Safety Leadership Conference at Randolph CC

EHSI Hazard Communication Training Efforts are a Huge Success

I want to take a moment to thank the staff at EHSI for their tireless efforts in delivering the updated Hazard Communication to employees throughout the Community College Network. When it was all said and done, EHSI staff members trained over 3000 employees during the course of the year in the updated standard. This training is required by OSHA for all employees who work with or near hazardous chemicals. As you can imagine, this represents a large percentage of the CC faculty and staff members across the state. If you still need to schedule Hazard Communication training for members of your faculty or staff, please contact your EHSI representative or Tamara Heinemann at 828-694-4738. Don’t forget this training is also available via webinar at the EHSI SafetyNet online training center. The training is offered on the first Tuesday of each month at ehsi.webex.com. The password is always “Safety1”. You can also contact Tamara if you would like to schedule an online class at a different time than those already scheduled.

EHSI 2014 Conference Date Announced

We are excited to announce the date and agenda for this year’s annual safety conference. We hope that you will be able to join us on April 29th and 30th at Randolph Community College in Asheboro, NC as we continue our professional development offerings to you as safety leaders. This year we have asked the NC Industrial Commission Safety Education Section to provide their 2-day Safety Leadership Workshop so that we can further enhance the effectiveness of our efforts to improve the health and safety at all of our campuses.

The two day course will include the following key subjects:
- Safety for Supervisors
- Five Steps of Job Hazard Analysis
- Effective Safety Committees
- Inspection Process
- Communication Exercise
- Selling Safety to Management
- Accident Investigation

Conference attendees will also tour the Randolph Community College’s new LEED Gold Certified Education and Industrial Center one of the first LEED Gold Certified buildings in NC. Seating for this special event will be limited to 40 attendees so please reserve your seat as soon as possible. Lunch will be served on both days and as always, there is no cost to attend. If you have any questions or would like to reserve your seat, please contact Tamara Heinemann at t_heinemann@blueridge.edu or 828-694-4738.

This training will provide attendees with a better understanding of safety issues enabling them to investigate, evaluate, mitigate, and communicate safety issues in a way that encourages employee participation in campus safety programs.
Extension Cord Safety 1910.334(a)

Extension cords should be inspected before each use for damage to the insulation, wires, or plugs. The ground pin on the plug must remain intact in order to ensure proper grounding of the equipment being used. Ground pin adapters may not be used, and any extension cord that is used in a wet location must be approved for such locations. Damaged extension cords must be taken out of service and either destroyed or properly repaired. Damaged plugs are replaceable, but care must be taken to ensure each wire is attached to the correct terminal of the replacement plug.

In this case it may be best to err on the side of caution. If the cord is damaged near the ends, install a new plug at the damaged area and have a shorter, but safe cord. If the damage is near the middle, cut and install two new plugs and have two short cords. Portable Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters (GFCI) should be used in outdoor or wet applications. The GFCI should be plugged into the receptacle and then the cord plugged into it. This gives ground fault protection to the cord as well as the tool you are using. Extension cords typically designed for home use should not be used at the college. These cords usually have small, 18 gauge wires that can easily overheat without tripping the circuit breaker. Occasionally check your cord, and if it feels warm to the touch you should replace it with a heavier gauge extension cord.

OSHA allows minor repairs to the cord and wires with “incidental” abrasions to be made with electrical tape, but there is no definition of “incidental.” However at the same time, OSHA recommends against using tape for these repairs because 1926.403(a) in the construction regulations states “all electrical conductors and equipment shall be approved.” Also the taping will prevent any further inspection of the damage to see if it is getting worse (OSHA Letter of Interpretation 4-12-10).

Homemade extension cord sets are allowed if the proper electrical parts and flexible cords are used. This may sound petty, but we routinely find these made with a conduit style box (with knockouts) used to hold the receptacle. This is an OSHA violation and only the solid body electrical boxes should be used for this application [1910.303(b)(2)]. Flexible cords such as S, SE, SJ, etc. fall under 1910.305(g). Flexible cords may not be fastened to surfaces with staples or hung in a manner that would damage the outer jacket or insulation. Stapling cords also gives the appearance of permanent wiring, for which flexible cords are unsuitable. Flexible cords cannot be used through holes in the walls, ceilings, floors, or through doorways and windows. Flexible cords may not have splices or taps and must be connected with strain reliefs.

