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Automotive Safety Association

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

Helping you to make your workplace a safe place

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ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

Balconies and Handrails

On a recent visit to an auto repair facility I noticed the hand railing at the entrance to the shop was noticeably loose. After speaking with the owner I advised he notify the property manager immediately. The reason being, should anyone sustain an injury as a result of that loose railing, it will be the shop owner that will first be held financially responsible for any injury related costs. Always better to avoid an issue completely than deal with it after the fact. See article at right for more information and general guidelines.

Lockout - Tagout

Every year over one hundred workers lose their lives as a result of equipment which was not properly de-energized during set-up or repairs. Approximately thirty thousand employees are injured in what are often considered to be preventable accidents.

(see article on page two)

Balconies and Handrails Guidelines

Falls from stairways, ramps and balconies can easily be prevented by installing handrails and guardrails. In most cases, stairs and ramps are part of the means of egress from a building or structure. In normal usage or times of emergency, requirements exist to assure the safe passage of occupants. All means of egress more than 30” above the floor or grade below shall be provided with guardrails to prevent falls over the open side. These would include stairs, ramps and balconies.

Often used interchangeably, handrails and guardrails are not the same. Handrails are used to provide stability and guardrails are used to provide protection.

Some simple requirements to remember for handrails for stairs or ramps include:

- Handrails for stairs and ramps shall be provided on both sides. Stairways less than 44” in width serving apartments and condominiums may have one handrail.
- For existing stairs and ramps, the handrail must be within 44” of the centerline.
- Handrails must be no less than 34” nor more than 38” above the surface of the tread.
- Clearance between the handrail and wall must be at least 1 ½”.
- The handgrip portion of the handrails shall not be less than 1 ¼” nor larger than 2” in diameter.

To prevent falls from elevated walkways, balconies and stairs with open sides, apply these guardrail requirements:

- The top of the guardrail for walkways and balconies shall not be less than 42 inches in height.
- The top of the guardrail for stairs shall not be less than 42” high with handrails placed not less than 34” nor more than 38” above landings and the nosing of treads.
- Guardrails shall have vertical rails or balusters spaced so that no opening is greater than 4” wide.

Keep in mind that these are minimum requirements and maintenance is required to keep these handrails and guardrails in good condition. Regularly check to see if the rails are securely anchored and maintain their structural integrity. Also check the spacing of the baluster and vertical guards. If needed, make repairs immediately. **Visit www.MySafetyPoint.com for more info.**

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Lockout – Tagout, cont.

Many hazardous energy sources such as electrical, mechanical, pneumatic, hydraulic and thermal energy are present during the production of products or building construction. Other less frequent or often overlooked sources of stored energy include power presses.

Lockout of an energy source involves placing a lock on an actuating device, such as a circuit breaker or shutoff valve. This procedure must ensure that the equipment the device controls cannot be started until the lock is removed.
Tagout, on the other hand, is simply placing a tag or label on an isolating device to warn others not to restore energy to the equipment.

Lockout Procedures

Set up a program, publish it and train your employees.

The program can be as simple as providing lockout devices on equipment and assigning workers their own locks. Strict programs may require the worker to obtain the lock from the office and sign a register indicating what equipment is being locked out and when the work will be finished. This allows management to keep track of down equipment.

- Determine which switch will de-energize the equipment.
- Open the switch, preferably with the equipment running as proof that the switch is the right one.
- Attempt to operate the equipment with the normal operating controls.
- Place a padlock on the switch in the open position.
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Use lockout devices that accept more than one padlock if more than one person works on the equipment at any one time. The lockout is placed on the switch in the open position. All padlocks must be removed before the lockout will come off.

There must be only one key for each padlock and it must be kept in the possession of the worker.

Locks and any other equipment required for energy control (chains, blocks, shorting bars, pins, etc.) shall be provided by the employer and must be designated for energy control exclusively. They shall not be used for any other purpose.

The lockout device (padlock) must identify the person who attached it. Where padlocks are controlled through an office, a number can refer back to the log where the worker will be identified.

Check the voltage, short out capacitors, relieve pressure from hydraulic and air systems, place springs in neutral position, etc.

Each worker's lock remains on the switch or lockout device until his/her work is done.

Any work performed on the de-energized equipment must be done with that worker's padlock in place. Do not rely upon someone else's padlock. Do not rely upon the disconnect switch being in sight. Lockout must be used.

Provide a specific procedure for ensuring orderly transfer of control devices from one shift to the next.

Training

Authorized employees must be trained in:

- Hazardous energy source recognition;
- Type and magnitude identification of energy sources.
- Methods and means for isolation and control of energy.
- Affected employees must be instructed on the purpose and use of lockout/tagout procedures.
- Other employees only need instruction on the procedures but not their use. The prohibition on trying to restart equipment that has been locked/tagged out must be emphasized.

Visit www.MySafetyPoint.com for full bulletin

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