

## **SMACNA – OSHA Alliance Renewed**

### OSHA Official Renews Alliance With SMACNA

Edwin G. Foulke Jr., assistant secretary of labor for the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, (OSHA) was a guest speaker at SMACNA's December Council of Chapter Representatives meeting.

Mr. Foulke met briefly with SMACNA President Richard J. Cramer Sr. and SMACNA Director of Safety and Health, Mike McCullion, and together they renewed the original two-year SMACNA/OSHA Alliance for one more year.

"I am proud to stand before you today as OSHA and SMACNA renew our Alliance, which was first signed in August 2004," Mr. Foulke said. "This agreement has focused on developing information, guidance, and access to training resources to help protect employees' health and safety. Over the last two years we have addressed a range of issues, such as motor vehicle safety, fall protection, and personal protective equipment."

In response, SMACNA President Cramer acknowledged, "We are enthusiastic about our ongoing Alliance with OSHA because it ensures continuity and structure for the development of new safety information and tools to make American workplaces safer."

In addition, he explained that "we also welcome the opportunity to share the benefits of the Alliance with our members and chapters by encouraging them to seek partnership efforts with OSHA on a state and local level." For example, state and federal OSHA representatives participated in the 2006 SMACNA Convention Products Show.

Mr. Foulke further noted that ensuring workplace safety also makes good business sense. OSHA data suggests that companies implementing effective safety and health programs can expect to see their injury and illness rates reduced by 20 percent or more. SMACNA's safety survey participants consistently report equally successful safety programs, as the average lost workday incidence rate for respondents is well below industry-wide rates.

Mr. Foulke emphasized his desire to impress upon employers the need to protect their most valuable business asset – their employees. "Do not be afraid to come to us for help and advice," he said. "We should all be on the same side of the law, working toward the same goal: Assuring the safety and health of employees."

"I want to get the message out that the most effective safety and health strategy available is prevention," he

said. “Together, we can make American workplaces the safest, most healthful and most productive in the world.”

## **2007 SMACNA Safety Survey Program**

SMACNA Safety Statistics and Evaluation Award Survey  
Available ON-LINE

The new year means that it is time for the 2007 SMACNA Safety Statistics Evaluation and Awards Program (SSEAP). This annual program is the tool SMACNA uses to obtain valuable information about the safety and health programs of its members, determine winners of the annual safety awards, and provide safety feedback to the membership.

After January 1, 2007, SMACNA members can complete and submit their form online by going to the SMACNA website...easy!

To do so, you must be registered for SMACNA’s “Members Only” Web site. If you haven’t registered for this site, you can do so at <http://www.smacna.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=profile>

Entries can also be submitted by fax or regular mail. Go to the SMACNA website for a “hardcopy” of the survey form.

All entries must be received by May 15, 2007. Please submit your survey early.

First place winners in each man-hour category will be presented with their awards at the SMACNA annual convention in Las Vegas, Nevada. Second place winners and third place winners, and all participants who report zero lost workdays, will have their awards shipped to them.

If you have questions about the SSEAP, please contact Mike McCullion, SMACNA’ Director of Safety and Health by telephone at (703) 995-4027 or by e-mail at ([mmccullion@smacna.org](mailto:mmccullion@smacna.org)).

## **Hexavalent Chromium – Answers to Common Questions**

Answers To Your Most Common Hexavalent Chromium OSHA Standard Questions

The initial hexavalent chromium (hex chrome) standard compliance deadline for most businesses expired on Nov. 27, 2006. SMACNA has posted significant compliance assistance information on the SMACNA Web site safety page at [www.smacna.org/safety](http://www.smacna.org/safety). We also have received numerous phone calls and emails regarding the standard. The following are answers to several frequently asked questions:

Q: Why do I need to be concerned with the hex chrome standard?

A: You need to be concerned if you conduct welding, grinding or cutting on metals that contain chrome. Hex chrome is a chemical by-product generated when “heat” is applied to stainless steel, and to a lesser extent, galvanized steel and chrome-coated metals. In addition, low levels of hex chrome may be an ingredient of the welding rods and wires used in the welding processes. The new standard sets levels of employee exposure to hex chrome.

