



Communicating across cultures

Closing the language gap in safety

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Nominations for the 2011 GOSH Awards

are now being accepted in categories for organizations and individuals who make extraordinary contributions to workplace safety and health. Applications are available at www.oregongosh.com and must be received by October 28, 2010.



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RESOURCE

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On the cover: Lorenzo Godinez and Dan Herzing of Willamette Landscape Services.

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Administrator's message: Preventing Fatalities Requires Focus

By Michael Wood

One area that workplace safety and health professionals take very seriously is fatality prevention. Unfortunately, we don't always do a good job of recognizing that preventing workplace death takes focused attention. We often rely upon a strategy that says, "If we reduce injuries, then fatalities will go down as well." That approach can have truly fatal consequences.

One long-standing theory in occupational health and safety is the injury and illness pyramid. The basic notion of the pyramid is that fatalities and severe injuries are the tip of an iceberg – so that the best way to target prevention activities is to track near misses and minor injuries. Because tracking near misses can be difficult, safety specialists often rely on data about injury and illness rates to determine overall risk. At first blush, the pyramid seems a reasonable way to identify the greatest risks. But a number of us have come to question the basic assumption about the relationship between minor and severe injuries, as well as between injuries and fatalities.

Several years ago, I developed a training session on workplace violence and its prevention. As I did so, I realized that the pyramid model generally fails in relation to workplace violence. Minor injuries resulting from violence simply do not point toward those industries and activities where the risk of violent death is the greatest.

A survey of the available data shows that most workplaces where there is a high incidence of violent injuries – health care (especially nursing homes), social services, and work with disabled children or adults, etc. – generally have a relatively modest risk of fatalities. While most jobs with a relatively high risk of violent fatalities – law enforcement, taxi drivers, late-night retail – do not see very many less serious injuries.

This problem with the pyramid is not unique to workplace violence. A large number of significant fatality risks simply will not generate a correspondingly large number of minor

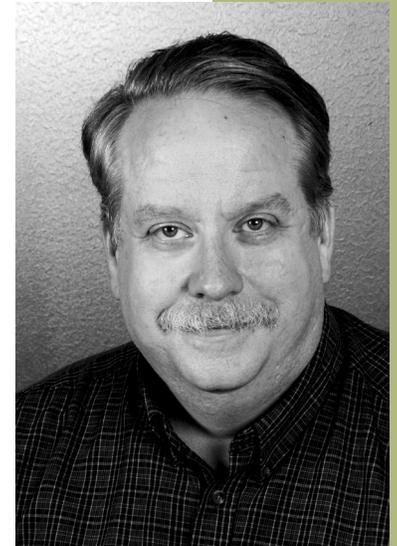
injuries. Many of us recognize confined spaces, lockout/tagout problems, trenching, tractor rollovers, electrocutions, and a number of other issues as significant fatality risks. But those risks result in relatively few less serious injuries.

And while machine guarding problems result in the loss of fingertips or even fingers, many (probably most) guarding issues present little real risk of death. Similarly, the biggest source of disability in the workplace – musculoskeletal disorders – presents no fatality risk.

We should never neglect the prevention of injuries, including disabling injuries, even where there is little risk of death. The injuries are real, and the disabilities can be lifelong and severe. But we need to avoid the mistaken assumption that we will prevent fatalities simply by relying on the initiatives we launch to prevent other injuries and illnesses.

Such a mistaken (and largely unconscious) reliance on the pyramid has led policymakers, as well as safety and health professionals, to rely on past injuries and illnesses to identify workplaces at risk of fatalities (or of severe injuries). But in workplace after workplace we have learned that to prevent workplace death, we must focus on those things that can cause death, not simply on the generally very different list of items that can cause injury.

If we want to save lives in the workplace, we need to identify the risks that can take those lives. And then we need to consciously eliminate or reduce those risks. In the coming years, Oregon OSHA intends to consciously focus our work on those risks. We invite you to do the same. ■



Michael Wood, Administrator



Communicating across cultures

Closing the language gap in safety

By Melanie Mesaros

At Willamette Landscape Services in Tualatin, half of the company's 70-member workforce speaks Spanish.

