

A woman wearing a white hard hat, safety glasses, and an orange high-visibility vest over a black long-sleeved shirt is standing at a construction site. She is holding a clipboard and a red pen, appearing to be taking notes. The background is slightly blurred, showing construction equipment and trees with autumn foliage.

Health and Safety

RESOURCE

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Resource

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Learning from the experience of others a key to boosting workplace safety

by Michael Wood

I suppose it's a factor of my age that I seem to end up in more conversations about how to manage an effective safety program – or create an effective workplace health and safety culture. Indeed, I've been asked to speak later this month in Washington state on that very topic.

Unfortunately, most of my gray hairs don't necessarily represent hard-won wisdom. Most of them, sadly, just represent the inevitable process of being a bit older one year than I was the year previously. As I reflect on nearly a quarter of a century in workplace health and safety, the clearest message that comes through to me remains one I learned early on in my days as a workplace health and safety practitioner: Learn from those who know things you don't.

It is said that experience is the best teacher, and that is no doubt a truth worth remembering. But when it comes to managing risks – when it comes to preventing workplace conditions that can cause serious injury, illness or death – it can have limited utility. I've heard adults say that the only way a child can learn not to touch a hot stove is by doing it a time or (for the slow learners) two. But that's not true. We can learn from the experience of others.

As a child, I never actually touched a hot stove – my parents told me it was hot and that it would hurt. I'm not fond of pain, and I trusted my parents, so my natural curiosity just never extended to learning for myself. Now, I *did* have to learn for myself

that it was a really bad idea to stick one's finger in a Christmas tree light socket (you know, the old-fashioned kind!). But, you know, if they'd thought to mention that one to me in advance I probably would have listened to them about it as well. The truth is that we can – and should – learn not only from our own experience, but also from the experience of others. It may not be quite as effective, but it is certainly a great deal more efficient.

In fact, it is our capacity to learn from the experience of those who have gone before us that provides us with our largely unique capacity for the advancement of knowledge. I didn't have to repeat the experiments of Dmitri Mendeleev in order to make use of the periodic table of the elements. And I can understand the risks of oxygen deprivation or carbon monoxide poisoning or asbestos exposure without needing to experience them for myself.

That's just one of the reasons why we make a mistake when we rely upon "common sense" as our primary method of promoting health and safety in the workplace. Common sense is not something that just springs into each person's mind, fully formed, sometime near the end of their teenage years (more than a few people even exhibit it before then!). It is the distillation of all the lessons that we have learned so early in life that we take them for granted. But that does not mean that it is an infallible guide, nor does it mean that we cannot – or should not – add to that reservoir of knowledge.

We can learn from one another. And we can teach one another. And, if we are truly going to make our workplaces as safe and protective as they can and should be, we need to learn to be better at doing both. ●



Oregon OSHA
Administrator



Don't miss...



Education: March-May workshops

March 12, 2019 • Salem

8 a.m. Hazard Identification and Control
1 p.m. Accident Investigation

April 23, 2019 • Medford

8 a.m. Safety Meetings and Committees
1 p.m. Accident Investigation

May 29, 2019 • Salem

8 a.m. Lockout/Tagout and
Machine Safeguarding
1 p.m. Job Hazard Analysis

For more information: osha.oregon.gov/edu

For the most recent public education schedule
updates: osha.oregon.gov/edu/workshops

To receive registration materials, exhibitor
information, or sponsorship information for the
2019 events, contact the Conference Section:
oregon.conferences@oregon.gov | 503-947-7411



The Key to Safety is in Your Hands

June 3 & 4, 2019

Pendleton Convention Center • Pendleton, OR

Keynote by Rob Fisher

13th Annual
Blue Mountain
Occupational
Safety & Health Conference

Safety leadership workshop (June 3) No cost
Conference (June 4, includes lunch) \$85
Forklift Round-Up competitor fee (June 3) \$50

The 13th annual event
focuses on helping
organizations strengthen
their safety culture. Topics
featured include:

- Safety leadership and communication
- Safety committee series
- Machine guarding
- Root cause analysis
- Forklift safety
- Hot topics in IH
- Safety for supervisors
- Confined Spaces
- ... and more!



