EDITORIAL

ISHM just completed a move into larger office spaces. While still very modest the new ‘digs’ will allow us to better serve you.

We try to use this newsletter, on occasion, to generate comments about a particular subject. In some cases we get some interesting replies and several times we have been taken to task about something we wrote. Great!!! In order to grow professionally we must step away from the day-to-day activities and think outside the box, Challenge and be Challenged. During the many years that we visited job sites and workplaces to review safety policies and practices we came across several with banners proclaiming “Safety is Number One!!!” We always took exception to that because we believed that in the final analysis ‘dollars’ were number one. That is why we keep saying and preaching and pontificating that safety professionals need to be bi-lingual. Not only must we speak safety but we must also speak dollars. The top levels of management do not understand the intricacies of safety but they darn sure understand dollars and bottom line. The other day we were googling (Yikes, it appears we no longer do searching) safety and came across an article that parrots our position. This will be ITEM ONE in the newsletter. Let us know what you think. Appropriate replies will be printed in the next newsletter.

Yours,

Curtis
While googling safety I came across Mike Rowe Works Scrap Yard. Mike Rowe is the host of “Dirty Jobs” on the Discovery channel. Mike received an email regarding a recent episode.

My husband works on the oilrigs as a well tester. We watched you folks do so without any eye protection! Are you crazy? Drilling a hole with no protective eyewear? Between him, a well tester, and me, a workers’ compensation lawyer, we’re cringing! Somebody could LOSE AN EYE! Seriously – Safety First, fellas! I would expect better from the Discovery Channel!! — suzemommy

Mike’s reply started with:

I sincerely appreciate your concern for me, and agree that stupidity plays an ongoing role in my professional and personal life. But believe me, I have no wish to be injured on the job. However, it is not the objective of Dirty Jobs to conform to any particular set of safety standards, other than those dictated by the people for whom I happen to be working at the time. I take my cues from them, and I assume whatever risk they assume, for the most part. In the end, we hope to capture an honest look at what life is like for the workers in a particular venue. We do not aspire to set an example, or be a poster child for OSHA or any particular industry. I realize that my sound controversial, but it’s the truth, and not nearly as inflammatory as what I’m going to say next. Ready?

Now Mike gets into what I have been saying for years.
Of all the platitudes automatically embraced in the workplace – and there are many – there is none more pervasive, erroneous, overused, and dangerous, than “Safety First!” in my opinion.

I have heard this slogan countless times. I have seen it emblazoned on banners, T-shirts and hats. I have sat through mandatory briefings and slideshows and presentations designed to “protect me from the hazards at hand.” And I have listened as safety officers and foreman have run down list after list of OSHA requirements, all apparently construed to remind me that nothing is more important to the employer than my own well-being. What a load of unmitigated nonsense.

In the jobs I have seen thus far, I can tell you with certainty, that safety, while always a major consideration, is never the priority. Never. Never, ever. Not even once.

Next Mike talks about his opinion on the subject.

Is it important? Of course. But is it more important than getting the job done? No. Not even close. Making money is more important than safety – always – and it’s very dangerous in my opinion to ignore that. When we start to believe that someone else is more concerned about our own safety than we are, we become complacent, and then, we get careless. When a business tells you that they are more concerned with your safety than anything else, beware. They are not being honest. They are hedging their own bets, and following the advice of lawyers hired to protect them from lawsuits arising from accidents.

You are correct to suggest that wearing safety glasses would have made the task at hand safer. But why stop there? Wearing a helmet would have made it safer still. And wearing a steel mesh shark-suit would have made it really, super safe.

I know that sounds glib, and I know that many will wish to scold me for appearing cavalier. But really, I’m not. In a car, I wear a safety belt. On a motorcycle, I wear a helmet. Not because it’s the law, but because it seems a reasonable precaution. And ultimately, the only one responsible for my own safety is me. (Besides, if the government were really concerned with my safety above all else, wouldn’t they drop the legal speed limit to 30 miles an hour and make cars out of rubber?)
Again, you’re right – I probably should have been wearing safety glasses, not because safety is first, but because I like to hedge my bets.

We can always be safer. We can always assume less risk. But if safety were really first, I wouldn’t travel at all, or engage in any activity that required me to assume any risk. And I certainly wouldn’t be hosting Dirty Jobs.

