

Health and Safety

RESOURCE

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Meet Woodfold Manufacturing, a custom-crafted accordion and roll-up door manufacturer in Forest Grove



Resource

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Continued success requires creativity and an understanding of the fundamentals

by Michael Wood

As many of you know, I have long been an advocate for “focusing on the fundamentals.” If you read past columns, you will see me talk about the importance of the hierarchy of controls – and of the need to exercise genuine and consistent safety leadership. Even as the world changes around us, in a very real sense, there is little in the life of a workplace health and safety professional that is truly new.

But we also cannot rely on our past approaches to bring future success. Put simply, many of the problems that can be addressed and corrected by “the way we’ve always done it” have been addressed and corrected. Those that remain intractable clearly require something else. And in a state such as Oregon, where we have had many years of success, looking at new approaches can be a little intimidating.

We may realize that we need to do more, or do it more effectively, but we also do not want to endanger our past successes. And most of us have a solid awareness that if we disregard the fundamentals in our search for new approaches, we will discover that those problems that we thought were solved have simply been laying dormant. Voluntary Protection Program sites that have remained in the program for many years certainly understand this lesson – hazards and safety problems never truly vanish. They appear to be just waiting in the wings, hoping that we will drop our guard.

But successful VPP sites also realize that it isn’t enough to just keep doing what they’ve been doing. They need to tackle new challenges and pursue new solutions. They need to move forward or – as I remind them whenever I speak at their ceremonies – they will find that they are moving backward. In workplace health and safety, and in so much of life, it really is not possible to simply stay where you are. The question is not whether you will move – you will – but whether that movement will be forward...or backward.



Oregon OSHA
Administrator



The same lesson, I think, applies to programs such as Oregon OSHA. We are in the midst of a serious effort to plot public policy strategies that we should pursue in both the near and the long term. Some initiatives, such as the Spanish-language conference I wrote about in the previous issue of Resource, are already underway. But we are putting a number of other ideas through a process of deliberation and selection (recognizing that, just as we cannot stand still, we cannot do everything we might like to do).

We’ll be talking more about those plans as our public policy agenda – which we will be calling “Action 2025” – begins to take shape, at least in draft form. Ideally, at least some of those agenda items will reflect creativity and even a bit of ambition. But they must also reflect a solid understanding of the fundamentals of the work we do.

We live in interesting and exciting times. That can be challenging and intimidating. But it can also be invigorating.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read "m. wood".

Don't miss...

Education:

August-October workshops

Aug. 29, 2019 • Salem

8 a.m. Safety and the Supervisor

1 p.m. Safety Meetings and Committees

Sept. 5, 2019 • Milwaukie

8 a.m. Safety and the Supervisor

1 p.m. Job Hazard Analysis

Sept. 10, 2019 • Roseburg

8 a.m. Confined Space Safety

1 p.m. Lockout/tagout and machine safeguarding

Oct. 29, 2019 • Salem

8 a.m. Worker Protection Standard

1 p.m. Hazard Communication Aligned with GHS



For more information: osha.oregon.gov/edu

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



September 16 & 17, 2019

Riverhouse on the Deschutes • Bend, Oregon

This event helps your organization improve workplace safety and health performance. Topics include information for all experience levels.

Registration now open!

Cost to attend: \$55-\$210

More information available at:
safetyseries.cvent.com/central19

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

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

October 15–17, 2019
Ashland Hills Hotel • Ashland

Exhibits • Awards • Workshops

Professional Development and Keynote Speaker
Robin Rose, Author, Trainer and Consultant

October 15: Professional Development Workshop
Leadership, Teamwork & Communication – Tools for Success

October 16: Keynote
Safety on the Brain

www.soassp.org
osha.oregon.gov/conferences

This conference is a joint effort of the American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP), Southern Oregon Chapter, and Oregon OSHA.

Did you know?

To help employers identify rules that have requirements for things such as recordkeeping, training, written documentation, and qualified person, Oregon OSHA has organized these rules into a [filterable, sortable, and searchable list](#).