"Field supervisors are active in our training and translating," said Dan Herzing, the company's area manager.

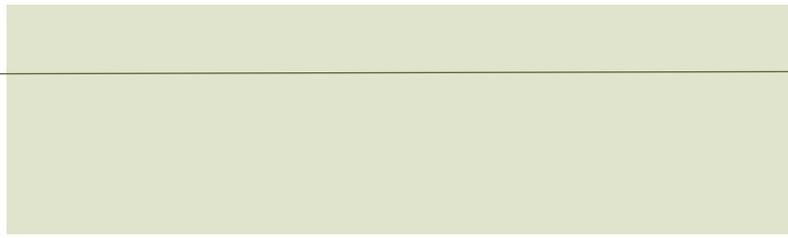
Just ask Lorenzo Godinez, a bilingual manager who often leads the safety trainings.

"There have been times when someone doesn't fully understand," Godinez said. "Sometimes you get to the site, they are wearing their PPE but you can tell, they didn't quite get the message. With chaps, for instance, sometimes they have them too loose."

The company, a recent Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) graduate, has figured out how to close that language gap. Its weekly all-staff meetings are bilingual, devoted to a safety topic, and involve staff (the company's safety committee members are also bilingual).

"Each week, one of the guys in the field has to present their own topic," said Herzing. "We often focus on seasonal problems, which could be anything from the issue of mowing slippery, sloping grass or lifting heavy loads."

Above: Bilingual manager Lorenzo Godinez (left) and area manager Dan Herzing conduct regular checks of crews working in the field.



The company’s crew leaders demonstrate safety is a priority to achieve advancement.

“We place these people in a position of leadership because they have shown the ability to not only do the work safely and efficiently, but they are also capable of training those they are responsible for,” said Herzing. “We always hint at the fact they are training their replacement.”

A hands-on training day is held for all staff at an off-site location each year. Herzing said he and other supervisors demonstrate how to use equipment, review PPE, and other safety procedures.

Inside company trucks are laminated cards with visual depictions of PPE required for each piece of equipment. Even those with a low reading level can look at the card

and understand what’s expected. Oregon OSHA’s Tomas Schwabe, a bilingual trainer, said because literacy and language levels vary so much among workers, training has to be visual and hands-on.



Adalberto Hernandez applies fertilizer to a client’s lawn.



Herzing shows off one of the cards that illustrates the PPE required for each piece of equipment.

Trust is essential to achieve safety success in a multicultural workplace. Here are some key points to consider:

- Get to know your workers, learn their names, tell them something you like, talk about sports, etc.
- Give your workers an ego boost by asking them questions only they know the answers to. For example, ask them what kind of PPE they’ve used in prior jobs. Listen to their answers carefully; they may know more than you think.
- When conducting training, include a person the workers already trust as part of the training team. This person is likely someone in your company that the workers feel comfortable with and can go to for help.
- Learn a few words in their language; it shows you understand that speaking another language is challenging.

“A very effective four-step training method is, ‘I do, you watch,’ then, ‘I do, you help,’ and ‘You do, I help,’ lastly, ‘You do, I watch,’” said Schwabe.

Many companies with a Spanish-speaking workforce struggle with the cultural gap, Schwabe said.

“Hispanic cultures have a steep hierarchy, one where people respect social classes and where talking to strangers is rude,” he said. “This sets up a situation where it is unlikely for an employee to approach a manager with issues. Here in the U.S., it’s quite the opposite and people are more comfortable addressing problems in the workplace.”

Herzing, who has a degree in teaching, said he uses his background to his advantage to build up trust among workers.

Baltazar Vega, one of the company's Spanish-speaking workers, wears ear plugs and gloves while mowing.

"I always introduce myself to a new employee and say, 'I'm Dan and I root for Chivas (a popular Mexican soccer team) and the Chicago Bears' and let them get to know me. That helps open communication," he said. "I don't think there's a guy here who won't approach me directly with a problem."