Q: What do I need to do to be in compliance with the standard?

A: The first step is to conduct a hazard assessment to see if any of your employees may be exposed to hex chrome. Do you weld, grind, or cut metals that contain chrome? Once the assessment is done, you will likely need to conduct personal air monitoring to see if any employee is “overexposed,” e.g. air sample results are above the regulated levels.

Q: What is personal air monitoring?

A: Personal air monitoring is simply placing a small air pump with the proper sampling filter on the employee for an eight hour work shift. The pump draws in air that represents “breathing zone” air. The sample is then sent to a laboratory for analysis. Depending upon the lab, the cost for the analysis is approximately \$100. However, the most substantial cost involves retaining a firm to conduct the air monitoring.

Q: Can I do the air monitoring myself?

A: SMACNA recommends that contractors contact their workers compensation insurance provider or an outside consultant to conduct the air monitoring. Although the sampling is not difficult, there are technical procedures that must be done properly to ensure accurate results (e.g., calibration of the pumps, handling and shipping samples, paperwork, etc.).

NOTE: The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) method for analyzing welding samples has recently been revised. Samples collected on PVC filters must be sent to the lab within 24 hours of collection and the samples must be analyzed within eight days of collection.

SMACNA members are encouraged to evaluate their welding processes and related activities, identify which processes may generate excessive hexavalent chromium fumes and implement a compliance plan. If members have questions or concerns, they may contact Mike McCullion, director of safety and health, at [mmccullion@smacna.org](mailto:mmccullion@smacna.org) or (703) 995-4027.

## OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements

### OSHA Recordkeeping Requirements

Employers are required to post annual OSHA injury and illness recordkeeping summaries from February 1 to April 30. This is a significant change from the prior requirement to post results only for the month of February. Therefore, SMACNA members required to keep OSHA injury and illness records should post their OSHA 300 Log summary for the calendar year 2006 from February 1, 2007 to April 30, 2007.

SMACNA members in need of assistance with OSHA recordkeeping requirements are encouraged to visit the safety and health section of the “members-only” SMACNA website ([www.smacna.org](http://www.smacna.org)) and use the FREE, on-line recordkeeping course. The course is newly revised to contain up-to-date information on OSHA’s requirements.

The OSHA Lof was revised in 2004. Foremost among the changes was the addition of an occupational hearing loss column to OSHA’s Form 300, Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses. The hearing loss column is to be used when an employee’s hearing loss is found to be decreased by a standard threshold shift (STS) of 10 decibels since a previous test.

In addition, one criterion for recording injury and illness cases, including a hearing loss case, is determining if the case is work related. According to OSHA, you must consider an injury or illness to be work-related if an event or exposure in the work environment either caused or contributed to the resulting condition or significantly aggravated a pre-existing injury or illness.

Each hearing loss case will need to be evaluated to determine if the hearing loss resulted totally, or in part, from workplace noise sources. If there is no obvious work environment noise source that caused or contributed to the hearing loss, then the case is not recordable.

Other changes to the recordkeeping form include:

- „X "days away from work" column now comes before the days "on job transfer or restriction",
- „X more clear formulas for calculating incidence rates, and
- „X more prominent column heading "Classify the Case" to make it clear that employers should mark only one selection among the four columns offered.

If you have any questions on OSHA recordkeeping requirements, contact Mike McCullion in the SMACNA Safety and Health Department at 703-995-4027, or [mmccullion@smacna.org](mailto:mmccullion@smacna.org).

## Protecting Workers in Cold Environments

### How To Protect Workers In Cold Environments

In most areas of the country, cold weather has arrived, forcing America's outdoor workers to face yet another brisk challenge to safety and health on the job. To help protect them, SMACNA is reminding employers and employees to avoid prolonged exposure to frigid temperatures.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), "Exposure to cold weather can be more than uncomfortable; it can be dangerous. More than 700 people die of hypothermia each year in the United States. Employers and workers need to know how to defend against hazards of working in extremely cold temperatures."