You can find this tool on the [safety and health management web page](#) of our [A-to-Z topic index](#). ●

Quotable

"We encourage employers and workers in Oregon to add this flexible, user-friendly online tool to their fall protection toolbox. There's more to come, too, as we roll out our entire online suite of fall protection courses."

– **Roy Kroker**, consultation and public education manager for Oregon OSHA, discussing "[Fundamentals of Fall Protection](#)," a free online course to help employers and workers understand and use fall protection.



Datapoints

Oregon OSHA's [Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program \(SHARP\)](#) helps employers effectively manage workplace safety, focusing on management commitment and employee participation. Companies that use SHARP often experience a reduction in injuries and illnesses and, in turn, reduce their workers' compensation insurance premiums.

By the end of 2016, the program had grown to 168 employers, according to a [recent analysis](#), with 23 current participants and 145 who graduated after five successful years of participation.

**SHARP certified employers
Oregon, 2012-2016**



Finding the path to continuous improvement through an effective safety and health program

By Ellis Brasch

It's a fact. Organizations with effective safety and health programs have fewer workplace injuries and illnesses than workplaces that lack them. What makes a safety and health program effective? Managers are committed to safety, employees are actively engaged in keeping their workplaces injury free, and a system is in place to ensure hazards are promptly identified and controlled.

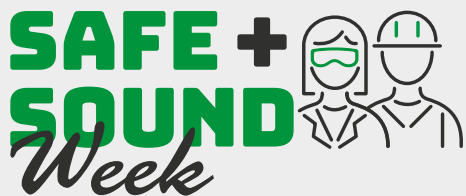
If you're proud of your organization's safety and health program, why not celebrate the achievement during Safe + Sound Week, Aug. 12-18? Safe + Sound Week – now in its third year – is a nationwide event led by federal OSHA that gives employers and employees the opportunity to show their commitment to safety. Participating in Safe + Sound Week is easy and there is still time to sign up. Check out OSHA's [Safe + Sound webpage](#) for more information about the event.

Effective safety and health programs don't just happen overnight, however. The concept of safety and health management – which became a cornerstone of Oregon OSHA's outreach efforts more than 30 years ago – implied that employers could successfully manage their safety and health programs if they were dedicated to the goal of continuous improvement. Continuous improvement meant that workplaces would become safer if all employees remained committed to the safety effort. Their commitment would be driven by management leadership and employee participation.

Management leadership

Management leadership means your employees know you are committed to keeping them safe. You show your commitment by:

- Holding supervisors accountable for enforcing safe practices
- Emphasizing workplace safety and health as a priority and stating your expectations for all employees in your business policy
- Giving your employees the authority and resources they need to carry out their safety responsibilities
- Following through on the recommendations from your safety committee or from your employees during safety meetings
- Ensuring all of your employees have the appropriate safety and health training they need to do their jobs safely
- Recognizing your employees' contributions to the safety effort
- Enforcing a disciplinary policy that expresses clear safety expectations for all your employees



August 12-18, 2019

Employee participation

Workplace safety is a right and responsibility. Your employees have a right to a safe workplace, but they must participate in the day-to-day effort to keep it that way. Remember that your employees must not be retaliated against when they raise safety and health concerns, report injuries or hazards, or exercise their safety and health rights. Encourage employees to participate by:

- Making sure they have an effective way to report hazards and responding promptly to their concerns
- Training new employees in the safety and health aspects of their jobs
- Showing support for your safety committee or for safety meetings if you have them
- Asking for their help in developing safety and health policies and allocating safety resources
- Keeping them involved in the effort to identify and control workplace hazards
- Asking them to help evaluate the effectiveness of the safety and health program

A systematic approach for identifying and controlling hazards

Management leadership and employee participation show commitment, but there is one more essential component of an effective safety and health program: a system for identifying and controlling workplace hazards. The key parts of the system include:

- Hazard identification
- Hazard prevention
- Education and training
- Program evaluation
- Effective communication between the host employer, contractors, and staffing agencies



Hazard identification

You identify hazards by assessing the kinds of injuries and illnesses your employees could receive so you can prevent hazards or control them before they cause harm. Essential ways to identify hazards:

