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Public Sector Safety Report, Spring 2000

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Public Sector Enforcement

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Public Sector

S A F E T Y R E P O R T

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Free Help with Safety and Health for Public Sector Workplaces

Safe Spring Clean-up

Public sector workers, both on the job and at home, are in the process of cleaning up from winter. Spring cleaning involves a number of tasks, including sweeping left over sand and gravel by hand or power broom, chipping downed branches, cutting up downed trees, and removing other debris. All of these tasks require the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Following are brief descriptions of some of the PPE needed for outdoor clean-up:

Power or hand brooms - Since sand and other road debris is dry, it is important to wear a filter face mask to reduce exposure from silica and other air borne dusts. Wear hearing protection and eye protection when using power brooms.

Chain saws - Wear a hard hat with face protection, hearing protection, leather gloves, cut resistant chaps, and cut resistant boots.

Chippers - Wear a hard hat with face protection, gloves, and hearing protection.

When working near or on roads, always wear reflective vests and display clearly visible warning signs.

The operator of any equipment should understand how the safety devices on the machine work, how to operate the machine properly, and the importance of wearing PPE. Whether on the job or at home, there is NO excuse for not wearing PPE.

For more information on personal protective equipment or other safety and health concerns, please contact **SafetyWorks!** at 1-877-SAFE-345. A program of the Maine Department of Labor, SafetyWorks! has several voluntary programs that are available to you at no cost. SafetyWorks! staff visit only at your request and cannot issue fines or citations.

- Consultation - SafetyWorks! specialists can visit your workplace to identify hazards and help you control or eliminate them.
- Training - The occupational safety and health specialists from SafetyWorks! can come to your workplace to train staff on a variety of workplace safety and health topics, including personal protective equipment, hazard communication, ergonomics, machine guarding, bloodborne pathogens, and many others.
- Safety Committees - SafetyWorks! can help you organize a safety committee.
- Noise and Air Quality Testing - Industrial hygienists can help you identify and correct problems with air quality and excessive noise.
- Occupational Safety Loan Program - Through the Finance Authority of Maine, the Department of Labor offers loans of up to \$50,000 at 3% interest for workplace safety improvements.

To take advantage of these resources, call SafetyWorks! toll-free at 1-877-SAFE-345.

The Maine Board of Occupational Safety and Health:

- has adopted the 1999 OSHA regulations for general industry (29 CFR 1910) and for construction (29 CFR 1910), and
- will adopt rules to strengthen protection against bloodborne pathogens. The new rules will be at least as protective as the new OSHA Directive CPL 2-2.44D, which can be found on OSHA's web page: <http://www.osha.gov>.

Regulations and compliance assistance for Maine public sector workplaces can be found on the internet at <http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/newpsw.htm>

Return Service Requested

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The Public Sector Safety Report is issued quarterly to inform public sector employers and employees on safety and health enforcement issues. Published by the Maine Department of Labor, the compliance and enforcement agency for occupational safety and health regulations for public sector workplaces in Maine.

Please post this Report to share the information with employees.

To be added to the mailing list, or to make address corrections, send information to *Public Sector Safety Report*, MDOL, 45 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333-0045, fax to (207) 624-6449 or e-mail at webmaster_bls@state.me.us. TTY 1-800-794-1110.