### Major Risk Factors for Cold-Related Stresses

- Wearing inadequate or wet clothing increases the effects of cold on the body.
- Taking certain drugs or medications such as alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, and medication that inhibits the body's response to the cold or impairs judgment.
- Having a cold or certain diseases, such as diabetes, heart, vascular, and thyroid problems, may make a person more susceptible to the winter elements.
- Becoming exhausted or immobilized, especially due to injury or entrapment, may speed up the effects of cold weather.
- Aging – the elderly are more vulnerable to the effects of harsh winter weather.

### Harmful Effects of Cold

General hypothermia occurs when body temperature falls to a level where normal muscular and cerebral functions are impaired.

Trench foot is caused by long, continuous exposure to a wet, cold environment or actual immersion in water. Any worker who experiences these types of cold, wet environments on a daily basis need to be especially cautious.

Frostbite occurs when the skin tissue actually freezes, causing ice crystals to form between cells and draw water from them, which leads to cellular dehydration.

## Preventing Cold–Related Disorders:

Personal protective clothing is perhaps the most important step in fighting the elements and is providing adequate layers of insulation from them. Footgear should be insulated to protect against cold and dampness.

Safe Work Practices, such as changes in work schedules and practices, are necessary to combat the effects of exceedingly cold weather. Always permit employees to set their own pace and take extra work breaks when needed. Reduce, as much as possible, the number of activities performed outdoors.

Educate employees to the symptoms of cold–related stresses – heavy shivering, uncomfortable coldness, severe fatigue, drowsiness, or euphoria. The quiet symptoms of potentially deadly cold–related ailments often go undetected until the victim's health is endangered. Knowing the facts on cold exposure and following a few simple guidelines can ensure that this season is a safe and healthy one.

The Center for Disease Control (CDC) has information on cold environments at the following internet link: <http://www.cdc.gov/elcosh/docs/d0400/d000420/d000420.html>

For more information on working in cold environments, contact Mike McCullion, SMACNA's director of safety and health at 703–995–4027 or [mmccullion@smacna.org](mailto:mmccullion@smacna.org).

## **SMACNA Safety and Health Department Products and Services**

### SMACNA Safety and Health Products and Services

If you attended the 2006 SMACNA Convention breakout session on Managing Safety During High Levels of Productivity, you heard Mr. Michael Topf discuss how safety issues can differ in times of high productivity. Throughout the year, no matter how “productive” your firm is, the SMACNA Safety and Health Department is available to assist all members with implementing and improving company safety and health programs. A variety of products and services are available to individual members and/or chapters.

SMACNA has many safety and health products available. In the past years, SMACNA has developed numerous manuals on important topics such as Fall Protection, Respiratory Protection, Environmental Risk Management, Scaffold Compliance, and Hazard Communication Toolbox Talks.

Did you know that ALL current SMACNA safety and health manuals are available in “PDF” for free download from the Members Only–Safety webpage of the SMACNA website? In addition, these manuals are also available in “hardcopy” for a minimal cost to SMACNA members.

Recent SMACNA products, and ones under development, include an on–line OSHA Recordkeeping Course (newly updated), Service and Construction Vehicle Safety “tip cards”, Heat Stress Training pamphlets, and Personal Protective Equipment information cards. OSHA compliance information on the new OSHA standard for Hexavalent Chromium is available on the SMACNA safety webpage.

Through a cooperative agreement with SMOHIT, the Sheet Metal Occupational Health Institute Trust, many safety and health training aids developed by SMOHIT are available from SMACNA.

Toolbox talk booklets, user–friendly CDs, and high quality DVDs present significant information on topics such as Confined Space Entry, Powder Actuated Tools, Welding Safety and Health, and Physical Stress Management.

The main safety and health services provided by SMACNA are short training courses on a variety of topics and issues. Examples of training include full or half-day Supervisor Safety Training, half-day training on OSHA Inspections and Compliance Issues, or an executive level presentation on Safety Cultures of High Performing Contractors. Several chapters including the Bay Area, Orange Empire, St. Louis, and New York City have taken advantage of these training opportunities with excellent feedback from attendees.

For more information on safety and health products and services, contact Mike McCullion, director of safety and health, at 703-995-4027 or [mmccullion@smacna.org](mailto:mmccullion@smacna.org).

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