- Conduct a baseline survey. A baseline survey is a thorough evaluation of your workplace – including work processes, equipment, and facilities – that identifies safety or health hazards. A complete survey will tell you what the hazards are, where they are, and how severe they could be. Consider having an experienced safety professional survey your workplace with you.
- Perform regular workplace inspections. Regular workplace inspections help you identify hazards, maintenance needs, and new hazards. Quarterly inspections by workers trained in hazard recognition are a good way to get the job done.
- Determine what new hazards could result whenever you change equipment, materials, or work processes.
- Perform a personal protective equipment (PPE) hazard assessment. A PPE hazard assessment is an evaluation of your workplace that helps you determine what hazards your workers are exposed to and what PPE they need to protect themselves.
- Investigate incidents and near misses to determine root causes. Most incidents are preventable and each one has a root cause – poor supervision, inadequate training, and lax safety policies are examples. A near miss is a miss or a close call. One way to investigate near misses is to have a no-fault incident reporting system: Workers can fill out a simple incident-report form that describes the near miss and how it happened. Investigate the near miss as if it were an incident and tell your employees what you will do to prevent it from happening again.



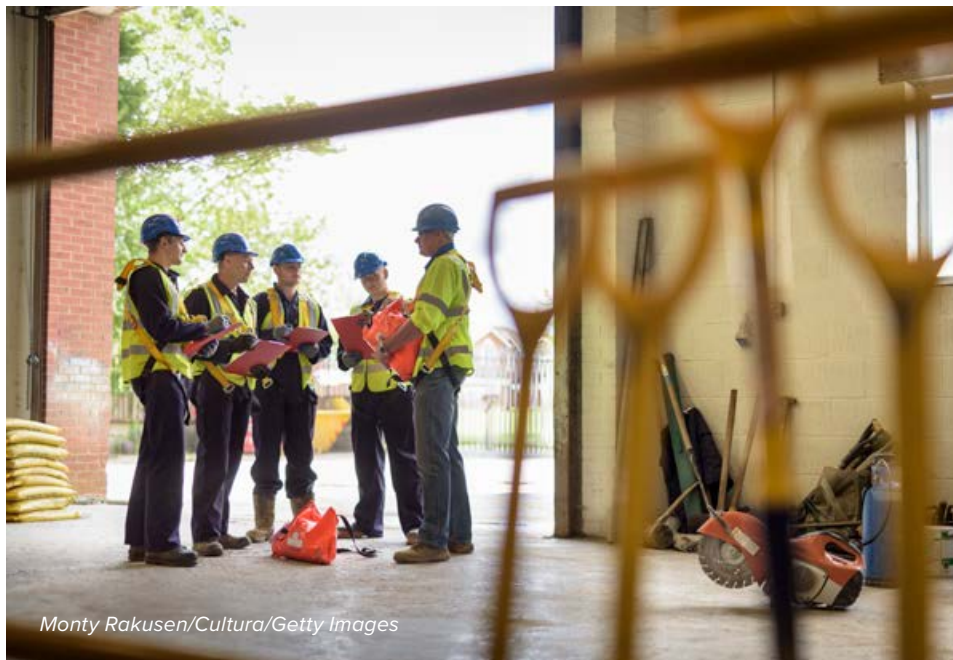
Hazard prevention and control

The best way to prevent a workplace injury or illness is to eliminate the hazard. If you cannot eliminate the hazard, then control it so that it will not cause harm. The best controls also protect workers by minimizing the risk of human error, such as interlocks on guards and fail-safe mechanisms. Other ways to prevent hazards:

- Maintain equipment on schedule
- Practice good housekeeping
- Enforce workplace safety rules
- Keep records that show what you have done to eliminate or control hazards

Education and training

- Your employees need to know their safety responsibilities, the hazards they could be exposed to, and how to eliminate or control their exposures. New worker orientations, emergency drills, refresher training, classroom sessions, and hands-on practice are good ways they can learn. Don't forget that managers and supervisors need practice, too.
- New employees should have orientation training that covers your safety rules and policy, hazards, and procedures for responding to emergencies. If you employ temporary workers from a staffing agency, they also need this training.
- All employees must receive appropriate safety and health training in a language and literacy level they understand.
- All employees must be trained to safely do their jobs before they begin, and be retrained whenever there are changes that create new workplace hazards or when it is necessary to maintain their skills.