Power strips cannot be plugged into another power strip. This can lead to a serious overloading of the circuit. EHSI often finds this situation in computer labs and office areas. When using a power strip, as a rule of thumb, add up the wattage of all the devices that have plugged into the power strip and divide by 120. The answer will be the amps that you are using. The power strip should be rated above the amp demand and so should the circuit. Most circuit breakers for office receptacles are 15 or 20 amps.

OSHA categorizes all electrical hazard violations as a “Serious” violation, which carries a mandatory $7000 fine. This is quite a lot of money to pay for using a defective extension cord. A new 100 foot, 12 gauge extension cord is available for less than $100 at Lowes.
OSHA was 43 years old on December 29, 2013. On December 29, 1970 President Richard Nixon signed the bipartisan Williams-Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSH Act) into law. The legislation was proposed and driven forward by Senator Harrison Williams and Representative William Steiger. This law led to the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the independent Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission. During the twenty five years from 1945 – 1970 approximately 250,000 industrial deaths occurred due to accidents and illness. It’s estimated that 14,000 workers were killed in 1970, but the record keeping was not very good prior to OSHA so that estimate is suspect. The number of industrial deaths steadily declined over the years and in 2009 the number of deaths due to accident and illness was at 4,380. The number of deaths in industry now, is even more remarkable when you consider that the US workforce was 80 million in 1970 and approximately 152 million in 2009.

In the four decades that OSHA has been in existence the workplace fatalities have been reduced by 65 percent and the occupational injury and illness rates have declined by 67 percent, but OSHA says “far too many preventable injuries and fatalities continue to occur”. Each day twelve workers die on the job, and each year 3.3 million workers have a job-related injury or illness. Also many more employees are exposed to hazardous chemicals and materials that may have lasting effects. Some of the major milestones that have impacted the most workers in OSHA’s forty year history are:

- April 28, 1971 George Guenther becomes the first Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) under President Richard Nixon. He installed the initial consensus standards and developed OSHA’s first standard on asbestos fibers as a carcinogen (June 7, 1972).
- January 17, 1972 the OSHA Training Institute is established. OSHA partnered with colleges and universities in 1992 and between the two groups over 500,000 safety personnel and employees have been trained.
- First state plans approved in 1972 for South Carolina and Oregon to adopt and enforce OSHA standards.
- January 29, 1974 fourteen carcinogen standards are issued to address recognition of the growing chronic health effects of work place exposure.
- February 26, 1980 President Carter’s Executive order provides OSHA coverage for Federal workers.
- January 16, 1981 the Hearing Conservation standard mandates hearing protection at sound levels greater than 85 decibels and hearing testing.
- November 25, 1983 the Hazard Communication standard (HCS) is issued to require employers to provide information and training to employees about hazardous chemicals.
- September 1, 1989 Lockout/Tagout Standard (LOTO).
- September 3, 1991 Imperial Foods Fire, Hamlet, NC fire kills 25 people many of whom couldn’t escape because the company locked the fire exits. Federal OSHA resumes concurrent jurisdiction in NC (a state-run OSHA program) which resulted in a revamped North Carolina State Plan.
- November 15, 2007 payment for safety equipment employers must pay for safety equipment with the exception of prescription eye wear, safety shoes and normal work clothing.
Question: We have completed our required employee GHS training updates for our Hazard Communication program. When will we see the new labels and SDS sheets, and are there any other requirements?

Answer: Thanks for participating in the Hazard Communication GHS Update Training provided by EHSI. Last year we trained over 3000 community college employees before the OSHA required date of December 1, 2013. You may start seeing the new labels and SDS sheets anytime now. Chemical manufacturers and distributors have from now until December 1, 2015 to comply with new label and Safety Data Sheet requirements. So between now and then you may get a mix of old and new labels and SDS or MSDS sheets as current stock is shipped. After December 1, 2015, any new shipment received or purchased must be GHS compliant. During this transition period, OSHA recognizes that businesses will have a combination of MSDS and SDS sheets in their file. As new SDS sheets come in, begin to replace the old MSDS sheets. After June 1, 2016 you should have all SDS’s in your file. If you still have an old MSDS for a chemical that has not been reordered during this period, you can find a new SDS sheet online or call the manufacturer and ask for one. But if this is the case, you should consider the need for that chemical and based on its limited usage, possibly discontinue using it.

### EHSI SafetyNet Training Schedule

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(all training starts at 10:00 a.m.)