NORTHWEST
SAFETY & HEALTH
SUMMIT

May 14-16, 2019

Red Lion Hotel on the River – Jantzen Beach
Portland, Oregon

This summit is designed for all industries and worksites, even if they are not in the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). Operations personnel, program/project managers, safety managers/coordinators, and safety committee members will benefit from this world-class workplace safety training and networking.

Registration opens in late March!

To receive registration materials, exhibitor information, or sponsorship information for the 2019 event,
contact the Conference Section: oregon.conferences@oregon.gov | 503-947-7411

Visit safetyseries.cvent.com/vpp19 and regionxvppa.org

Did you know?

A strong safety committee is a critical component of building a culture of safety.

It's a sounding board for identifying hazards. It's a place for employees and managers to work together to fix those hazards.

If you are an employer in Oregon, your business must have a safety committee or hold safety meetings – unless you are the sole owner and the only employee of a corporation. [General industry and construction employers](#) must follow the safety committee and meeting requirements under Oregon OSHA's rules for those

"The importance of my presentation is to share my life-changing consequences from my accident – which was preventable – that continue to affect my family and fellow workers to this day."

– John Martin, manager of Martin Safety Solutions of Charleston, S.C., whose experience with an industry safety failure left him in a hospital burn unit for more than five months.

industries. Likewise, [agriculture](#) and [forest activities](#) employers must follow the requirements for safety committees and meetings for their respective industries.

For a quick rundown of the requirements, check out Oregon OSHA's guides to safety committees and safety meetings for [general industry and construction](#), and [agriculture](#). ●

Written hazard communication program was the Oregon OSHA standard most often violated in 2018

Rank	Standard Violated	Subject	Total Violations	Serious	Repeat	Willful	Other	Total Initial Penalties	Serious	Repeat	Willful	Other
1	29 CFR 1910.1200(e)	Written hazard communication program	477	225	0	0	252	\$39,345	\$39,345	\$0	\$0	\$0
2	OAR 437-003-1501(1)	Fall protection	461	338	122	1	0	\$933,685	\$292,190	\$563,370	\$78,125	\$0
3	OAR 437-001-0765(1)	Rules about safety committees or safety meetings	335	82	5	0	248	\$19,965	\$17,665	\$1,680	\$0	\$620
4	OAR 437-001-0765(13)	Documentation of safety committee meetings	191	4	9	0	178	\$2,280	\$480	\$1,800	\$0	\$0
5	29 CFR 1910.1200(g)	Material safety data sheets	189	27	0	0	162	\$6,780	\$6,780	\$0	\$0	\$0
6	29 CFR 1926.1053(b)	Requirements for use of ladders	146	131	11	0	4	\$109,700	\$98,450	\$11,250	\$0	\$0
7	29 CFR 1910.178(l)	Training for operators of powered industrial trucks	129	40	1	0	88	\$15,820	\$15,620	\$200	\$0	\$0
8	29 CFR 1910.1200(h)	Employee information and training	116	51	0	0	65	\$14,365	\$14,365	\$0	\$0	\$0
9	29 CFR 1910.134(c)	Respiratory protection program	96	53	0	0	43	\$11,785	\$11,785	\$0	\$0	\$0
10	OAR 437-001-0765(11)	Frequency of safety meetings dependent on type of work done	92	22	1	0	69	\$3,860	\$3,660	\$200	\$0	\$0

Note: Standards violated have been summarized to the rule or first paragraph level and may therefore not reflect the complete standard cited by Oregon OSHA. This report is therefore not comparable to the published reports before 2008 in which total counts and penalties were for the complete standard. The violation data for any calendar will not be complete until July 1 of the following year (e.g., for calendar year 2009 complete data will be available after July 1, 2010).

Industry is classified according to the North American Industrial Classification System (NAICS), 2002 edition.

We've had an accident. Do I need to report it to Oregon OSHA?