Monty Rakusen/Cultura/Getty Images

Program evaluation

Evaluate the effectiveness of your safety and health program at least once a year. Program evaluation helps you focus on the overall goal of continuous improvement. Use the results of your evaluation to correct shortcomings and set new short-term goals. Describe what needs to be done to accomplish each goal, determine who is responsible for accomplishing it, and set a date for achieving it.

Effective communication and coordination between host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies

Effective communication and coordination means that before coming on site, contractors, staffing agencies, and their employees know:

- The types of hazards at the site
- What they need to do to prevent or control their exposure
- How to contact the host employer to report an injury or illness

Host employers and their employees must know:

- The types of hazards that may result from work done by contractors or staffing agency employees
- Procedures necessary needed to prevent or control hazards
- How to contact contractors and staffing agencies
- How to respond to emergencies ●

Use free resources to help develop a strong safety and health program

By Aaron Corvin

Oregon OSHA offers a variety of resources to help employers understand safety and health management, and put their knowledge into practice.

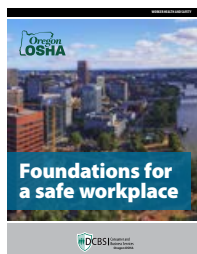
The following are just some of the resources we offer. If you're just looking for a place to begin exploring the subject – a kind of clearinghouse of information on the topic – check out our [safety and health management webpage](#) on our [A-to-Z topic index](#).

Publications

Foundations for a safe workplace

A robust safety and health management plan doesn't have to be complicated or expensive.

[This guidebook](#) offers suggestions and proven elements to help you develop a successful safety and health management plan.



Safety committees and safety meetings for general industry and construction employers

You can't have a strong safety program without meaningful worker participation.

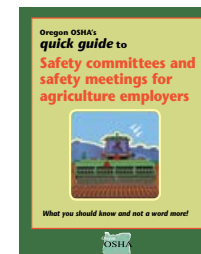
Meaningful worker participation includes maintaining a safety committee or having safety meetings. In fact, you must have such things if you're an employer in Oregon – unless you're the sole owner and the only employee of a corporation.

This [quick guide](#) explains the requirements for general industry and construction employers.



Safety committees and safety meetings for agriculture employers

Are you an agriculture employer? Then this [quick guide](#) about safety committees and safety meetings is for you.



Finding program requirements

To help employers identify rules that have requirements for things such as recordkeeping, training, written documentation, and qualified person, we've organized these rules into a [filterable, sortable, and searchable list](#).

Happy hunting!

Education workshops

If you're looking for in-person training to learn about safety and health management – or to hone your current skills – then our [workshop schedule](#) awaits your perusal. There, you'll find opportunities to take classes on everything from job hazard analysis to safety and the supervisor.

Online training

Got an Internet connection and a love of learning about safety and health management? If so, we've got the perfect spot for you to plunge in: Our [Safety and Health Management online course](#) walks you through the elements of an effective safety and health management program, best practices, and how to overcome obstacles. ●



Ask Oregon OSHA

Our company recently became a division of Canadian company. The Canadian company's workplace safety and health program is based on the OHSAS 18001 international standard, but they are starting to align it with ISO 45001. Can I use the OHSAS 18001 and ISO 45001 policies from the Canadian company for our company here in Oregon?

As you probably know, ISO 45001 is the most current international standard for occupational health and safety programs and ISO 45001 recently replaced the older OHSAS 18001 standard. In Oregon, businesses that have received certification for OHSAS 18001 or ISO 45001 and can provide evidence of certification, are exempt from Oregon OSHA's programmed inspections – see [437-001-0057\(4\)\(b\)\(F\)](#).

However, you will likely need to modify the safety and health program that your parent Canadian company uses to ensure that it meets the requirements in Oregon OSHA's rules. This would also be an excellent opportunity to have an Oregon OSHA consultant review your program. Oregon OSHA consultation services are free and confidential. Visit [Oregon OSHA's consultation services webpage](#) to request a consultation.●

Short take

Linde facility earns VPP Star status

Linde North America's Medford Electronic and Specialty Gases in White City has been approved for continued participation as a Star site in [Oregon OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program](#).