Mike

This brought about a lot of comments. Some of them quite thought provoking. In fact they are causing me to rethink my hardline on the subject and perhaps modify it somewhat. Yup, be challenged! It was quite interesting to read the opinions on both sides of the subject. Interesting and educational.

You can find it all at: http://www.mikeroweworks.com/2009/03/safety-first-or-just-in-the-top-3/

Let us know what you think.

The views I express here are mine only and not the views or opinions of ISHM.

SECTION TWO- Accident investigation procedures by Jan Rosenberg

Accident investigation procedures are initiated when someone is injured or property is damaged. Accident investigation procedures are a very important part of an effective safety management program. Investigation of all accidents, whether minor and major, can help identify the root causes and set up proper control measures to avoid accident recurrence.

The depth and complexity of the investigation will vary with the circumstances and seriousness of the accident. However, finding the underlying or root cause of the accident is crucial to making the process effective. If the accident investigation reveals that someone tripped and fell because of a floor hazard, we know that the floor
hazard is the immediate cause. The root cause of the floor hazard can be found somewhere in a breakdown of the safety management system.

The accident investigation process needs to have a structure to it to achieve an effective result. Providing such structure helps to insure consistency in the process.

The first priority whenever an accident occurs is to deal with the emergency and ensure that any injuries or illnesses receive prompt medical attention. Once things are stabilized, it is important that the accident investigation process be started as soon as possible after the accident occurs to allow for the most detailed and complete reporting while the accident is fresh in the minds of witnesses and physical evidence is best preserved.

The investigator needs to collect as much information as they can about the accident and related events. Workers who were involved in the accident, others who may have witnessed the accident and supervisors are great information sources.

Conducting thorough interviews, taking photos, and diagramming the accident scene are very important in the information gathering process. Focus should be maintained on gathering information by asking what, who, where, when, why and how the accident occurred.

Analyzing the information that has been collected related to the accident then needs to be done in order to clearly understand why the accident happened. It is at this point that a determination can be made as to whether unsafe conditions or actions, either separately or in combination, were contributing factors.

Once the analysis has identified the contributing factors, action can then be taken to control or eliminate the conditions and/or actions that caused the accident. Such actions need to be clearly targeted to prevent recurrence of the accident. It is at this point that breakdowns in the safety management system are addressed.
Well defined and properly executed accident investigation procedures are one of the most important aspects of any safety management program. Preventing accident recurrence demonstrates that the accident investigation process is of great value in a well-functioning safety management program.

SECTION THREE– SAFEGUARDING YOUR VALUABLES WHILE AT WORK

The following information contains suggestions on reducing the potential for THEFT in the WORKPLACE

AT YOUR WORKSTATION:

- Keep your purse or wallet with you or locked in a secure drawer or cabinet
- If a theft occurs or is discovered, call the Protective Services Department immediately
- Lock all money in a secure desk or cabinet
- When someone enters your area you are unfamiliar with, make a habit to inspect ID badges
- Memorize combinations and passwords- don’t write them down around your workstation
- Never put an identifying tag on a key ring---if you lose your keys it’s an open invitation to thieves
- Report doors and windows that won’t lock or shut properly
- You and your co-workers may want to establish an Office Watch Program
- Challenge wandering visitors roaming the halls and escort them to the right office
- Watch out for “head poppers” who open wrong doors and pretend to be looking for a certain office
- Lock all offices that are regularly unoccupied
- Be discreet- don’t advertise that you are carrying large amounts of money or credit cards
- When you must work before or after business hours, keep your doors locked if possible
- If you are the last to leave at night, secure all computer systems, critical files and doors- stay alert and aware of your surroundings

IN YOUR VEHICLE:
- Never leave valuables in plain sight- place all change, CD’s, MP-3 players, bags, laptops, suitcases, or anything that looks inviting in your glove box or trunk- especially GPS devices, they are one of the top items being stolen from vehicles in Broward County right now

SECTION FOUR – Important dates for ISHM

The following dates are important events for ISHM

April 20,21, 22 Test Question Workshop in Las Vegas
June 3 Test Question Workshop Denver
June 3, 4, 5 ASSE EXPO Denver
October 22, 23, 24 NSC EXPO Orlando