

This issue of the Construction Depot begins the new year with an important theme: A productive, safe workplace is possible only when employees feel free to share information with their employers. John Hofer's article describes why it's essential to keep the lines of communication open and highlights employees' rights to report hazards. In this issue you'll also meet Jane Kirby, OR-OSHA's new Resource Center librarian. Need help finding an NFPA rule, an ANSI standard, or an obscure journal article? Jane will help you. Did you know that OR-OSHA has a new bilingual English-Spanish safety training program that covers excavation, fall protection, ladder/scaffold safety, and other construction-related subjects? See Page 2 for details.

Keep the lines of communication open

By John Hofer, OR-OSHA Appeals Manager

Employee participation is essential to workplace safety because important information about hazards and unsafe conditions comes from those who do the work – employees. Employee participation is also essential for the success of a safety committee; a successful safety committee keeps the lines of communication open between employees and employers.

Also essential to a safe workplace and a successful safety committee is the sharing of information between employees and employers. Employees will share information only when they believe that they can tell their employers about workplace concerns without fear of retaliation. Employees who fear retaliation won't participate or share information and employers won't know about their concerns. The result can be costly workplace accidents and injuries. "No one can put in his best performance unless he feels secure... Secure means without fear, not afraid to express ideas, not afraid to ask questions," writes W. Edwards Deming, the great American management philosopher, in his book, "Out of the Crisis" (Page 59).

The state of Oregon recognizes that employee participation is essential to workplace safety and encourages employees to report unsafe and unhealthful conditions to their employers without fear of retaliation. ORS 654.062(1) states that "every employee should notify the employer of any violation of law, regulation or standard pertaining to safety and health in the place of employment when the violation comes to the knowledge of the employee."

If you believe that your employer has retaliated or discriminated against you for reporting a workplace hazard or unsafe condition, you can file a complaint with the commissioner of the Bureau of Labor and Industries. You should immediately contact one of the Bureau of Labor and Industries Intake Offices below. You have only 30 days from the date of the alleged discrimination to file a complaint.

Bureau of Labor and Industries Intake Offices:

- Bend, (541) 322-2435
- Eugene, (541) 686-7623
- Medford, (541) 776-6270
- Pendleton, (541) 276-7884
- Portland, (503) 731-4200 / TTD: (503) 731-4106
- Salem, (503) 378-3292

We want to come home safely after work and we should feel free to report workplace hazards and unsafe conditions without fear of retaliation. Antidiscrimination is an important part of keeping the lines of communication open.

Speak up when you spot a workplace hazard or see someone working unsafely. This poem by Don Merrell reflects how speaking up about unsafe practices can save a life.

I CHOSE TO LOOK THE OTHER WAY

*I could have saved a life that day,
But chose to look the other way.
It wasn't that I didn't care,
I had the time and I was there,
But I didn't want to seem the fool,
Or argue over a safety rule.*

*I knew he'd done the job before,
If I called it wrong he might get sore.
The chances didn't seem that bad,
I've done the same, he knew I had.
So I shook my head and walked on by,
He knew the risks as well as I.
He took a chance, I closed an eye,
And with that act I let him die.*

*I could have saved a life that day,
But chose to look the other way.
Now every time I see his wife,
I'll know I should have saved his life.
That guilt is something I must bear,
But it isn't something I need to share.*

*If you see the risk that others take,
That puts their health and life at stake,
The question asked, or the thing you say,
Could help them live another day.*

*If you see the risk and walk away,
Then hope you never have to say,
I could have saved a life that day,
But chose to look the other way.*

– Don Merrell, J.R. Simplot Company

PESO: a new bilingual training program for construction safety

OR-OSHA and several construction-industry partners have developed a new bilingual English/Spanish safety program that helps employers train their employees when language may be a barrier.

The 11 training modules in PESO (Oregon Occupational Safety and Health Program in Spanish) include five general safety subjects, five subjects specific to construction work, and a how-to guide that educates employers about different styles of delivering information to employees. General safety subjects include accident investigation, hazard identification, hazard communication, material handling, and safety committees. Construction-specific subjects include excavation, fall protection, health in construction, and ladder/scaffold safety.

The PESO program makes it simple for employers to train employees. Each set of pages of the training curriculum is identical — English text is on the left side, Spanish text on the right side. Each module can easily be taught on-site in less than an hour. Accompanying “tailgate sheets” summarize key points.



You can easily download PESO modules from the OR-OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org. OR-OSHA also offers a 30,000-word English/Spanish and Spanish/English workplace safety and health dictionary on the Web site.

I'm OR-OSHA's new Resource Center librarian, Jane Kirby

By Jane Kirby

I recently watched a home-improvement television show to pass the time while I folded laundry. Somewhat distracted by the mass of unmatched socks in front of me, I heard the narrator say, “Our roofing shingles were unexpectedly delivered today. Since the roofers weren’t on the job site yet, I had our carpenters take the delivery.” I looked up to see images of a crane delivering pallets of shingles to the crew perched precariously on the highest point of the roof.