The approval to participate in VPP – which encourages companies to protect workers by going well beyond minimum safety requirements – follows the facility's successful completion of a recent VPP evaluation.

The facility, which employs 72 people, purifies and packages electronic gases used primarily by the semiconductor industry. Hazards include potential inhalation of toxic or corrosive gases, thermal burns, and muscle or back strain from moving cylinders.

The VPP evaluation found the facility's safety and health management systems "continue to meet the quality expected of a VPP site." The evaluation noted "strong employee participation and multiple areas of excellence and best practices during the audit."

The Oregon OSHA members of the evaluation team were: Gary Robertson, safety consultant and team leader; Brandi Davis, health compliance officer and backup team leader; and Ann Peterson, health compliance officer. Eric Burcham of Klamath Energy and Joe Hyde of Duro-Last Roofing served as the team's [Special Government Employees](#).

The benefits of becoming a VPP company include up to 80 percent fewer workday injuries than expected of an average site of the same size and industry; reduced workers' compensation costs; improved employee motivation to work safely; and recognition in the community.

For more information about VPP, contact Mark E. Hurliman, Oregon OSHA VPP/SHARP program manager, 541-776-6016 or mark.e.hurliman@oregon.gov. ●



The management team at Linde North America's facility in White City – joined by Oregon OSHA Consultation and Public Education Manager Roy Kroker (pictured third from the left) – recently held a ceremony to celebrate the facility's VPP achievement.



A VPP-themed cake was part of the ceremony recently held to recognize the top-level safety achievements of Linde North America's facility in White City.

Short take

Salem company earns safety, health recognition

D&O Garbage Service Inc. in Salem has completed its first year in [Oregon OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program \(SHARP\)](#).

SHARP, primarily set up to help small- and mid-size businesses, coaches companies on how to effectively manage workplace safety and health. In turn, companies are recognized for their success in reaching specific benchmarks during the five-year program.

D&O Garbage, in business since 1956, has grown into a multi-faceted provider of garbage and recycling collection services. The company made significant workplace health and safety improvements during its first year in SHARP. Those improvements included implementing a hearing conservation program; ending the use of a truck wash that contained hydrofluoric acid; installing fall protection in its maintenance shop; and bolstering the company's confined space program.

The company, which first committed to the SHARP process in February 2018, made those and other improvements with the help of Oregon OSHA safety and health consultants. It's all part of what Tim Nichols, the company's route and safety manager, describes as a business that treats its employees – all 34 of them – like family and that cares about the health and safety of its community, too. When employees raise safety or health concerns with managers or the safety committee, Nichols said, the company tackles those concerns quickly.

"Communication with and input from our employees is the foundation on which we have achieved SHARP certification through Oregon OSHA," he said.

The benefits of SHARP, which is part of [Oregon OSHA's consultation services](#), include lower injury and illness rates, decreased workers' compensation costs, increased employee morale, and lower product losses. ●



D&O Garbage recently celebrated its first-year award as a participant in Oregon OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program.

Short take

Workplace safety, health training grants available

If you have a dazzling idea for a workplace safety or health training program, Oregon OSHA wants to hear your pitch.

The agency is accepting [grant applications](#) for the creation of innovative on-the-job safety and health training programs. Applications are due by 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4. Oregon OSHA encourages unique projects such as mobile apps, videos, or online educational games to engage workers.

The training grants will focus on programs that target a high-hazard Oregon industry, such as construction or agriculture, or a specific work process to reduce or eliminate hazards. Any employer, labor group, school affiliated with a labor group, or nonprofit organization may apply. Applicants may request up to \$40,000 per grant project.

Employers are not allowed to use grants to pay for training for their employees. Materials produced by grant recipients become the property of Oregon OSHA. Many of the materials are housed in the [Oregon OSHA Resource Center](#) and are available for use by the public. Some materials are available electronically.

The Oregon Legislature launched the Occupational Safety and Health Education and Training Grant Program in 1990. Award recommendations are made by Oregon OSHA's Safe Employment Education and Training Advisory Committee, a group with members from business, labor, and government.



