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SafetyWorks! Newsletter for a Safer Workplace, Fall/Winter 2006

Maine Department of Labor

Maine Bureau of Labor Standards

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Carbon Monoxide Hidden Dangers
by Dale W. Siulinski, Industrial Hygienist, Occupational Health Specialist

Most of us are familiar with the chemical properties and potential dangers associated with exposure to carbon monoxide (CO) gas. It’s these same chemical properties that create a false sense of security and prevent its presence from being a “clear and present danger.” Don’t let it fool you!

Carbon monoxide is a colorless, odorless gas that kills 500 people every year from accidental poisoning. Long-term exposures to low or moderate concentrations of carbon monoxide can pose serious health consequences. Carbon monoxide enters the body through the lungs and prevents oxygen from being delivered to the blood. Carbon monoxide is created when fuels burn incompletely. Many fuels can produce carbon monoxide including, but not limited to, wood, oil, gasoline, natural gas, kerosene and propane.

The opportunity for exposure and health problems increases as winter sets in. Improper use of a generator, improperly vented appliances or wood stoves, and idling vehicles stuck in deep snow all present a risk of exposure to CO. The symptoms of exposure may include headache, fatigue, shortness of breath, dizziness, nausea and vomiting. Your occupation (forklift operator, auto mechanic) or lifestyle (cigarette smoker) may increase your chances of carbon monoxide poisoning.

To keep yourself safe, follow these precautions:

- During a power outage, operate a generator, camp stove or grill WELL AWAY from your workplace or home, NOT in the basement or the garage. EVEN WITH AN OPEN WINDOW OR DOOR, carbon monoxide gas can enter the building.
- Never operate a vehicle in an enclosed garage or outside near an open window or door.
- Ensure that all fuel-burning appliances or stoves are installed by a professional and are properly vented to the outside, away from air intakes. Have them inspected/maintained by a professional regularly.
- Install carbon monoxide detectors in your home or workplace that are equipped with a battery back-up and ensure that they are working. Remember, carbon monoxide detectors are not a replacement for proper installation and use of fuel-burning appliances.
- If you experience symptoms, move to fresh air immediately and see a physician.

For more information, call SafetyWorks! at 1-877-SAFE-345. More information can also be found at www.OSHA.gov or www.cdc.gov/NIOSH.
Using the Research & Statistics Unit...Have We Got a Profile for You?

Theodore E. Bradstreet, Research & Planning Associate II

The Research and Statistics Unit (R&S) of the Bureau of Labor Standards collects information on occupational injuries and illnesses from a variety of sources. Principal among these are: Maine Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB) First Reports of Injury (FROI). The statistics generated here are based upon data from reported claims resulting in one or more days of lost time beyond the day of injury.


U. S. Bureau of Labor Statistics Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI). The CFOI program collects fatality data according to CFOI program guidelines. To be included in CFOI, a fatality must be the result of an incident that occurs while the victim is in work status and is subject to verification standards.

Drawing on these and other data, R&S can provide, AT NO COST:

✓ An easy-to-use profile of your company’s workers’ compensation claims for the past ten years showing types and causes of injuries leading to lost time.
✓ State and National injury profiles for your industry.
✓ Special profiles focused on particular variables such as injury type or occupation.

To request a profile: Call (207) 624-6447 or e-mail Steven.P.Laundrie@Maine.gov

We will mail or fax the profiles to you within seven working days. R&S does ask that, in return, you participate in a short confidential interview after you receive the data. This is intended to let R&S know how useful the profiles have been and how the service can be improved. PLEASE NOTE: A company-specific profile will be provided only to officials of that company subject to verification by R&S upon receipt of the request.

Also, publications based on each of the data types held by R&S can be found on the Web at: www.Maines.gov/labor/labor_stats/research.html

Dealing with Mold Exposure

Molds are microscopic organisms found everywhere in the environment, indoors and outdoors. When present in large quantities, molds have the potential to cause adverse health effects. Some health effects include sneezing, runny nose, eye irritation, cough and congestion, aggravation of asthma, and skin rashes. People with the greatest risk are individuals with allergies, asthma, sinusitis or other lung diseases, and individuals with weakened immune systems.

You can recognize mold as it usually appears as colored wooly mats and smells foul, musty, or earthy. Removing excess moisture with a wet-dry vacuum to dry out the room as quickly as possible can prevent mold growth. Clean all wet surfaces or materials with detergent and water. Discard all water damaged materials and porous materials that have been wet for more than 48 hours.

General tips for cleaning mold include: identifying and correcting source of moisture, keep well ventilated, discard mold damaged materials in plastic bags, clean areas with detergent and water, and disinfect cleaned surface with a 1/4 to 1 1/2 cup household bleach to 1 gallon of water. Don’t mix bleach with ammonia. Recommend wearing a N-95 respirator and use hand and eye protection.

Source: OSHA Quick Card publication #3263-09N-05

2006 SHARP Awards

Congratulations...

to the following 2006 Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program recipients. The following Maine employers and employees are leading their industries by implementing effective safety and health programs.

Fraser Timber of Ashland & Masardis
Marden’s of Calais, Ellsworth and Presque Isle
Limington Lumber of East Baldwin
Robbins Lumber of Searsmont
The Hinckley Company of Trenton

To learn more about the benefits of being awarded SHARP, please contact us 1-877-SAFE-345 or visit our website. Your company could be listed here next year.

