high percentage of accident results, and lifting (overexertion) as a high percentage accident cause? Did many of the back strains from lifting come from one or two job sites or operations being performed? Did these accidents come from workers with less job experience? If so, these categories are where to focus your loss prevention efforts.

By investing time in analyzing trends and making appropriate adjustments, you can create a safety culture that positively impacts the organization. By taking a proactive approach, you can take control and better manage accident costs, reduce the frequency and severity of employee injuries, and protect your company's reputation.

Monthly Toolbox Talk

PERSONAL FALL ARREST SYSTEMS: The Last Choice In Fall Protection

Why should your body harness be your last choice when selecting fall protection? A personal fall arrest system does not prevent you from falling, rather, if set up and worn properly, it may prevent you from hitting a lower level when you do fall. In addition, you (the wearer) have to be actively involved in setting up the system so that it operates properly and prevents your sudden stop! Be sure to explore all other fall protection options, such as guardrails, hole covers, or fall restraint before grabbing for your lanyard and harness.

A personal fall arrest system is comprised of 3 key components

- Anchorage point is used for attachment of personal fall arrest equipment. It must be independent of any anchorage being used to support or suspend platforms, and capable of supporting at least 5,000 pounds per employee attached. Guardrails, electrical conduits, and water pipes should not be used as anchorage points unless specifically designed by a qualified person for such use.
- Full body harness is designed to minimize stress forces on your body in the event of a fall. It should be either 100% on or 100% off. Don't loosen or unsecure any straps during breaks or lunch –remove the harness completely.
- Connecting devices are the critical link that joins you and your full body harness to the anchorage. Connecting devices include lanyards, snap hooks, retractable lifeline, beam clamps, etc. Connecting devices must be capable of supporting 5,000 pounds. Snap hooks should be double-locking type to prevent roll out.

Using Personal Fall Arrest Systems Safely

To ensure that your personal fall arrest systems will stop a fall:

- Inspect all system components before each use for wear, damage, and other deterioration, and remove defective components from service.
- After donning your harness, have a co-worker perform a 5-point buddy check:
  - ✓ Is the sub-pelvic strap located under the buttocks, snug and not twisted?
  - ✓ Are the leg straps snug enough that you can't get more than 4 fingers between your leg and the strap?
  - ✓ Is the chest strap across the upper chest area, preventing the shoulder straps from being pulled off the shoulders?
  - ✓ Is the dorsal D-ring centered between the shoulder blades?
  - ✓ How is the overall fit and finish of the harness? There should be no loose webbing, twists, or non-symmetrical ends.
- Rig so that you can neither free fall more than 6 feet or contact any lower level. If using a 6' or shorter lanyard, attach at or above the level of your back D-ring.
- Place anchor points to minimize the amount of swing in a fall. Swing falls generate the same amount of energy as a fall through the same distance vertically, but with the additional hazard of colliding with an obstruction.
- If your personal fall arrest system has been subject to a fall, remove it from service.

Have a Rescue Plan

Whenever personal fall arrest is being used on your job, you need to plan for rescue in the event of a fall. Your plan should be able to promptly rescue employees in the event of a fall or assure that they are able to rescue themselves. Keep it simple, but have a plan. Don't leave anyone hanging!

EMPLOYEE RECOMMENDATIONS:

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_____

HOW THIS TOPIC APPLIES TO THIS JOB:

_____

_____

_____

_____

ATTENDEES: <u>Print Name / Signature</u> (use back if necessary)

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_____

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_____

DATE: _____

SUPERVISOR SIGNATURE:

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JOBSITE / PROJECT:

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