For more information, contact Teri Watson at 503-947-7406 or teri.a.watson@oregon.gov.

Apply for a workplace safety or health training grant by 5 p.m. Friday, Oct. 4

Get started

Short take

New video series offers fall protection training

Oregon OSHA has launched a free online course to help employers and workers across the state meet the agency's requirements to eliminate fall hazards, prevent falls, and ensure that workers who do fall do not die.

The two-hour course, "[Fundamentals of Fall Protection](#)," which includes six parts with 28 videos, is designed to supplement employers' fall protection training programs. It provides an overview of the rules, features interviews with experts, and provides links to additional information. Moreover, the course defines what fall protection means; walks viewers through fall protection options; delves into equipment inspection and maintenance; and shows viewers how to begin using fall protection.

Fall hazards are present at nearly every workplace. The human and economic costs of ignoring them cannot be overstated:

- One in five workplace deaths are due to slips, trips, and falls, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.
- From 2013 to 2018, there were 7,195 accepted disabling claims in Oregon due to falls to a lower level.
- In 2018, fall protection was the most commonly cited violation for Oregon's construction industry, with 443 total violations and initial penalties of \$902,990.

The "Fundamentals" course – which includes the opportunity to receive a certificate of completion – is the first of five online courses about fall protection that will be released during the summer and fall of 2019. The additional courses will address specific industries.





Safety Notes

Incident Report

Incident: Chemical burn

Company: Dairy farm

Worker: Wastewater operator

What happened?

An employee calibrating a pH probe was sprayed with 93 percent sulfuric acid when a PVC valve failed.

How did it happen?

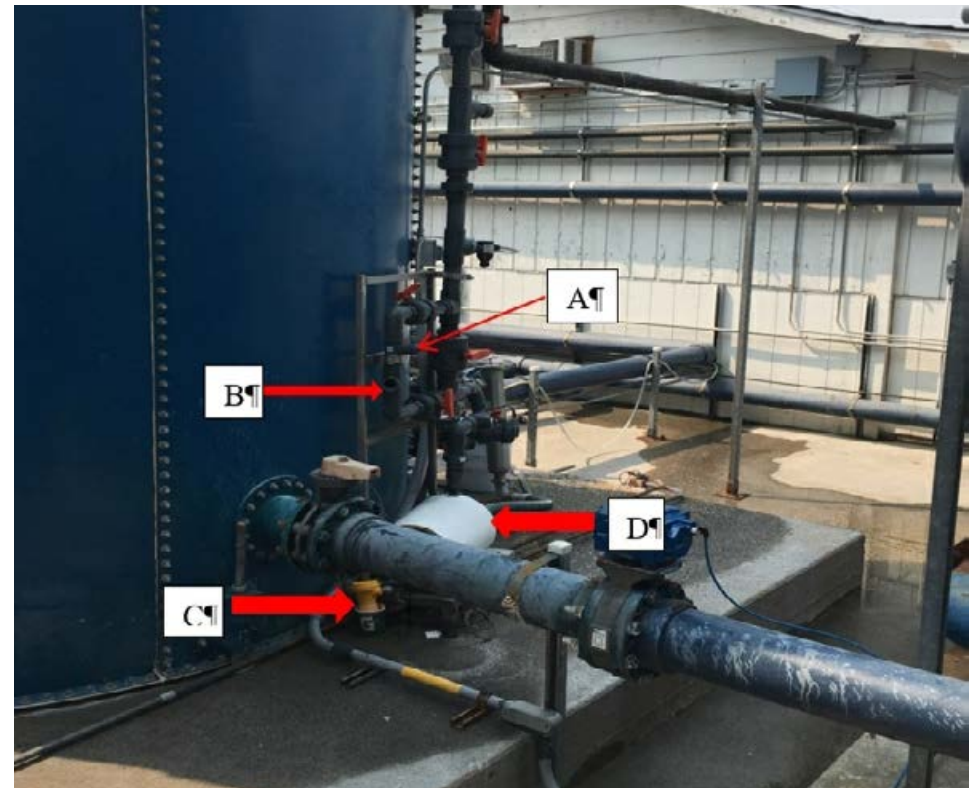
A wastewater operator who usually works alone at night during the swing shift was responsible for maintaining the wastewater treatment system for the farm. Part of his job also involved calibrating pH probes that monitor the facility's wastewater effluent.