By Ellis Brasch

If you're an employer, Oregon OSHA requires you to report workplace injuries that result in the loss of an eye, an amputation or avulsion that includes bone or cartilage loss, an in-patient hospitalization, a catastrophe, or a fatality.

Sometimes employers forget to report these incidents on time or they may not know that they are required to report them. However, failure to report a fatality or other serious workplace injury carries a penalty that can range from \$250 to \$12,675. The average penalty for an employer is about \$1,000. However, it's higher for employers who intentionally do not report incidents.

Timely accident reporting serves another purpose, says Oregon OSHA Statewide Safety Enforcement Manager Bryon Snapp:

"Only through timely, thorough investigations can we potentially prevent new ones. Timely notification by employers provides Oregon OSHA with the best opportunity to examine the scene before physical changes occur, interview those associated with the event before recollections evolve, and ensure additional employees are no longer exposed to the original hazard.

"This helps us to determine many of the root causes that can be lost if too much time passes between the unfortunate event and the start of our investigation. Oregon OSHA does not investigate every reportable event; however, we need the opportunity to do so. That opportunity is dependent on the employer's timely reporting."

So it's important to remember *what* incidents you must report to Oregon OSHA and *when* you are required to report them. If you are in doubt, Snapp recommends that you call Oregon OSHA and ask for clarification on reporting. You can do this without initially providing your name or company information.



What incidents do I have to report?

You must report any work-related incident that results in:

- The loss of an eye
- An amputation or avulsion that includes bone or cartilage loss
- An in-patient hospitalization
- A catastrophe
- A fatality

An *amputation* is the traumatic loss of a limb or other external body part, including a fingertip. Amputations include loss of a body part due to a gunshot wound and medical amputations due to irreparable traumatic injuries. Report an amputation even if the body part is re-attached.

An *avulsion* is the tearing away or forcible separation of any body part by trauma. Report an amputation or avulsion only if it includes bone or cartilage loss (for example, external ear). Report an avulsion even if the body part is re-attached.

An *in-patient hospitalization* is the formal admission to the in-patient service of a hospital or clinic for care or medical treatment. Hospitalization only for observation is not reportable, nor is a trip to an emergency room unless it includes in-patient hospitalization.

A *catastrophe* is an incident in which two or more employees die, or three or more employees are admitted to a hospital or an equivalent medical facility because of the same incident.

Fatalities include those caused by motor vehicle crashes and heart attacks that happen during an employee's work shift.



My business is not required to record workplace injuries and illnesses. Do I still have to report them?

Yes. Many businesses in low-risk industries and businesses that have fewer than 10 employees are not required to record injuries and illnesses on the OSHA Form 300 or 300A Summary form. However, those businesses must still report fatalities and any of the incidents listed above to Oregon OSHA within the required deadlines.

When do I have to report an incident?

- Report fatalities and catastrophes within **eight hours**
- Report in-patient hospitalization, loss of an eye, amputations, and avulsions within **24 hours**



How do I report an incident?

You can report an incident at any Oregon OSHA office during regular business hours or you can call 800-922-2689 (toll-free) any time. It's OK to leave a message; someone will return your call.

When you report an incident, you need to include the following information:

- Your business name, address, type of business, and number of employees
- Where the incident happened
- When the incident happened
- When you knew about the incident
- A short description of the incident
- Which hospital the worker was taken to (if applicable)
- The worker's name, address, age, and occupation
- The worker's next of kin
- Other government agencies you notified

Do not disturb the incident scene. Do not disturb the scene of a fatality or catastrophe until Oregon OSHA investigates the incident, unless a law enforcement officer tells you to do so – or if it's necessary to safely reach victims or to prevent injuries.

Who is responsible for reporting an injury or illness involving one of my temporary employees – my business or the staffing agency?

Your business is responsible for reporting the incident. However, a timely report from the staffing agency is OK, too, so it's a good idea to establish a procedure with the staffing agency that says who will report the incident. Remember: The incident must be reported to Oregon OSHA within the required deadlines. ●

Five recordkeeping requirements that you might have overlooked

By Ellis Brasch

If you own or manage a business that has 10 or more employees, you're probably familiar with Oregon OSHA's requirement to record injuries and illnesses on the OSHA 300 Log and the companion 300A Summary Form. But Oregon OSHA has other recordkeeping requirements as well.

