

Environmental, Health & Safety News

When is a Good Time For Safety?

Words of Wisdom!

Farmers know that you can't sow and reap in the same day!

The idea for this article came from recent MSHA inspections at two of our mining locations and as a result of citations that we received during those inspections. I also borrowed from Gary Hanson, President of American Safety & Health Management Consultants, Inc. who writes a safety article for the monthly Ohio Ready Mixed Concrete Association newsletter.

Everyone can agree that the US and World economies are limping along below their potentials. Unemployment is high, consumer confidence is low, banks are unwilling to freely lend money, governments are printing money in an effort to stimulate economic activity which affects inflation, and on and on and on.

Tough economic times require businesses to tighten their belts. Tightening the belt means cutting back on expenses wherever possible which then results in lay-offs and around and around we go. Tough decisions have to be made to reduce costs. Is safety an area where costs can be reduced? Some would say that, "everything has to share in the reductions. Fewer people providing less product means that some of the details have to slide." Of course this makes no sense to me or to the management at imi. We are making even fewer dollars, so saving money from not experiencing incidents and injuries becomes even more important.

Now let's back up a few years to when things were going full bore and pedal to the metal. At those times, I heard the comment, "We are too busy and we don't have the manpower to take care of some of the details." This doesn't make any sense to me because it is difficult to use the excuse that we can't afford something related to safety when the Company is making money. I am proud to say that managers above me have never uttered this, at least in my presence!

So my questions are, "Which is it? Which excuse is valid?" To answer my own question: **Neither one!** It is always a good time for safety. The costs have nothing to do with the argument. The bottom line is that we cannot afford to ignore basic safety requirements, ever!!!

To tie this discussion directly to recent events; we have received several citations for violations of basic good

housekeeping in the last few weeks. The excuses that have been offered by those involved fall into the category of; too few people don't allow enough manpower to get all the little issues taken care of, and I understand some of that. But what was the excuse a few years back when, "we are too busy to take care of the little issues", was presented when similar violations were cited? It all depends on your perspective.

To my knowledge not one single request for safety gear or safety and environmental training has been denied. Our current safety record indicates that we are making progress toward our goal of zero incidents and injuries and for that, everyone needs a big thank-you. It is not anything particular that the EHS group is doing, it is a corporate effort to make it a part of our Corporate culture; in other words is it everything that everyone is doing.

In the course of my job I talk to a lot of different people from all different areas of Irving Materials, Inc., et al. and I try to put on the shoes of those individuals in an effort to understand why things are done in a certain manner. It never fails to amaze me when someone points out that they have a totally different view of a subject than me. I do try to factor their point of view into the actions that I take. The point being, "we must all remember that there are different ways to look at most things."

One thing that we all can agree on is that a good Safety Program is valuable. Our attitudes and beliefs about safety shouldn't change depending on the number of yards of concrete delivered or the tons of aggregate produced or the miles of roadway placed. Good housekeeping never goes out of style. The Safety Program is a never ending pursuit to reduce and eliminate the causes that put people at risk of being injured or being involved in an incident. It is most times not the big things that kill and injure people, it is the everyday occurrences. **Housekeeping** is a primary, everyday, all-the-time, never ending issue. Housekeeping is a basic safety concern. So when is a good time to take care of the housekeeping issue? **All the time! All the time is a good time for Safety!!**



Have a Safe Halloween!

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Environmental, Health and
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We're Proud of Our Work

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

Location: _____

Supervisor: _____

please sign below, confirming the material was reviewed: **October 2009**

Oct 4-10, 2009
firepreventionweek.org

STAY FIRE SMART!



October is always fire safety month and safety week in 2009 is October 4-10. For additional information try the firepreventionweek.org webpage listed above. Also try firesafety.gov for tips on:

- [Get a Smoke Alarm](#)

A smoke alarm is critical for the early detection of a fire in your home and could mean the difference between life and death. Fires can occur in a variety of ways and in any room of your home. But no matter where or how, having a smoke alarm is the first key step towards your family's safety.

- [Make an Escape Plan](#)

In the event of a fire, remember - time is the biggest enemy and every second counts! Escape plans help you get out of your home quickly. In less than 30 seconds a small flame can get completely out of control and turn into a major fire. It only takes minutes for a house to fill with thick black smoke and become engulfed in flames.

- [Practice Fire Safety](#)

More than 4,000 Americans die each year in fires and approximately 20,000 are injured. An overwhelming number of fires occur in the home. There are time-tested ways to prevent and survive a fire. It's not a question of luck. It's a matter of practicing and planning ahead.

- [Residential Fire Sprinklers](#)
- [What to Do After a Fire](#)

Recovering from a fire can be a physically and mentally draining process. When fire strikes, lives are suddenly turned around. Often, the hardest part is knowing where to begin and who to contact.

- [Carbon Monoxide Poisoning](#)

Each year unintentional carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning claims hundreds of lives and sends thousands of people to the emergency room for treatment.

There is not nearly enough room in this venue for all of the information. If you have the capability, get additional information about fire safety from the mentioned websites.