"One of the reasons this company is succeeding is because they have gained the trust of their workers through these examples," said Schwabe. ■



Top Spanish publications available on the Oregon OSHA website:

- **Spanish/English glossary**
- **Protección Contra Caídas: Prácticas Seguras para Instalar y Reforzar Armaduras de Cubierta y Cabios de Madera**
(Fall Protection: Safe practices for setting and bracing wood trusses and rafters)
- **Escaleras Portátiles; Como usarlas sin sufrir caídas**
(Portable ladders: How to use them so they won't let you down)



Herzing works with Godinez to have directions translated into Spanish during staff trainings.

Reaching out to Latino workers

By Ellis Brasch

In mid-April, one of my Oregon OSHA co-workers sent me an e-mail suggesting that we translate two of our fact sheets – one on **personal protective equipment** and the other on **material safety data sheets** – into Spanish. At first, the suggestion seemed like a good one: make more of our publications available to Spanish-only readers. Coincidentally, that was about the same time that the **National Action Summit for Latino Worker Health and Safety** had just wrapped up two days of workshops and exhibits in Houston to raise awareness among Latino workers of their rights to a safe workplace.

The message of the conference was that many Latino workers who work in low-wage, high-risk jobs don't even know they have such rights – literacy, language, culture, and fear are all barriers to a safe workplace. They may think (correctly) that their employer will fire them if they talk about hazards or report an injury. Their supervisors may not enforce safe practices or training may be inadequate.

Or, bilingual safety information – if it's available – may be poorly translated or too technical.

How do we inform Latino workers locally? Written material, printed or published online in the traditional manner, may not reach its intended audience. For example, the **En Español** page on the Oregon OSHA website (www.orosha.org) gets a respectable number of visits each month but fewer than 9 percent of those visitors live in Oregon – and 37 percent live outside the United States.

Only by going out into communities and educating workers or connecting with workers through willing employers can we raise safety awareness among Latino workers. One tool for doing that is Oregon OSHA's Programa en Español de Seguridad e Higiene en el Trabajo de Oregon OSHA (**PESO**). Developed by Oregon OSHA trainer, Tomas Schwabe, the program includes a number of topic-based modules that trainers can use to deliver job safety training to Spanish-speaking workers at any location. The pages in each module are set up for two-sided copying in English and Spanish. English text and graphics are on the even-numbered pages, while Spanish text and graphics are on the odd-numbered pages.

Each module is designed as a 30- to 60-minute program that can easily be taught on site. All the PESO modules are available on our website's **Español** page.

Fact sheets en Español? Did we go ahead and translate those two fact sheets into Spanish? No. The English versions are easy to understand if you've got a college degree, but like many other government publications, they're likely to draw blank stares from readers who haven't been to school for 16 years. Instead, we created two new documents based on the bilingual **PESO** model – one on **material safety data sheets** and one on **personal protective equipment**. Written for employees, they cover "just the facts" on a specific safety topic and are designed to be used at tailgate training sessions. We call them *Quick Facts* and plan to publish more in the near future. ■

Job training for limited-English Hispanic workers in many Oregon workplaces often happens like this:

1. The trainer, usually a native English speaker without bilingual skills, grabs a native Spanish speaker with some English skills from the group of workers, and uses this person as an interpreter.
2. The training begins with the trainer speaking through the interpreter.
3. Sometime during the training session, the trainer asks the trainees if there are any questions.
4. The trainees hardly ever have any questions.
5. The training ends with the trainer asking the trainees if they understood everything.
6. The trainees nod their heads in a "yes" motion, indicating they understood everything.
7. They didn't.