Health hazards such as loud noise, respirable silica, lead, asbestos, and blood-borne pathogens account for many recordkeeping requirements that are necessary to ensure that workers aren't overexposed. Other recordkeeping requirements help ensure that equipment such as fire extinguishers are routinely tested and working properly.

However, some recordkeeping requirements serve a more general purpose and are often overlooked by employers. Here are five that might apply to your business.

Safety committees and safety meetings

If you have a safety committee, be sure to take minutes at each meeting and keep a record of those minutes for at least three years. (The recordkeeping requirement applies to general industry, construction, and agriculture employers.) Include:

- The names of all attendees
- The meeting date
- The safety and health issues discussed
- Recommendations for controlling hazards and a deadline date for correcting them
- The name of the person responsible for following up on corrective measures
- Any other reports, evaluations, and recommendations made by the committee



If you hold safety meetings – and you are an agricultural employer or your employees do construction, utility work, or manufacturing – you must also take minutes and keep them for at least three years. Include:

- The names of those attending the meeting
- The date of the meeting
- The hazards identified and discussed during the meeting.

If you are a subcontractor on a multi-employer construction worksite, your employees can attend the prime contractor's safety meetings and you can keep the minutes from those meetings. But you must still meet with your employees to discuss any accidents involving them.

- **General industry and construction employers:** Follow the requirements in 437-001-0765, *Safety Committees and Safety Meetings*.
- **Agriculture employers:** Follow the requirements in 437-004-0251, *Safety Committees and Safety Meetings*.



Access to employee exposure and medical records

Recordkeeping requirements apply to general industry, construction, and agriculture employers who keep or have access to their employees' exposure and medical records. (The employee's physician or other health care provider can also keep the records.)

When employees – or a designated representative – requests their exposure or medical records, you must provide them within a reasonable time. If you can't provide them within 15 business days, you must tell the employee why there is a delay and when the records will be available.

Unless another Oregon OSHA rule requires a different retention period, keep employees' medical records for the duration of their employment plus 30 years. Keep their exposure records for at least 30 years.

For more information, see *1910.1020, Access to Employee Exposure and Medical Records*.



Hazard communication

If your employees use hazardous chemicals, keep the safety data sheets for the hazardous chemicals that they are currently using. You don't need to keep safety data sheets for chemicals that you no longer use; however, you do need to keep a record of your employees' exposures to hazardous chemicals for at least 30 years. To meet that requirement, you can either keep those old safety data sheets for the chemicals that you no longer use, or you can keep a record of the chemical's name and where and when it was used in your workplace.

For more information, see *1910.1200(g), Hazard communication (Safety data sheets)*.



Fall protection

Construction workers who are exposed to fall hazards must be trained to recognize those hazards and to know how to control them. Keep a record of each employee trained, the training date, and the trainer's signature.

If you use a safety net for fall protection, but cannot perform a drop test, a competent person must inspect the net and certify that it is safe before it is used. Keep a record that identifies the net, the date of the inspection, and the signature of the competent person who did the inspection. Keep a current record for each net at the job site.

For more information, see 437-003-0503(2), *Training requirements (Certification of training)* and 1926.502(c), *Fall Protection Systems Criteria and Practices (Safety net systems)*.



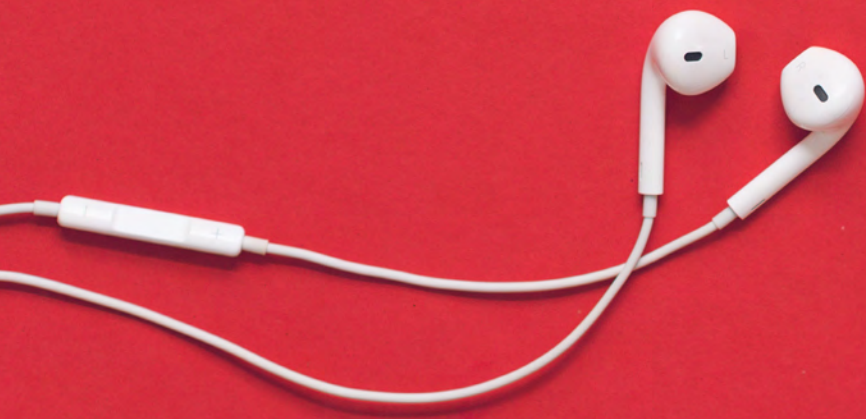
PPE hazard assessment for general industry employers

