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Public Sector Safety Report, Fall 1999

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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New Respiratory Protection Standard in Effect

The Respiratory Protection Standard for Maine public sector workplaces became effective October 1, 1999. By November 1, 1999, each employer who is affected must have a written respiratory protection plan in place. By August 2, 2000, full compliance is expected. Information about the standard, including sample forms, checklists, and policies to help employers comply can be found on the internet at <http://janus.state.me.us/labor/bls/respstd.htm>.

Videotape on Respirator Fit-testing Available

Employers are responsible for fit-testing respirators for each user, whether the user is paid or volunteer. A videotape on respirator fit-testing may be borrowed at no charge from the Bureau of Labor Standards. Please call 624-6400 for information.

Public Sector Enforcement Officers Enforce Computer Safety Law

Under Maine Law, employees who use computers four or more hours a day must be trained how to work safely on the computer. This training must occur within the first month after hiring and on an annual basis. In recent months, Public Sector Enforcement Officers have cited a variety of workplaces for failure to comply with this law. For a copy of the Video Display Terminal Law, the notice employers must post, or a booklet on computer safety, call 624-6400.

New Web Page for Public Sector Safety and Health

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

Applying Heat to Equipment Being Worked on Can be Unsafe

According to the U.S. Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), three workers died this year while using heat to assist with repairs on heavy equipment. MSHA recommends the following:

- DO NOT use heat or open flame where lubricants, oil, or grease are present.
- DO NOT use heat or open flame where there is a fire or explosion hazard.
- NEVER apply a heat source to a tire rim/hub until the tire has been removed from the hub assembly.
- Staff required to service tire and rims need tire and rim safety training.
- Before heating components refer to the equipment manual or contact the manufacturer for special safety precautions.

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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 enforcement agency for occupational safety and health regulations for public sector workplaces in Maine.

Please post the Report to share this 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.