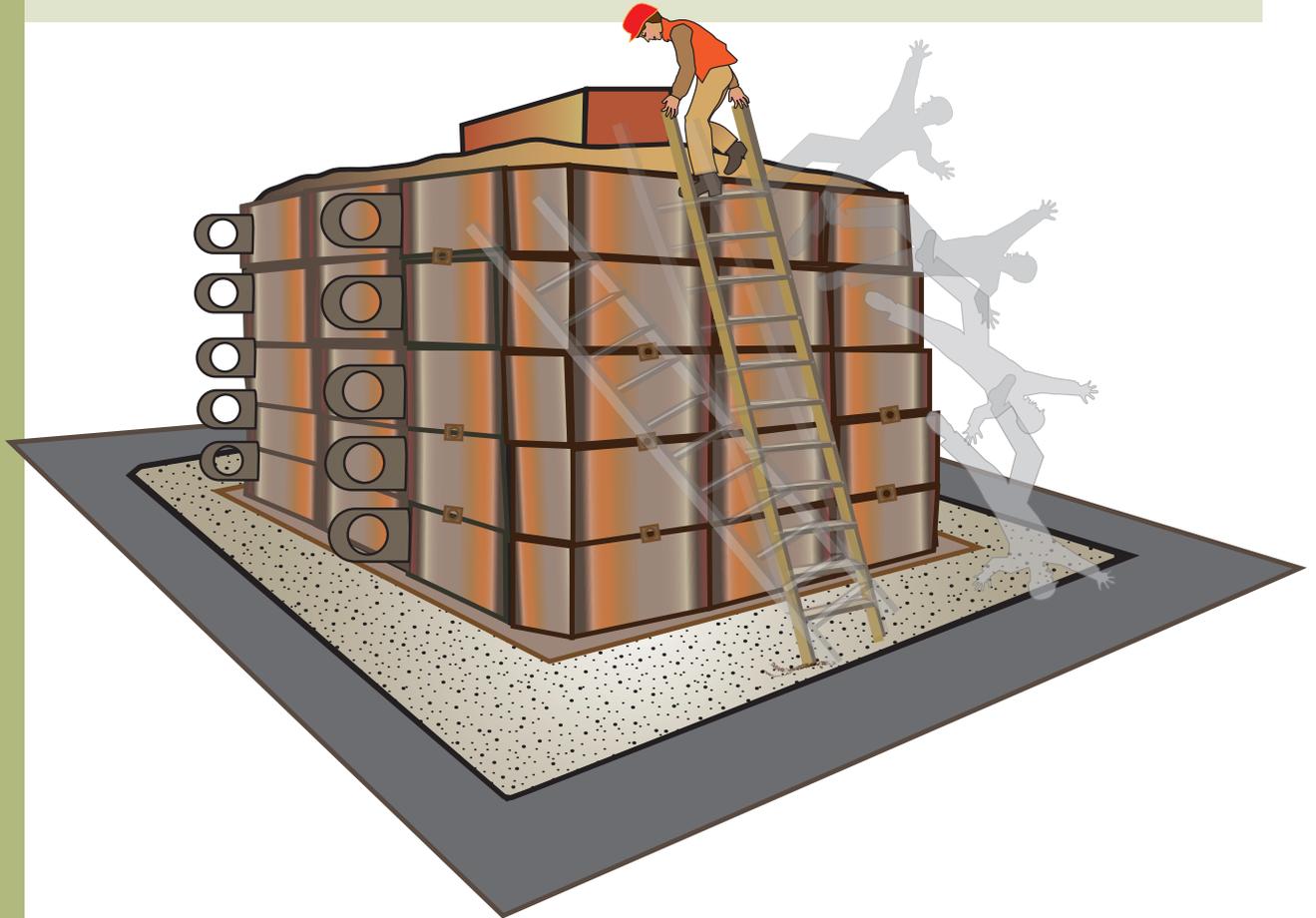
From the PESO module, **Cultures, Languages, and Safety**

Accident Report

Accident type | Ladder fall

Industry | Foundry

Employee job title | Pourer



Employees at a molten metal foundry had been working on a mold for the large lip of a bucket. At the time of the accident, they were completing final preparations for the pour. The mold was approximately 20 feet long, 10 feet wide, and eight feet tall. During the mold preparation, workers go up and down a 10-foot ladder to access the top of the mold for various reasons. An unknown worker from a previous shift placed the ladder in sand and did not secure it. The ladder was then left in place for others to use.