If you are a general industry, construction, or agricultural employer, you must determine if your workplace has hazards that you cannot eliminate or control without personal protective equipment (PPE). A PPE hazard assessment helps you determine what hazards your employees are exposed to and what PPE they need to protect themselves.

If you are a general industry employer, however, you must also keep a record that says you have done the hazard assessment. The record must include the name of the workplace evaluated, the name of the person who certified that the hazard assessment was completed, the date of the assessment, and a heading that says the record is a "certification" of the hazard assessment.

For more information, see 437-002-0134(1), *Personal protective equipment (Hazard assessment and equipment selection)*. ●

Is there such a thing as an OSHA-approved ear bud or in-ear headphone?



No. OSHA and Oregon OSHA do not approve products or services. But, speaking of amplified sound, do you know what the noise reduction rating on packages of ear plugs and muffs means?

When you look at packages of ear plugs or muffs, you will see the words “Noise Reduction Rating” and a number. That’s the product’s level of noise protection expressed in decibels. However, the number is not reliable outside of a testing laboratory, which is where the product received the rating. The noise reduction rating tends to overestimate the protection that a hearing protector will provide under real-world conditions.

One way to estimate the real-world effectiveness of a hearing protector is to subtract seven decibels from the noise reduction rating shown on the package. You want to be sure that the hearing protector’s noise reduction rating reduces the noise level to 85 decibels or lower. Prolonged exposure to noise above 85 decibels can result in hearing loss.

One feature you want to look for when you’re shopping for ear buds or in-ear headphones is the ability to limit the maximum sound to 85 decibels; that way you can enjoy your music and protect your hearing, too.

Short take

It's February. Do you know where your OSHA 300-A is?


Don't forget to post a copy of your OSHA 300-A form, which summarizes your company's job-related injuries and illnesses logged during 2018. The summary must be displayed each year between Feb. 1 and April 30 in a common area where notices to employees are usually posted. Businesses with 10 or fewer employees at any time during 2018 and businesses in certain low-hazard industries are exempt from the requirements.

The highest-ranking manager at the location where the log was compiled must sign and date the document. If there is no manager at that location, the manager with control over that location must sign and date it.

You'll find the form and instructions in [OSHA Forms for Recording Work-related Injuries and Illnesses](#). It takes time to record an injury or illness, so the fewer injuries or illnesses you have, the less time you will have to spend doing paperwork. ●

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OSHA Forms
for Recording
Work-Related
Injuries and Illnesses



A Division of the
Department of Consumer
and Business Services

OSHA 300-A
Injuries and Illnesses
Log

Instructions
for Recording
Injuries and
Illnesses

Worksheet for
Recording Injuries
and Illnesses

OSHA 300-A
Injuries and Illnesses
Log

Instructions
for Recording
Injuries and
Illnesses

Worksheet for
Recording Injuries
and Illnesses



Short take

New resources offered to agricultural employers

Oregon OSHA is offering a collection of resources – in both English and Spanish – to help agricultural employers comply with new safety and health requirements when pesticide spraying occurs outdoors.

The requirements – part of updates to the Worker Protection Standard – have been adopted and phased in over time. The final rule updates took effect Jan. 1. They include the Application Exclusion Zone (AEZ), which is next to, but outside of, the pesticide-treated area.

The zone provides an added level of protection beyond safeguards enforced with respect to the treated area itself. The AEZ surrounds and moves with spray equipment and must be free of all people other than appropriately trained and equipped pesticide handlers.

