JULY 2014

Automotive Safety Association

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

Behavioral Issues

Behavioral issues of your workers impact workplace productivity and safety. These behavioral issues can include complacency, fatigue, frustration, rushing, or stress. By identifying and addressing these issues in your operations, you can manage your productivity and safety standards more effectively. See article at right.

Protecting Workers from Effects of Heat

Now that summer is upon us it is a good time to review your Injury and Illness Prevention plan to ensure it addresses Heat Illness Prevention. Studies show effective reduction of heat illness depends on written procedures, access to water, access to cooler areas, acclimatization and weather monitoring, emergency response and employee and supervisor training. See article on page two.

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Behavioral Issues ~ Cause & Action

Complacency

After employees have been on the job for a while, complacency may set in. The employee becomes familiar with the job functions and simply gets into a routine rather than maintaining a focus on the tasks necessary to complete the job. This lack of attention to detail can result in declining productivity, product or equipment damage, and/or employee injury.
Supervisors must be aware of how each employee is functioning within the workplace. When complacency is noted, action must be taken to help the employee return to a focused effort toward the job. Actions that can be taken include talking to the worker, job rotation as part of the job schedule, and training for some workers.

Fatigue

Fatigue can produce devastating consequences in the workplace. Workers experiencing fatigue are more likely to be injured or cause product or equipment damage. The causes can be from worker actions such as staying up to late on a regular basis or from management allowing too many hours to be worked on a shift or in a week.
Management must control fatigue in the workplace. Actions can include sending workers home during the shift for appropriate rest, reducing an employee's hours worked, or disciplinary actions where warranted for actions that can only be controlled by the employee. Communication is a key in controlling this behavioral issue. The employee must know what is expected and the consequences of their actions

Frustration

Conditions at home or in the workplace can result in frustration. Workers demonstrating frustration need counseling by management to attempt to determine the cause of this action. Work related frustration can many times be reduced or eliminated through communications with the work force or on an individual basis or a need for training may be the resolution

Rushing

While some employees simply work at a faster pace than other employees, it is important to understand that rushing may be a different behavioral result. When a worker gets behind or feels the need to increase production because of schedule demands, they begin to rush their work pace. This causes them to lose focus on the total job picture and focus on a limited set of criteria.
This factor can result in increased potential of workplace injuries or accidents and could lead to catastrophic results in worker injuries, product loss, and equipment damage. Management must carefully control rushing in the workplace. Properly communicate any changes in production schedule to reduce an employee's perception that they need to overly hurry up to complete a job. They need to remain focused on the detail work safely.

Information attained from MySafetyPoint.com technical Bulletin

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Factors Leading to Heat Stress

High temperature and humidity; direct sun or heat; limited air movement; physical exertion; poor physical condition; some medicines; inadequate tolerance for hot workplaces; and insufficient water intake can all lead to heat stress.

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. It 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. If a worker shows signs of possible heat stroke, professional medical treatment should be obtained immediately. Until professional medical treatment is available, the worker should be placed in a shady, cool area and the outer clothing should be removed. Douse the worker with cool water and circulate air to improve evaporative cooling. Provide the worker fluids (preferably water) as soon as possible.

• **Heat Exhaustion** is only partly due to exhaustion; it is a result of the combination of excessive heat and dehydration. Signs and symptoms are headache, nausea, dizziness, weakness, thirst, and giddiness. Fainting or heat collapse is often associated with heat exhaustion. 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. Heat cramps have been attributed to an electrolyte imbalance caused by sweating and are normally caused by the lack of water replenishment. It is imperative that workers in hot environments drink water every 15 to 20 minutes and also drink carbohydrate-electrolyte replacement liquids (e.g., sports drinks) to help minimize physiological disturbances during recovery.

• **Heat Rashes** are the most common problem in hot work environments where the skin is persistently wetted by unevaporated sweat. Heat rash looks like a red cluster of pimples or small blisters. It is more likely to occur on the neck and upper chest, in the groin, under the breasts, and in elbow creases. The best treatment for heat rash is to provide a cooler, less humid environment. Keep the affected area dry. Dusting powder may be used to increase comfort, but avoid using ointments or creams—they keep the skin warm and moist and may make the condition worse.

Administrative or work practice controls to offset heat effects

• **Acclimatize workers** by exposing them to work in a hot environment for progressively longer periods.

• **Replace fluids** by providing cool water or any cool liquid (except alcoholic and caffeinated 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.

• **Reduce the physical demands** by reducing physical exertion such as excessive lifting. Use relief workers or assign extra workers, and 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.

• **Monitor workers** who are at risk of heat stress, such as those wearing semi-permeable or impermeable clothing when the temperature exceeds 70°F, while working at high energy levels. Personal monitoring can be done by checking the heart rate, recovery heart rate, and oral temperature.

Information for this article was attained from OSHA Fact Sheet posted on MySafetyPoint.com

Additional Information

• For more information on this, and other health related issues affecting workers, visit OSHA's Web site at www.osha.gov.

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