Remember...Safety is no accident.
IMPORTANT NOTICE!
The Maine Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Standards, has jurisdiction and responsibility to investigate serious injuries and fatalities of public sector employees.

If there is a fatality or an incident which causes one or more public sector employees to be admitted to a medical facility overnight, the Bureau of Labor Standards shall be notified. Serious injuries must be reported within 24 hours and a death must be reported within 8 hours.

Weekdays Normal Working Hours
8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Call (207) 624-6400
or toll-free at 1-877-723-3345

Non Business Hours (Emergency Only Pager)
(207) 750-1852

Do Your Employees Work In or Near the Roadway?
Working in or near traffic could be the most serious hazard employees are exposed to on the job!

If you have a Public Works, Highway, Water, Sewer, Fire, EMS or Police Department, ask your department heads if they are up to date on all employee’s training for work zones and traffic control.

All employees need to have safety training for the hazards they will likely encounter. There are different regulatory standards that apply depending on the task: Fire and EMS fall under the newly passed 29-A MSRA § 2091 2. All others, public works, highway, water, sewer, and police departments, fall under 29CFR1926.21(b)(2) and various Department of Transportation standards.

Call the Bureau of Labor Standards for guidance at (207) 624-6400 or SafetyWorks! toll-free 1-877-SAFE-354.

Public Sector Compliance Directives: Current, New & Updated

Compliance Directives describe how the Bureau of Labor Standards will enforce the occupational safety and health standards in Maine public sector workplaces. To download copies of the compliance directives go to www.maine.gov/labor/workplace_safety/compliancedirectives/index.html. Check periodically for new additions or revisions.

3-02 Chainsaw Personal Protective Equipment
4-02 Electrical Wiring-Protection from Mechanical Damage
5-02 Hazardous Materials Response Training First Responder Awareness Level
6-03 Firefighter, Law Enforcement, EMS Required Training Interchange
7-02 Fire Department Training Records
8-05 Public Sector Respiratory Protection Standard
9-05 EMS - BLS Enforcement Checklist Revised 7/06
10-05 Fire Department - BLS Enforcement Checklist Revised 7/06
11-05 Law Enforcement – BLS Enforcement Checklist Revised 7/06
12-05 Public Works/Water Districts/Sewer Districts/Sanitary Districts – BLS Enforcement Check list Revised 7/06
13-05 Educational Facilities – BLS Enforcement Checklist Revised 7/06
14-05 Town Office – BLS Enforcement Inspection Checklist Revised 7/06
15-05 Recreation Department – BLS Enforcement Checklist Revised 7/06
16-05 Chemical Hygiene Officer
17-05 Transfer Station / Recycling Facility – BLS Enforcement Checklist Revised 7/06
18-06 Library – BLS Enforcement Inspection Checklist New 7/06
19-06 Emergency Scene Traffic Control New 7/06
20-06 Electrical Installations – Public Sector New 9/06

Visit our web site at www.safetyworksmaine.com
The Three Ps--Tips for Safe Winter Driving

Prepare for the trip: Maintain your car by checking the battery and tire tread, keep windows clear, put no-freeze fluid in the washer reservoir, and check antifreeze levels. Have on hand a flashlight, jumper cables, abrasive material (sand or kitty litter for traction), small shovel, snow/ice brush, and blankets. If your car stops or stalls, stay with your car, don’t over exert, wait for help, and turn on hazard lights and dome light. Make sure exhaust pipe is clear and only run car long enough to keep warm. Don’t idle for a long time with windows up or in an enclosed place. Plan your route and check weather reports. Let people know your expected route, expected arrival time, and leave early depending on weather.

Protect yourself: Buckle up and if possible sit 10 inches from an air bag. Be familiar with pumping brakes or anti-lock brakes in your vehicle and what happens if you stomp on them. Steer into skids.

Prevent crashes on the road: Slow down and increase distance between vehicles. Keep an eye open for pedestrians walking in the road. Avoid fatigue by getting enough sleep before your trip, take rest breaks every three hours in a safe place, and rotate drivers if possible. Most of all never mix driving with drugs and alcohol.

Source: National Highway Traffic Administration

Employers: Discover all the ways that the Maine CareerCenters, 22 locations statewide, can work for you. Advertise your job openings to thousands of active job seekers statewide at no cost to you! With years of proven experience in providing assistance to Maine employers, we can do the work to find the resources to make your business succeed. Whether it’s accessing monies to train your current employees, or finding qualified employees for your business, we look forward to assisting you.

To find out more, call 1-888-457-8883 or visit our website at www.mainecareercenter.com

From the Director

The SafetyWorks! Training Institute in Fairfield is proving to be a real asset to our SafetyWorks! program. The increased ability to provide real hands-on training is really exciting. The newest addition is a confined space entry prop. Now rather than just talk about confined space rescue, students can conduct air sampling and practice rescues with gas meters and a tripod. This is a real upgrade in the learning experience. Look for more of these enhancements in the future.

Maine is one of the “oldest” states in the nation. As the workforce matures, employers are faced with different needs from older workers. This is a challenge the Department of Labor knows well, as more than 60% of the MDOL employees will be eligible to retire in the next five years. If you’re an employer in the same boat, check out our new course—The Challenges of an Aging Workforce. For more information, check out the SafetyWorks! website. While you’re there ask our experts a question or make a suggestion for future training.

William Peabody, Director
Bureau of Labor Standards

Visit our web site at www.safetyworksmaine.com