

March 2016



twitter.com/cmta



facebook.com/
calmanufacturers

Inside this issue:

Addressing workplace hazards **1**

CMTA keeps up the fight on work comp bills **3**



CMTA SOURCE

The Trusted Insurance Source For Manufacturers

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

Addressing workplace hazards

How do you set priorities for workplace health and safety issues, especially hazard control? Determining how organizations address hazards can be challenging. When prioritizing hazards you need to consider:

- ◆ Which hazards are the most serious?
- ◆ Which hazards have historically produced the greatest number of injuries or illnesses?
- ◆ Which hazards have historically produced the most severe injuries or illnesses?
- ◆ What tasks are causing the most injuries?
- ◆ Which hazards can be addressed easily or quickly?
- ◆ Could the public be affected by this hazard?
- ◆ What funds and other resources are available to carry out any solutions?

Let's examine how to control hazards. Once hazards are identified there are various methods that can be used to protect workers. These are referred to as hazard controls. Not all controls are equally effective. In fact, there is a hierarchy of possible control solutions. Think of a pyramid, with the most effective solutions at the top of the pyramid. These solutions remove the hazard. The next level of solutions will reduce or eliminate a workers exposure to the hazard. The least desirable solution is the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) because it merely provides resistance to a hazard.

What is a Hazard?

There are a host of definitions of a hazard as it pertains to workplace injuries. But the following is particularly definitive:

Hazard - any source in the workplace of potential unplanned damage, harm or adverse health effects.

Expanding this a bit, a hazard can cause harm or adverse effects (to individuals as health effects or to organizations as a property loss, equipment loss or a reduction in asset values).

A common way to classify hazards is by category:

- ◆ **Biological** - bacteria, viruses, insects, plants, birds, animals, and humans, etc.
- ◆ **Chemical** – this is dependent on the physical, chemical and toxic properties of the chemical.
- ◆ **Ergonomic** - repetitive movements, improper set up of workstation, focused on work process.
- ◆ **Physical** - radiation, pressure extremes (high pressure or vacuum), noise, temperature, etc.
- ◆ **Psychosocial** - stress, violence, trauma, etc.,
- ◆ **Safety** - slipping/tripping hazards, inappropriate machine guarding, equipment malfunctions or breakdowns, sharp items, moving parts, etc.

continued on page 2

continued from "Addressing workplace hazards"

In your risk assessment process you must:

- ◆ Identify hazards
- ◆ Analyze or evaluate the risk associated with that hazard
- ◆ Determine appropriate ways to eliminate or control the hazard

The following simple table can be helpful in understanding the relationship of hazard to harm:

Workplace Hazard	Hazard	Harm Caused
Object	Knife	Cut
Substance	Benzene	Leukemia
Material	Asbestos	Mesothelioma
Source of Energy	Electricity	Shock, Electrocutation
Condition	Wet floor	Slips and Falls
Cumulative Trauma	Repeated Lifting	Musculoskeletal Strains

Removing a Hazard

The best way to protect workers from hazards is to remove the hazard from the workplace altogether or to keep workers away from the hazard. This method is referred to as an engineering control. Engineering controls directly address the hazard and do not depend on a workers actions to be effective. Workers don't have to wear special protective gear or take special precautions, because the hazard has been eliminated.

Engineering controls might include these methods:

Re-design the process – This might include the use of conveyor belts to eliminate lifting and carrying or the use of hoists to move engines from crate to a vehicle.

Install ventilation systems – Remove chemicals and airborne particles from the air workers breathe.

Substituting safer products for hazardous ones – use chemicals that are not dangerous in the work process. This may impact productivity, but the trade-off is a reduction in work related injury/illness losses and a healthy workforce.

Re-design the equipment – Change computer workstations to fit the worker's bodies comfortably or replace old equipment with new equipment that has improved guarding.

Improve Work Policies and Procedures

Oftentimes, removing the hazard is not possible. When a hazard cannot be eliminated altogether, another option is to employ procedures that limit your workers' exposure to the danger presented by workplace hazards. These are referred to as administrative controls. Examples include:

Rotating workers – This limits a hazard exposure to a less harmful level so that the length of exposure is reduced.

Increase the number of breaks – This will reduce the time of exposure, but again there is still an exposure.

Change work schedules - For example, if feasible schedule tasks in very hot environments at night when it's cooler.

Providing worker training programs – Hazard communication and proper procedures help limit the impact of hazards on workers.

continued on page 3

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

The third method of reducing the impact of a hazard is to use personal protective equipment. PPE worn on the body protects workers from exposure to a hazard. PPE might include gloves, goggles, respirators, ear plugs, hard hats, coveralls, to name a few. Use PPE when other methods of hazard control are not possible or don't give enough protection to remove the hazard from the workplace. Oftentimes PPE is used with an administrative control to provide the best available method of hazard protection.

Safety is a process that must be managed. Effective safety directors and managers will establish priorities and monitor results to ensure that the organization's investment in safety provides a return consistent with expectations. That return is not always measured monetarily, but satisfies the organizations' moral responsibility of protecting its employees.

CMTA keeps up the fight on work comp bills

CMTA is working on two important 2016 workers' compensation bills that could impact manufacturers. Our advocacy could increase in this issue area as we continue to work through the 1,500 bills introduced during this legislative session.

Following is a synopsis of the bills. You can go to www.cmta.net/page/legwatch.php to get more bill information and bill letters in 2016.

AB 1643 by Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez Title: *Workers' compensation: permanent disability apportionment*

Last year, Gov. Jerry Brown vetoed AB 305, a bill that CMTA opposed after it was introduced by Assemblymember Lorena Gonzalez in May 2105. It would have eliminated alleged gender bias against women in workers' compensation. The bill passed the Assembly Insurance Committee on a party line of 9-4 vote. By mid-May it had passed the Assembly with a 59-18 vote, then successfully made it out of the Senate and to the Governor's desk by September.

On October 6, Gov. Brown vetoed it because it was based "on a misunderstanding of the American Medical Association's evidence-based standard, which is the foundation of the permanent disability ratings, and replaces it with an ill-defined and unscientific standard."

Gonzalez introduced a replacement bill this month, AB 1643 that is expected to once again undermine the principle of apportionment in the workers' compensation system and drive up permanent disability awards by prohibiting apportionment in cases of physical or psychiatric injuries when gender-related characteristics are involved.

CMTA position: RECOMMEND OPPOSE

AB 2230 by Assemblymember Kansen Chu
Title: *Workers' compensation: language interpreters*

AB 2230 requires that, when necessary, a language interpreter be selected by the injured employee during Workers' Compensation medical treatment appointments, proceedings and depositions. The bill only allows employers to select the interpreter only when no selection has been previously made.

CMTA Position: Watch



CompWest

CMTA-CompWest Workers'
Compensation solutions for
manufacturers.





CALIFORNIA
MANUFACTURERS
& TECHNOLOGY
ASSOCIATION



1115 Eleventh Street
Sacramento, CA 95814-3819
(916) 498-3340

PUBLISHED BY

California Manufacturers &
Technology Association
1115 Eleventh Street
Sacramento, CA
95814-3819

Editor: Andy Viglietti
aviglietti@cmta.net
(916) 498-3340

Assistant: Renee Blatt
rblatt@cmta.net
(916) 498-3342

Email: cmtasource@cmta.net

Fax: (916) 441-5449

www.cmta.net/page/cmtasource.php

Reprint permission granted
with credit given to source.

Printed by
California Manufacturers &
Technology Association

*MEMBER FOCUSED
MEMBER DRIVEN*

We're on the Web!

www.cmta.net/page/cmtasource.php