The employee ascended the ladder to place the hot topping on top of the mold in preparation for the pour. He walked down the leading edge of the mold toward the ladder. After climbing to the top of the ladder, he placed his foot on the nearest rung and fell head first to the ground below. The fall was about eight feet. After the fall, the ladder had shifted to rest on the flask lip that was approximately 18 inches from the top of the mold.

Two workers witnessed the fall, and both ran to assist the worker. The victim landed on his head several feet away from the mold. The workers yelled for help, but no one was in the vicinity. One of them sounded the crane horn to get the attention of the crane operator and other workers. The second witness called 911 for help.



The victim's hard hat absorbed the momentum of the fall, protecting him from a more serious injury.



The mold minus two of the 18-inch layers that were in use when the accident occurred.

The victim was treated for several fractured vertebrae and a serious head laceration. He was wearing a hardhat and the protective equipment absorbed the momentum of the fall – also protecting him from a more serious injury.

After the employee was transported, the employees continued to pour the mold and work around the accident area. The blood was not cleaned up or quarantined during this time. The company's health services crew cleaned up the blood with proper equipment hours after the accident occurred.

Items cited:

437-002-0026(8)(b)(A)(iii): The tops of ladders were not tied or secured when there was a possibility of sliding or movement.

437-002-0026(7)(i): Portable ladders were not used on a surface that did not give stable, level footing.

1910.1030(d)(4)(ii)(A): Contaminated work surfaces were not decontaminated with an appropriate disinfectant after completion of procedures; immediately or as soon as feasible when surfaces were overtly contaminated or after any spill of blood or other potentially infectious materials; and at the end of the work shift if the surface could have become contaminated since the last cleaning.

1910.1030(c)(1)(ii)(B): The employer's Exposure Control Plan did not include the schedule and/or methods of implementation for 29 CFR 1910.1030(d) methods of compliance.

Questions about first aid, CPR requirements

Traditionally, first-aid training is hands-on in the classroom. But as businesses continue to move toward more Web-based training, some confusion has arisen about whether online training is acceptable.

“We’ve been getting a lot of questions about whether we accept online training,” said David McLaughlin in Oregon OSHA’s technical section. “As long as the training program is from or based on a nationally recognized program (Red Cross, American Heart Association, etc.), Oregon does accept that as valid first-aid training.”

CPR training is required by rule for certain industries or activities (agriculture or logging, for instance) but is a separate issue. CPR training is not something that can be accomplished without hands-on training.

Having first-aid training can save a life, but it isn’t always an Oregon OSHA requirement. There are some specific rules, such as confined

space rescue and forest activities, that explicitly require first-aid and CPR-trained employees.

For other employers, McLaughlin said, “You need to evaluate the hazards to which employees are exposed and if any of those could cause an injury that requires an immediate response, you need to have someone on site who is trained to administer first aid.”

McLaughlin also said that employers need to honestly evaluate how quickly local EMS can respond in an emergency to determine if that will be adequate for the likely types of injuries. For businesses in rural or remote areas, where EMS response time can exceed five minutes, Oregon OSHA recommends they have someone on staff who is trained.

More information about first aid is available at www.orosha.org/subjects/first_aid.html.

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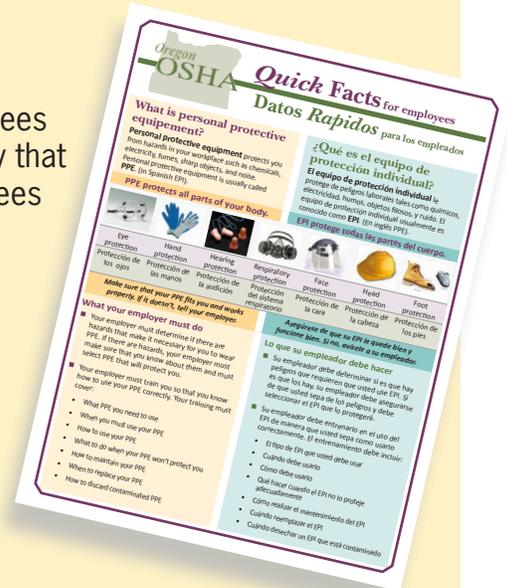
Register online! www.regonline.com/central_oregon10

This conference is a joint effort of the Central Oregon Safety & Health Association (COSHA) and Oregon OSHA.