The following resources will help employers understand and comply with AEZ requirements:

- AEZ explained (video) – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- Overview of requirements guide – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- Steps to take guide – [English](#) | [Spanish](#)
- Worker Protection Standard/AEZ [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- Oregon OSHA and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency AEZ rules – [overview and comparison](#)

Oregon OSHA offers [technical experts](#) to help understand rules, as well as on-site, no-cost [consultation services](#). Our online A-to-Z topic page includes more information about the [Worker Protection Standard](#). ●

Short take

Video illustrates complaint-filing process

Oregon OSHA has launched an [introductory video](#) that illustrates how the agency handles and investigates complaints about workplace safety and health hazards.

People have a right to a safe and healthy workplace. That right includes the ability to raise safety or health concerns with [their managers](#) or [safety committees](#), and to get those concerns resolved.

However, they may file a complaint with Oregon OSHA.

When a complaint is filed, Oregon OSHA either conducts an on-site inspection or opens an inquiry with the employer.

Oregon OSHA conducted nearly 3,300 inspections in federal fiscal year 2018. More than 5,100 violations of safety and health standards were cited on about 2,200 citations. Penalties assessed for these employer violations were \$3.1 million.

Inspections at employer worksites stem primarily from scheduling lists – which are based partly on an employer's history of workplace injuries and illnesses – complaints, accidents, and referrals. ●



Short take

Oregon businesses invited to take a 'Safety Break' May 8

Employers across the state are invited to participate in Safety Break for Oregon – the Wednesday, May 8, event focused on raising awareness and promoting the value of keeping people safe and healthy while on the job.

Now in its 16th year, Safety Break encourages employers to bolster workplace safety and health with training, award recognition gatherings, or other creative activities. Oregon OSHA coordinates Safety Break, which is voluntary for employers. Businesses and other employers can decide what activities are most beneficial to their workforce.

"This stand-down provides an opportunity for employers and their workers to take the time to remember the high value they should place on preventing injury and illness in the workplace," said Michael Wood, Oregon OSHA administrator. "It's an important time to review past successes – and the reasons for those successes – while planning ahead with a renewed dedication to analyzing and eliminating hazards."

Safety Break encourages employees and managers to work together to identify safety and health concerns. The result of this cooperation can lead to fewer injuries and reduced workers' compensation costs for employers.

Companies that participate will be entered to win one of three \$100 checks, to be used for a luncheon of their choice, when they [sign up online](#) by Friday, May 3. The prizes will be given to participating companies as part of a random drawing. The [Oregon SHARP Alliance](#) is sponsoring the contest.

During the Safety Break event, companies are encouraged to share their activities on social media by tagging @OregonOSHA on Facebook and using #SafetyBreakDay on Twitter.

For more information, ideas on how to host an event, or to download graphics, visit the [Safety Break for Oregon website](#). ●



Join worksites across Oregon and honor safety leaders, hold a training, or get a conversation started about safety and health.

Sign up online

Short take 3 training grants awarded

Oregon OSHA has awarded three grants totaling nearly \$120,000 to help develop workplace safety and health education and training programs.

The recipients are:

Northwest Forest Worker Center: *Safety and Health for Latino Forest Workers*

The nonprofit group will produce a training program to help Latino forest workers in southern Oregon prevent musculoskeletal disorders.

Forest workers lift heavy objects, walk on steep and uneven terrain, and engage in repetitive motions. Such activities put them at high risk of developing injuries and disorders that affect the body's movement.

The training program will engage workers in discussions that relate to their own on-the-job experiences.

Grant award: \$40,000

Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association: *Spanish First Hospitality Employee Handbook Template Tailored for Minority Employees*

The association will develop an employee handbook designed for Spanish-speaking restaurant and hospitality employees and make it available in both print and digital formats.

By creating a culturally and linguistically appropriate employee handbook – accompanied by training – the association intends to increase communication and trust, and help Latino workers become more effective in their workplaces and reduce work-related injuries.

Grant award: \$39,963

SafeBuild Alliance: *Strengthening Construction Safety Culture by Developing Front-Line Leaders*

The nonprofit group will develop a training and outreach project that will engage construction companies and labor organizations in identifying and cultivating front-line leaders who are capable of improving workplace safety.