“Wait a minute!” I thought, “What are they doing?” The crew looked uncomfortable handling their awkward load and I could see nothing to stop them from falling to the ground, two stories below.

A year ago I probably wouldn’t have noticed anything wrong with those images, but as a new OR-OSHA employee, I know better. Information helps us perceive situations in new ways. I could see how a few minutes saved on the job might have meant injury or death to one of those carpenters on the roof.

At the OR-OSHA Resource Center, we specialize in providing information to help prevent accidents and save lives.

We offer publications, CD-ROMs, books, and videos to help keep your construction workplace safe and healthful. They are available free or at a modest price so that employers can easily afford current and accurate information.

Our Resource Center staff is dedicated to working behind the scenes to help you make your worksite run safely and effectively. Beverly Anderson, our secretary, provides OR-OSHA publications, CD-ROMs, and other materials dedicated to safe work practices. Don Harris, our video librarian, knows the OR-OSHA collection exceptionally well and can recommend the most appropriate video for your safety meeting or employee training. I am looking forward to answering your research questions and providing documentation, standards, and journal articles you need for your workplace-safety projects.

The Resource Center is located in the basement of the Labor and Industries Building. Office hours are 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Stop by or visit us on the Web, www.orosha.org, for an online catalog of our publications and videos. Online ordering is available for your convenience.

Hearing-loss column added to OSHA 300 log

Federal OSHA made several changes to the 2004 OSHA Form 300, *Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses*, most significant of which was the addition of an occupational-hearing-loss column. Beginning January 1, 2004, when you enter a recordable hearing-loss case on the OSHA 300 Log, you must check the hearing-loss column.

A recordable hearing-loss case meets the following criteria:

- The employee's hearing test (audiogram) shows that the employee has a work-related standard threshold shift in hearing in one or both ears. [A standard threshold shift is a change of an average 10 decibels (dB) or more in hearing threshold relative to the baseline audiogram at 2,000, 3,000, and 4,000 Hz in either ear.]

- The employee's total hearing level is 25 dB or more above audiometric zero (averaged at 2,000, 3,000, and 4,000 Hz) in the same ear as the standard threshold shift. [Audiometric zero is the lowest sound-pressure level that the average young adult with normal hearing can hear.]

You'll find a downloadable 2004 OSHA Form 300 and complete instructions under *Publications* on OR-OSHA's Web site: www.orosha.org. You'll find OR-OSHA's recordkeeping and reporting requirements in Division 1, 437-001-0700.

Construction happenings

December 2, 2003: DPR Construction receives VPP safety recognition

The Department of Consumer and Business Services recognized DPR Construction of Portland for its commitment to workplace safety and health December 2. DPR Construction was awarded "VPP Star" status by OR-OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) for creating a "zero-injury environment" for construction work under way at the expansion of the Ronler Acres semiconductor facility in Hillsboro. To achieve VPP status, a worksite must have a three-year average injury and illness rate that is at or below the rates of other employers within their industry. For more information about VPP, contact Mark Hurliman, VPP coordinator, (503) 947-7437.

May 12, 2004: Safety Break for Oregon

This one-day event raises awareness and highlights the value of workplace safety in preventing injuries and illnesses. *Safety Break for Oregon* is a partnership between OR-OSHA and Oregon employers. For more information about the *Safety Break for Oregon*, contact Kevin Weeks, (503) 947-7428.

OR-OSHA offers ergonomics-in-construction training

OR-OSHA and construction-industry partners are offering free training to prevent construction-related overexertion injuries. Dates and locations:

January 20 in Salem

Labor and Industries Building, Training Room C
350 Winter Street NE
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

February 3 in Portland

Sheet Metal Workers Training Center, Room 221
2379 NE 178th Avenue
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

March 11 in Beaverton

Portland Community College Capital Center
18624 NW Walker Road
1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

For more information, call (503) 947-7443 or toll-free within Oregon, (888) 292-5247, Option 2. To register, fax your request on company letterhead to (503) 947-7462 or sign up on the OR-OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org under *Education*.

Sign up for OR-OSHA's electronic notification service

Want to be the first to know about new OR-OSHA publications, proposed rules, and more?

Sign up for OR-OSHA's free electronic notification service. It takes just four mouse clicks on OR-OSHA's Web page:

1. Click *Publications* at www.orosha.org.
2. Click *E-mail notification service*.
3. Click *Sign up for our e-mail notification service*.
4. Click *New user and fill out the new-user profile*.

After you've signed up, OR-OSHA will send e-mail notices to you about new publications, proposed changes to rules, fact sheets, and video library offerings. This service helps you control the information you receive from Oregon OSHA and contact us easily by e-mail with questions or comments.

OR-OSHA

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A newsletter for the construction industry

QUARTERLY

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*If you have questions about the information in **Construction Depot**, please contact Ellis Brasch ellis.k.brasch@state.or.us or call (503) 947-7399.*

For general information, technical answers or information about Oregon OSHA services, please call (503) 378-3272 or toll-free within Oregon, (800) 922-2689.

For a color version of *Construction Depot* and related occupational-safety-and-health information, visit the OR-OSHA Web site, www.orosha.org.