The effluent needed to be pH-balanced with a 93 percent sulfuric acid solution to meet the requirements of a waste discharge permit. The sulfuric acid was supplied from a small portable tank with its own dedicated "acid" pump and delivered to a large bulk storage pH tank through a system of small tubes; then, the acid was injected into the effluent water stream through a port in the middle of a PVC pipe.

Adjacent to the injection port was a pH probe that monitored the status of the tank. The wastewater operator was almost done calibrating the probe and was reinserting it into the PVC pipe when he heard a loud "pop" and was sprayed with sulfuric acid. He immediately felt his skin burning, so he made his way to an emergency eye wash and shower, but because it was dark, it took him two minutes to get to a shower in the wastewater maintenance area.

He rinsed off in the shower for five minutes, but because there was no way to summon help, he walked to the production plant to get help from his co-workers as the remaining sulfuric acid began decomposing his clothes.

He told the first person he saw, a maintenance mechanic, that he was sprayed with sulfuric acid and needed someone to help him stop a leak at the pH tank. The two employees walked back to the pH tank, but couldn't find the leak, so the maintenance mechanic helped him to the emergency shower station where he started to rinse off again.



Overview of the pH probe calibration area: A is where the pH probe was removed from the system; B is where the employee was sprayed with sulfuric acid; C is where the pH probe was calibrated; and D is the acid pump that was operating at the time of the incident.

The shower's water temperature was too cold, so the maintenance mechanic guided him to a heated shower. Meanwhile, another employee called for emergency medical help and notified plant management about the incident.

The wastewater operator was taken by ambulance to the burn ward at a local hospital with first- and second-degree chemical burns over 11 percent of his torso, arms, buttocks, groin, and legs. He was expected to remain in the burn ward for six weeks and was scheduled to undergo skin grafts to repair the burn damage.



Closer view of the valves and pipe system associated with the pH tank: 1 is the acid injection point into the pH tank; 2 is the power switch to the acid pump shown at the bottom of the photo; 3 is where the pH probe was located in the system; and 4 is where the relief valve failed.

Factors that contributed to the incident

- A year before the incident, the dairy farm installed a new PVC piping system for the pH tank that used a 93 percent sulfuric acid solution; however, the farm did not conduct a hazard assessment to determine personal protective equipment and lockout/tagout needs for employees. The safety data sheet for 93 percent sulfuric acid requires eye protection, face protection, hand protection, and body protection.
- Employees indicated that they had not seen and were not aware of a written lockout/tagout procedure for the effluent tank and the PVC piping system. When they calibrated the pH probe in the past, they did not turn off or isolate the acid pump.
- The wastewater operator worked alone at night with potential exposure to sulfuric acid, but had no means to summon help in an emergency.
- The wastewater operator did not recognize the nearest emergency shower and went to one that was more than a minute walk from the incident site. He spent only five minutes in the shower before walking to seek help.
- The dairy farm had written procedures for calibrating some pH probes, but not for the pH probe involved in the incident.
- Employees confirmed that the PVC piping system leaked in the past and they had had not been trained for cleaning up the resulting chemical spills.
- The safety committee was not performing quarterly inspections.
- There was no full-time health and safety professional responsible for the dairy farm's health and safety program.



Violations

- *1910.147(c)(4)(i), Energy control procedure:* Procedures shall be developed, documented, and utilized for the control of potentially hazardous energy.
- *1910.147(c)(7)(i)(A), Energy control procedure:* Each authorized employee must receive training in the recognition of applicable hazardous energy sources, the type and magnitude of the energy available in the workplace, and the methods and means necessary for energy isolation and control.
- *437-002-0134(1)(a), Hazard assessment and equipment selection:* The employer must assess the workplace to determine if hazards are present that necessitate the use of personal protective equipment or other protective equipment.
- *437-002-0161(5)(a)(A)(v), Emergency eyewash and shower facilities:* Emergency eyewash and showers must meet the system manufacturer's criteria for water pressure, flow rate, and testing.
- *437-001-0765(5), Safety committees:* The safety committee must meet monthly (except the months when quarterly worksite inspections are performed).
- *437-001-0765(7), Safety committees:* The safety committee must establish procedures for conducting workplace safety and health inspections. Persons trained in hazard identification must conduct the inspections.