As the construction industry flourishes in Oregon – and as the number of retirements of front-line supervisors increases – the need to find, promote, and train potential leaders from the field of employees grows.

The training and outreach project will develop a methodology to identify emerging leaders and build on foundational safety leadership programs.

Grant award: \$40,000

Safety Notes

Incident Report

Incident: Infection

Industry: Recycling

Worker: General laborer

What happened?

A worker thought he was bitten by a spider. In fact, he had a severe infection caused by his work glove, which was too small for his hand.

How did it happen?

A temporary worker who had been hired by a recycling company through a staffing agency was sorting material on a conveyer line when he noticed a small red bump on his left middle finger. He thought it might be a spider bite.

Three days later, he told the sort line supervisor, who also worked for the agency, about the lesion after it had become swollen; he said he would make an appointment to have his doctor look at it that evening.

The next day, he told the sort line supervisor that he wasn't able to get the appointment, but he would try again before the day was over. He also called the staffing agency office at the sort line supervisor's request to say that he was going to a doctor.

The worker finally got to see his doctor later that day, but the doctor sent him to the local hospital, which admitted him, and he stayed for two days.

After the worker was released from the hospital, he went to the staffing agency office and said that the hospital doctor told him his injury happened because his work glove was too small. A note from the hospital's medical records read:

"... this is the patient's fourth digit infection since starting his job as a waste sorting agent at a recycling center. He advised [me] that they wear two layers of gloves at work, but that the largest size they have is a large. This is quite tight on his hands. He has requested an extra-large size glove, but has been unable to get any response. Given I found friction wounds on his left hand, it is possible the tighter gloves are causing a friction injury to the skin which breaks the skin barrier down and invites infection."



The sort line where the incident happened.



The worker had a severe infection caused by his work glove, which was too small for his hands.

When asked if he told anyone that his gloves were too small, the worker said that he mentioned it about six months ago to the lead worker, who was also employed by the staffing agency. The lead worker confirmed he had asked her for larger gloves, but said she didn't forward the request to the recycling company until two weeks after he had been injured. To complicate matters, the recycling company was never informed that the worker had been injured.

Findings

The recycling company and the staffing agency misunderstood their roles and responsibilities for protecting temporary employees. Because the sort line supervisor and lead worker were both employed by the staffing agency, the staffing agency was responsible for ensuring that the other temporary employees used gloves that fit properly and were appropriate for their tasks. But the recycling company was responsible for providing those gloves to the temporary employees.

The staffing agency and the recycling company should also have established a procedure to ensure that when a temporary worker is injured, both the staffing agency and the recycling company are informed. ●

Violation

437-002-0134 (1)(a)(C), *Personal protective equipment (hazard assessment and equipment selection)*. The employer (the staffing agency in this case) must select PPE that properly fits each affected employee.

Going the Distance



Company:

Orenco Systems Inc.

Safety, Wellness, and Environmental Manager:

Pete Kimbrel

Operations/facilities/workforce:

The company designs and manufactures equipment for on-site and decentralized water and wastewater systems, along with industrial controls and fiberglass products such as buildings, enclosures, and tanks. Orenco's small-diameter effluent sewers allow communities to install wastewater collection systems economically. The company's advanced treatment systems produce clear effluent that can be reused in beneficial ways, including for subsurface irrigation. Orenco has 477,000 square feet of facilities in Sutherlin, Winchester, and Wilbur, Oregon.

Pete Kimbrel, the safety, wellness, and environmental manager for Orenco Systems Inc., received the 2015 Governor's Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) award in the category of safety and health professional. When employees are involved in solving safety issues, he says, they "will take ownership and your safety culture will continue to grow."

Responsibilities/hazards addressed:

Our products are manufactured from fiberglass, and there are approximately 1,600 chemicals used in our manufacturing processes. My team – and I say "team" because at Orenco, the safety program I manage is employee-driven – consists of 372 employees who have embraced the safety culture we've created and who protect both each other and the company. We're responsible for monitoring and addressing many different potential hazards. Ergonomic challenges, HAZMAT, lockout/tagout procedures, confined space issues, fall protection, lifting challenges, and protecting the environment are just a few of the daily responsibilities we face.