Ask Technical

Q: *I have employees who don't speak English very well (it's their second language). Do I need to provide their training materials in Spanish?*

A: Employers must instruct their employees using both a language and vocabulary that the employees understand. If employees are not literate, telling them to read training materials will not satisfy the employers' training obligation. If employees need to communicate work instructions or information to employees at a certain vocabulary level or in a language other than English, they will also need to provide safety and health training to employees in the same manner.



Oregon OSHA has created publications in **Spanish**, **Russian**, and **Vietnamese**. Oregon OSHA also has a variety of **tools** to help employers with Spanish-speaking employees, including publications and training materials in Spanish, English/Spanish and Spanish/English dictionaries with job safety and health terms, and links to Spanish occupational safety and health-related websites. More information on worker training standards can be found here: www.oroша.org/interps/2010/worker-training-standards.pdf.



Congratulations to these new SHARP companies:

- LCG Pence, Salem
- Bend Surgery Center LLP, Bend

Going the distance

Meet a leading Oregon health and safety professional

What is your background and safety philosophy?

I was raised in my family's grain farming business in northern Idaho and earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics. I first worked in agricultural finance before moving to the farm safety field in 1988. I started my independent consulting practice in 1996.

My philosophy is to embrace the principles of risk management. Most "accidents" are not really accidents at all. Agriculture will never be a zero-risk environment, but there is a great deal we can do to reduce the likelihood of injury by integrating behavior-based safety with engineered solutions.

What are some examples of current projects you are consulting on?

At this time of year, I am heavily involved in fruit harvesting season. I help employers set up and conduct pre-harvest training programs and monitor work practices to see that harvest crews actually follow the procedures they were trained on.

I am also keeping an eye on pending changes to Division 4, the Oregon OSHA code for agriculture. Once the changes are finalized, I will be helping employers update their safety programs, especially in the area of safety meetings and safety committees. I am also helping SAIF Corporation prepare for its winter series of agriculture safety seminars, which are conducted all over the state.

continued on page 14



Company: Risk Management Resources, Inc.

Health and Safety Professional: Kirk Lloyd

Common Hazards: Diverse agricultural hazards, including livestock, machinery, slips/falls, and repetitive motion issues.

Going the Distance, *continued from page 13*

Cherry pickers at the Cooper Family Orchards in The Dalles use ladders with gripping on the poles so the ladders don't slip on steep hills.



Since you work primarily with agriculture businesses that have a diverse workforce, how do you help with the culture and/or attitude of employees?

Many farms have a one or more key persons who are multi-lingual. By teaching these employees the principles of risk management, specific techniques to reduce exposure, and skills to be better leaders and supervisors, I can empower them to reach across the boundaries of language and culture in a way that I could never do on my own.



Left: Kirk Lloyd talks with Martin Madrigal about ladder safety. **Middle:** Lloyd and Bacillio Rodriguez inspect the ladders. **Right:** Madrigal uses an orchard ladder to reach the fruit.

Some small businesses have really been struggling in this tight economy. Have you noticed it's having an impact on health and safety programs?

Many sectors of agriculture are in terrible financial conditions right now, but the impact of that hasn't always been what you might expect. I think many growers have actually increased their emphasis on safety and health, because they can't afford the costs associated with injuries. They can't make expensive capital improvements now, but in many cases have come up with creative ways to reduce risk at minimal expense.

What advice do you have for other safety and health managers hoping to make a difference?

We get our work done through other people. Emphasize broad principles, sound business practices, and the reasons behind safety policies and procedures. This allows everyone to make better moment-to-moment decisions to reduce risk. Don't skimp on supervisory skills development. Good front-line crew leaders are vital to safety and health results. ■



Lloyd (left) works with farm supervisor Rodriguez to oversee pickers at the orchard framed by Mount Adams.