A hazard letter was also issued to the employer to address the need for:

- Proper illumination in the bulk chemical storage area
- An organized storage area for personal protective equipment
- An annual review of emergency procedures with employees, including the location of the nearest emergency eye wash showers
- Assurance that the PVC piping is appropriate for use with 93 percent sulfuric acid
- Available resources for the company's safety and health program

(A hazard letter informs an employer about hazardous conditions not covered by Oregon OSHA's rules or that could not be documented by a compliance officer during an inspection.) ●

Going the Distance

Forest Grove-based Woodfold Manufacturing recently completed a journey, begun in 2014, through Oregon OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). The company – which makes custom-crafted accordion and roll-up doors, and hardwood shutters for residential and commercial installations – now stands as a proud SHARP graduate.

The company's decision to take on the challenges of SHARP, which empowers companies to become self-sufficient in managing on-the-job safety and health, reflects its dedication to continuous improvement and to treating its employees like family.

"A phrase we use often at Woodfold is, 'Everyone is someone's son or daughter,'" said Kevin Emerick, risk manager for the company, "and it's our responsibility to look out for them as if they were our own son or daughter."

This month, Going the Distance touched base with Emerick to discuss the company's SHARP journey, and what it learned and did along the way.

Company	Woodfold Manufacturing Inc.
Type of business	Wood door manufacturing
Established	1957
Employees	47



Woodfold has long used Oregon OSHA's consultation services to bolster its commitment to continuous improvement. More recently, the company – owned 100 percent by employees – took its commitment to the next level by signing up for Oregon OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).

Why did you join SHARP?

There were two main drivers to starting the SHARP process. First, with our continuous improvement culture, we felt that participating in the SHARP process would provide a great challenge for us and improve our safety efforts, which, in turn, would help move us forward toward our goal that every day everyone goes home alive and well.

With the median tenure at our company at almost 25 years, we are family, and the last thing you want to see is someone in your family get hurt or worse. Secondly, having worked for Woodfold for more than 33 years, I was looking for help in developing a safety management system that would give us a sustainable safety system that would continue on with or without me.

What were some of the primary hazards that Oregon OSHA consultants identified?

With most of our products being custom-made and custom-sized, several pieces of equipment were also custom-made for our processes, presenting machine-guarding challenges. But through on-site training from the SHARP consultants and their expertise, we were able to come up with several machine-guarding improvements without compromising the functionality of the equipment. Also, with most of our finished products being custom-sized, it's been challenging to remove all of the material-handling hazards. Through brainstorming with the SHARP consultants, we were able to resolve some of our longstanding issues. We also incorporated change management policies, which was a profound step toward better addressing potential hazards in a proactive manner.



Kevin Emerick is risk manager for Woodfold.

What were the top changes Woodfold made to its safety and health management system during SHARP?

We now have a true safety and health management system providing the sustainability in our safety program that I was looking for. There is now greater visibility in how safety is part of our organizational objectives and what we are working on. Our injury rate was fairly low to begin with, so we haven't seen a dramatic change there yet, but our Experience Modification Rate (a number used by insurance companies to measure past injury costs and future risks) has been dropping and is currently at 0.76. We have moved a long way forward with greater employee involvement, including employees driving more of the training. Additionally, our Safety Improvement Team (safety committee) has put in systems to annually review all of our data, and establish goals and objectives for the next year.

What was the biggest challenge posed by SHARP?

Going through the [58 SHARP questions](#) was a very thorough breakdown of our safety efforts and gaps. And being a bit of a perfectionist, it was very challenging to get all threes on all 58 questions. But in the end, I learned that it's more important to have systems in place that make your gaps visible and creating a plan to help close them. ●



Woodfold Mfg., Inc., based in Forest Grove, makes custom-crafted accordion and roll-up doors, and hardwood shutters for residential and commercial installations.