

SAFETY FOCUS

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SMACNA Safety Surveys Due May 16

Safety Award Program Deadline May 16

The submittal deadline for the 2008 SMACNA Safety Excellence Awards Program (SSEAP) is May 16, 2008. Please consider submitting a safety survey. SMACNA members can complete and submit their form online by going to the SMACNA website (www.smacna.org)...it's easy!

Entries can also be submitted by fax or regular mail. Go to the safety webpage on the SMACNA website for a "hardcopy" of the survey form.

The report generated from these confidential survey results is called the SMACNA Safety Profile. This report is valuable to the sheet metal industry as it helps track safety and health issues that affect our industry. You can be a part of this effort simply by submitting a survey.

You will need your previous year (2007) injury / illness data to answer the first couple questions, but then most of the remaining questions have "check a box" answers. The electronic version should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete and submit.

First place winners in each man-hour category will be presented with their awards at the SMACNA annual convention in Maui, Hawaii. Second place winners and third place winners, and all participants who report a "zero" injury and illness rate, will have their awards shipped to them.

If you have questions about the SSEAP, please contact Mike McCullion, SMACNA' Director of Safety and Health by telephone at (703) 995-4027 or by e-mail at (mmccullion@smacna.org).

OSHA Special Emphasis Programs on Combustible Dust and Silica

OSHA Special Emphasis Programs – Combustible Dusts and Silica

The Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) recently issued two National Emphasis Programs (NEP) that could affect SMACNA members and the sheet metal / HVAC industry as a whole. An NEP typically means increased and "focused" compliance inspections and enforcement actions related to the topic of concern.

Combustible Dusts

OSHA issued a safety and health instruction that details OSHA policies and procedures for inspecting workplaces that handle combustible dusts and that may have the potential for a dust explosion. Combustible dusts are often either organic or metal dusts that are finely ground into very small particles, fibers, chips, and/or flakes.

These dusts can come from metal, wood, plastic and organic materials such as grain, flour, sugar, paper, soap and dried blood. Dusts can also come from textile materials. Some of the industries in which combustible dusts are particularly prevalent include agriculture, chemical, textile, forest and the furniture industry.

The main “exposure” for sheet metal and HVAC contractors would be when working in industrial and manufacturing facilities and plants that have the potential to accumulate these types of dusts. Special precautions should be taken when welding, cutting, or brazing (or other “hot work”) in these areas. Go to this link for more information...

http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=15021%20

Crystalline Silica.

The second national emphasis program was established to identify and reduce or eliminate the health hazards associated with occupational exposure to crystalline silica. The sheet metal industry was one of many industries named in the program with the “potential for overexposure to crystalline silica”.

The main area of concern for the sheet metal industry was identified as abrasive blasting (or sandblasting). However, any work that results in significant disturbance of concrete or masonry should be considered to be under the jurisdiction of this national emphasis program and evaluated for possible silica dust exposures. Go to this link for more information... http://www.osha.gov/pls/oshaweb/owadisp.show_document?p_table=NEWS_RELEASES&p_id=14932

If you have questions about the programs, please contact Mike McCullion, SMACNA’s director of safety and health by telephone at (703) 995-4027 or by e-mail (mmccullion@smacna.org).

Working in Hot Environments – Heat Stress Cards Available

Working in Hot Environments – Heat Stress Card Available

With the coming summer months, SMACNA contractors are encouraged to provide workers with information and training on the hazards associated with working in hot environments. Overexposure to heat causes heat stress that can lead to more serious heat illnesses such as:

- Heat Cramps – painful muscle cramps, usually in the abdomen or legs.
- Heat Syncope – fainting due to low blood pressure.
- Heat Exhaustion – heavy sweating, dizziness, blurred vision, confusion, headache, nausea, vomiting.
- Heat Stroke – very dangerous – nausea; no sweating; red, hot and dry skin; throbbing headache; unconsciousness – can lead to death if not treated immediately.

Aside from these obvious physical dangers, the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) reports that the frequency of accidents in general appears to be higher in hot environments than in more moderate environmental conditions.

One reason is that working in a hot environment lowers the mental alertness and physical performance of an individual. Increased body temperature and physical discomfort promote negative emotional states which sometimes cause workers to overlook safety procedures or to divert attention from hazardous tasks.

The key to preventing excessive heat stress is educating supervisors and workers on the hazards of working in heat and the benefits of implementing proper controls and work practices. Contractors should establish a program designed to acclimatize workers who must be exposed to hot environments and provide necessary work–rest cycles and water to minimize heat stress.

SMACNA has developed a Heat Stress and Heat Illness Tip Card to be used in providing training to employees on the hazards of heat exposure. The purpose of the tip card is to supplement training on the subject of heat stress. Several states, including California and Washington, recently passed new or revised regulations regarding heat exposure.

The cards have a theme, PAT – Prevention, Awareness, and Treatment, as a way to emphasize the various aspects of heat exposure. Prevention discusses drinking plenty of fluids, wearing proper clothing, and taking breaks in the shade or ventilated areas. Awareness centers on the main types of heat illness. Treatment focuses on notifying the supervisor and seeking medical attention if needed.

For more information or to order copies of the heat stress cards, send an email to Mike McCullion, SMACNA’s director of safety and health at mmccullion@smacna.org. Please include the number of cards needed, your name, company name and SHIPPING address, telephone number, and UPS code for shipping and handling charges.

OSHA Offers Helpful Information to Small Businesses

OSHA – Small Business Resources

The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a very helpful webpage for small businesses. The webpage includes information on the following:

- Compliance assistance resources
- A small business handbook (very helpful)
- OSHA benefits for small businesses
- Penalty reductions for small businesses
- Safety and health adds value
- On–site consultation
- Small business tools including recordkeeping and inspections
- Workplace injury and illness statistics

The OSHA webpage can be accessed at the following web link: <http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/index.html>

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