

LABORERSAFFE

WINTER 2009

A guide for health & safety at home & on the job



CRANE SAFETY

NEW INITIATIVE FOCUSES ON AWARENESS, STANDARDS, INSPECTIONS, INVOLVEMENT AND TRAINING

After two deadly crane accidents marred New York City's building boom earlier this year, the U.S. Department of Labor's Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) launched a National Crane Safety Initiative in October to address safety hazards. The new OSHA initiative builds on earlier steps to raise awareness on crane safety, increase enforcement of safety standards, inspect high-rise construction, involve stakeholders and enhance safety training.

On construction sites in New York City and other cities, it's important for us as laborers to know the hazards and protective measures for working around cranes. The New York City Council has passed legislation for construction site safety and, specifically, for those sites where tower or climber cranes are being used. The legislation would require each site to submit a comprehensive

plan with the Department of Building and increase training for operators.

For the laborers who are on the job, residents in the city and visitors of the city it is important that we keep vigilant about the safety precautions of the job sites. If there is ever an occasion on the job site where you feel the regulations are not being met — talk to your supervisor. Without good communication, accidents happen and people get hurt or even killed.

Main Causes of Crane Accidents:

- Electrocutions from overhead power lines
- Crane collapse
- Being struck by falling booms or jibs
- Being struck by a falling crane load



Concentration is important individually, for personal safety and efficiency, and it's crucial collectively due to the cooperative way we work.

SLEEP DEPRIVATION



Concentration is important on any job, especially those involving power tools, heavy equipment or working high above the ground on scaffolding. In other words, concentration is critical in our work.

The need for concentration is just one reason why we need a restful night's sleep before going on the job in the morning. We know that the work we do takes a toll on the body, and we need healing time to get over aches and pains. It also takes a toll on the mind, and it requires mental concentration to do it safely. So the mind has to rest up just as the body does.

Concentration is important individually, for personal safety and efficiency, and it's crucial collectively due to the cooperative way we work. Everyone depends on everyone else for mutual support

and mutual safety. Lack of sleep makes concentration difficult, so it's important to recognize and prevent the problems that come with it.

Short Term Problems from Lack of Sleep

- Decreased daytime alertness
- Impaired memory and ability to think and process information
- Increased risk of occupational injury
- Weakened immune system

Lack of sleep is a problem not only on the job site but also driving home after a long workday. Drowsy drivers often make driving mistakes — in fact, the most fundamental mistake is believing they can drive home safely at all. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration estimates conservatively that, during an average year, drowsy drivers cause 100,000 automobile wrecks, 71,000 injuries and 1,550 fatalities.

Long Term Problems from Lack of Sleep

- High blood pressure
- Heart attack
- Heart failure
- Stroke
- Psychological problems including depression and other mood disorders
- Mental impairment
- Obesity

Shiftwork is a reality in the construction business and has a huge impact on the sleep cycles of those who do shiftwork. It is important that those workers continue with a structured sleep schedule and stick to it so that the body continues to function in its cycles. This may be a problem when it comes to social interactions and family time, however, for the safety of the worker and others on the site it is imperative that Laborers get a proper amount of sleep.

How to Get a Better Night's Sleep

- Go to bed and get up at about the same time every day, even on weekends.
- Don't eat or drink large amounts before bedtime.
- Avoid nicotine, caffeine and alcohol in the evening.
- Exercise regularly.
- Make your bedroom cool, dark, quiet and comfortable.
- Start a relaxing bedtime routine.
- Use sleeping pills only as a last resort.



CONCRETE SAFETY

We Laborers commonly work with concrete and around concrete on job sites. Consequently, we face significant hazards associated with this material. So it's important to recognize the potential risks of concrete construction and how to protect ourselves and our fellow Laborers.

It's important to recognize that each material that we work with involves particular hazards and each may require particular protective measures. We rely on our training, lessons and skills learned in the apprenticeship process. And we rely on each other, to notice any safety hazards on the job site and to report them to the superintendent on the site.

Personal Protection for Concrete Work In addition to the standard job site protections of hardhats and hearing protection, Laborers working around concrete should also:

- ✓ Always wear waterproof gloves and boots, a long-sleeved shirt, full-length trousers, and proper eye protection
- ✓ Remember that boots should be tall enough to keep wet concrete from flowing into them
- ✓ Rinse wet concrete, mortar, cement or cement mixtures from clothing, because wet cement may soak or penetrate clothing and can cause indirect contact with skin, bringing significant health hazards
- ✓ Use a respirator when working with dry cement, sand, or any other fine material



Protect Your Back — cement can be very heavy, it is important to use proper ergonomic lifting rules when working with this material.

Protect Your Skin — prolonged contact between skin and fresh concrete can cause burns that can become quite severe. Laborers should seek immediate medical attention if skin irritations persist.

Jobsite Conditions and Concrete Safety — cramped conditions and projects in confined spaces can intensify hazards associated with concrete, particularly regarding spills and airborne particles. Weather factors can also result directly in injury or combine with another risk.

STRESS

5 WAYS TO REDUCE COMMON STRESS TRIGGERS

Balancing work and life is an important issue for construction workers, contributing to effectiveness and safety on the job and happiness in life. Lack of balance can cause stress, which may lead to burnout, mental health issues, substance abuse, and diminished functioning. Naturally, stress affects everyone differently, but it almost always has a negative impact. **We can reduce the effects of stress by recognizing and avoiding what triggers it and learning how to reduce it.**

How to RECOGNIZE and AVOID Common Stress Triggers

- ✘ **Being late all the time** – Avoid the anxiety of arriving late by preparing for traffic and possible problems. Allow yourself an extra 20 minutes.
- ✘ **Excess workload** – Stop piling more work on top of what you already have. Start delegating tasks to others.
- ✘ **General unhappiness with your life** – Discontent brings stress. Try to learn to accept your life and everything in it.
- ✘ **Feeling out of control** – The sense of being controlled by events, rather than controlling them, creates stress. Think about areas of your life where you can take greater control, and do it.

How to REDUCE Stress

- ✓ **Get enough sleep** – The more rested you are, the better you will be able to handle stress in your life. Don't over do it, though. Sleeping too much also indicates stress.
- ✓ **Balance your diet** – Make sure your diet includes all the nutrients your body needs to keep you going strong. Also, some food allergies can cause stress.
- ✓ **Exercise** – Physical activity is a great stress reliever. Do something that you enjoy, so that it doesn't seem like a chore.
- ✓ **Reach out** – When you're stressed, sometimes the last thing you want to do is socialize. But being with people and having fun can help you forget your troubles for a while.
- ✓ **Relax** – Taking a few minutes of down time does a lot of good. Reading, listening to music, gardening, getting out in nature and meditation are good relaxation techniques.

5 WAYS TO REDUCE STRESS

Exercise
Reach out
Balance your diet
Get enough sleep
Relax



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