To address some of our hazards, we've developed many standard operating procedures (SOPs) for tasks and processes at Orenco. We then provide extensive training to the employees involved to ensure that tasks are performed safely. Employees either have access to the SOPs online or a hard copy is available from their supervisor. Many of our employees are issued iPads, which not only assist them with their production task for the day, but also allow them to access all of our safety programs. The iPads give employees access to our MSDS/SDS (safety data sheets) program online, as well. If a safety issue arises, the employee can easily contact me and even send a photo of the safety issue, if needed. With this type of technology, our employees are never without safety resources.

Orencia Systems is a 2013 graduate of Oregon OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). You received a 2015 Governor's Occupational Safety and Health (GOSH) award in the category of safety and health professional.

When you take stock of those and other experiences you've had in your profession, what would you say are two or three of the most important lessons you've learned along the way?

One of the most important lessons I've learned is that Oregon OSHA is your friend. Make sure they're kept in your safety "tool box" and use them as often as you need to – they're available to help anytime. Most of my safety knowledge was gleaned from an Oregon OSHA consultant while we were going through the SHARP process.

Also, make sure that when a safety issue arises, you let the employees you're working with in that area solve the issue. Give them guidance, point them in the right direction, but let them solve the problem. The employees will take ownership and your safety culture will continue to grow.

Another important thing I've learned is to make sure your employees are thanked and given pats on the back when they do something positive related to safety, because without the employees and management involved, your safety program is destined to fail.

In your line of work, how do you measure success?

When I'm walking around any of our three facilities and see a tenured employee taking some extra time to show new employees how to perform their assigned task safely and answer their questions, I see that as a major success. Or when I'm contacted by a group of employees that has a new task to perform but is concerned about how to do it safely and wants to discuss the best way to complete the task, I know we're being successful. When employees – from owners to the new hire who started today – are all working together to achieve the common goal of safety, I know our culture is alive and well. You can't get to 2.5 million hours worked with no lost-time accidents without everyone making safety a priority!



Kimbrel with Wendi Stinnett, environment and lab program manager, and Rick Edwards, administrative assistant for the safety and environmental group. Together, Kimbrel says, "We handle all things related to safety and the environment."

"When employees – from owners to the new hire that started today – are all working together to achieve the common goal of safety, I know our culture is alive and well. You can't get to 2.5 million hours worked with no lost-time accidents without everyone making safety a priority!" – Pete Kimbrel, safety, wellness, and environmental manager for Orenco Systems Inc.

What are some things you always do to promote safety where you work, and what are some things you never do?

We have safety meetings once a month when all the production employees gather in one location and I speak to them about what's going on as far as safety is concerned. I inform the group about any new rules or policies, any new chemicals and the hazards associated with the chemicals, updated training information, and if there were any injuries to discuss. Most importantly, I thank the employees as a whole and recognize individuals for any safety accomplishment.

One thing you can never do is put safety issues on the back burner. Also, never fail to include an employee who's expressed concern about a safety issue in the solution. Never tell an employee that you're too busy to listen to their concern. Stop what you're doing and give the issue your full attention; don't say it can wait. That would be a sure-fire way to damage your safety culture and put employees at risk.

What is some advice you'd give to those looking to improve safety and health at their workplace or for others seeking a career in this field?

Think outside the box, get employee involvement, come up with a plan, and test the plan. Create a safety "tool box" and add tools to it, including others in the safety field, mentors, Oregon OSHA, etc. There are many resources available, so use as many as you need. Most importantly, don't take the credit for successes. Give the credit to the employees you work with – give them pats on the back and say "thank you" a lot. A safety culture is created together as a company, not by just the safety manager. ●

Kimbrel says having regular safety meetings and recognizing employees for safety accomplishments are important parts of maintaining a strong safety culture. "One thing you can never do," he says, "is put safety issues on the back burner."