



SAFETY

Safety is never an accident: it is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, intelligent direction and skillful execution! It represents the wise choice of many alternatives!!

Here Comes the Government

On Tuesday, September 30, 2003, (you can see that I do make these ramblings in a timely fashion), I received an email from NRMCA—National Ready Mix Concrete Association. In it the report was that John Henshaw, Assistance Secretary of Labor for OSHA, stated in a recent speech that there were 7 industry sectors that are scheduled to receive targeted OSHA enforcement in fiscal '04 (October 1, 2003 thru September 30, 2004). Concrete and Concrete Products were included for targeted enforcement. Our Ready Mix operations are a part of Concrete and Concrete Products. Therefore, it is likely that we will be under the microscope at least for the next 12 months.

The reasons given for these targeted enforcements were:

- At least 5000 total injury and illness cases in the sector;
- Lost work day injury/illness (LWDII) rates were 3.5 or greater;
- At least 50% of injuries and illnesses involving days away from work were so severe as to result in at least 6 days away from work;
- And other things that made no sense to me.

imi's LWDII rate for 2002 was 5.32. The National LWDII was 5.7 for 2001. "What do these numbers mean?" you ask.

The National LWDII rate means that, in our type of work and including every place that OSHA had records for during 2001, there were an average of 5.7 injuries that resulted in days away from work for every 200,000 hours worked. You can see that we were only slightly better than average. Can we do better? We can!! Some of our competitors are doing much better. In the 1.0 to 3.0 area. Also, the average number of days away from work for imi's lost time injuries was **36 days!**

Can You Hear Me Now?

Terry and I make an effort to evaluate what safety and health issues are important for imi and for the people who work for imi. It was recently brought to my attention that some of our trucks are noisier than others. I have started to gather data, but more data will be needed to honestly evaluate the exposure.

Noise exposure is regulated by OSHA and MSHA. Their studies, at the time that the safety standards were written, say that during an 8 hour shift, a continuous exposure noise of 90 decibels (dB) would result in the maximum permissible exposure level (PEL), or a 100% dose. 50% of this exposure level (85 dB for 8 hours) is the action level. If an employee's exposure level is above the action level, then the employer is required to start a hearing conservation program. There are studies that say that even at the action level, hearing loss can be experienced over time.

I have recorded the noise levels of two different ready mix trucks so far, an old 900 series and a new 400 series. The total exposure was very low for both trucks because the time spent exposed to the highest levels was very short when considered over the entire work shift. The highest noise levels were experienced while traveling at highway speeds (anyone driving a truck knows this, I am sure). For the newer truck, exposures to noise levels above 90 dB were less than 2% of the time and exposures above 85 dB were just over 8.5% of the time. For the older truck, above 90 dB exposures—8.3% and above 85 dB—21% of the time.

These samples were taken for roughly half a day. If this data is project for an 8 hour day, the driver of the older truck would be exposed to 17% of the maximum permissible exposure level. At a 10 hour shift the exposure would be 22% of the PEL and for a 12 hour shift—26% of the PEL. The newer truck's noise level was lower and therefore the exposure level was also lower. (concludes on back)

Inside this issue:

I'm From the Government and I'm Here to Help!

Noise in the Work Place

For What it is Worth!

For What it is Worth!

Did You See That?

Two guys were out hunting deer. The first guy says, "Did you see that?" "No," says the second guy. "Well, a bald eagle just flew overhead," the first guy says. "Oh," says the second guy. A couple minutes later the first guy says, "Did you see that?" "See what?" the second guy asked. "Are you blind? There was a big black bear walking on that hill, over there." "Oh," came the reply from the second guy. A few minutes later the first guy says, "Did you see that?" By now the second guy is getting irritated and responds, "Yes, I did!" And the first guy says, "Then why did you step in it?"

