



the monitor

keeping industry informed of developments in occupational health and safety

Issue 4 Vol 16 November 2012



Ominous signs in workers' compensation statistics

WorkCover WA's Annual Statistical Report for 2007/08-2010/11 provides interesting reading and informative data on the future direction of injury and disease incidence in Western Australia and contains some ominous signs that should attract the attention of OHS professionals.

The Report identifies the key drivers for the increase in recommended premium rates for 2011/12 as the rising proportion of long duration claims (claims of 60+ days duration) combined with increases in overall claims duration.

Over the four years 2007/08-2010/11 the proportion of long duration claims has continued to rise although the total number of claims has either reduced or remained relatively stable.

| Year | Total Claims | Long Duration Claims | % of claims |
|---------|--------------|----------------------|-------------|
| 2007/08 | 40949 | 3958 | 9.66 |
| 2008/09 | 38469 | 4109 | 10.68 |
| 2009/10 | 36665 | 4080 | 11.12 |
| 2010/11 | 37847 | 4994 | 13.19 |

The increase in long duration claims in 2010/11 of 914, or 22.40%, is a cause for concern.

Indications are that this trend will also be evident in the 2011/12 year.

The Report states that long duration claims in 2010/11 accounted for 81.5% of total claims cost with the majority of costs incurred by claims of 180 days or more time off work.

An additional item of concern was the increase in the number of claims for mental diseases in 2010/11 from 425 in 2009/10 to 567 in 2010/11, an increase of 33.41%.

Readers who follow developments elsewhere will have noted that claims for mental health problems in Canada are now the leading cause of workplace disability in that country.

MARCSTA will conduct a seminar/workshop in early 2013 to discuss both the incidence and alarming costs of long duration claims and the growing concern with mental disease claims.

Readers can record their interest in attending this event by emailing their details to pfs@marcsta.com

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Issue 4

Vol 16
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Merry Christmas from the Management Committee

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MARCSTA training packages

As a Registered Training Organisation, MARCSTA delivers occupational safety and health units of competency for the following national training packages:

- Transport and Logistics
- Business Services
- Resources and Infrastructure Industry
- Construction, Plumbing and Services Integrated Framework

Applications for recognition of prior learning may be lodged for all training programs.

Archived editions of the Monitor are available online at www.marcsta.com

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OHS harmonisation ... Update



Western Australia

A survey to assess the costs and benefits of the proposed *Work Health and Safety Regulations* has been completed and the report from the consultants, Marsden Jacob Associates, is expected to be with the Minister by mid to late November, which effectively defers any possibility of amending legislation until well after the 2013 State election.

The State Mining Engineer has advised (see *Minesafe*, September) of the following initiative:

In a true demonstration of goodwill and commitment to a positive outcome, UnionsWA, WorkSafe WA, the Association of Mining and Exploration Companies, the Chamber of Minerals and Energy WA and the Department of Mines and Petroleum have formed an alliance to ensure that the transition to the new OHS harmonisation laws is supported by consistent messages.

Representatives from these key stakeholders are meeting regularly to formulate a consistent set of appropriate messages that can be delivered by multiple avenues to those working in the mining sector. Web-based podcasts, and in-flight and pre-shift audiovisual presentations are being considered for message delivery, as well as the usual broadcast and print media.

South Australia

The industrial Relations Minister, Russell Wortley, has announced that after months of negotiating, the Government has support for the passage of the harmonised WHS legislation. Amendments to height limits, clarification on the duty of care, the right to silence and right of entry have been incorporated.

He said that the national net benefit of the reforms is expected to reach \$250 million a year throughout the next decade, reflecting reduced red tape and better safety standards.

The Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Bill Shorten, said that with workplaces in South Australia and Tasmania introducing harmonised WHS laws effective from 1 January 2013, workers and employers in those states will join millions of other Australians already benefiting from harmonised laws.

He called upon Victoria and Western Australia to do likewise.

New South Wales

New legislation to replace the existing laws, while maintaining the status quo for mining, is expected to commence on 1 January 2013 and will include additional mining-specific provisions to apply in NSW which are also common to Western Australia and Queensland.

ADVERSE MEDIA REPORTS ON HEALTH AND SAFETY IN THE MINING INDUSTRY NEED REBUTTAL



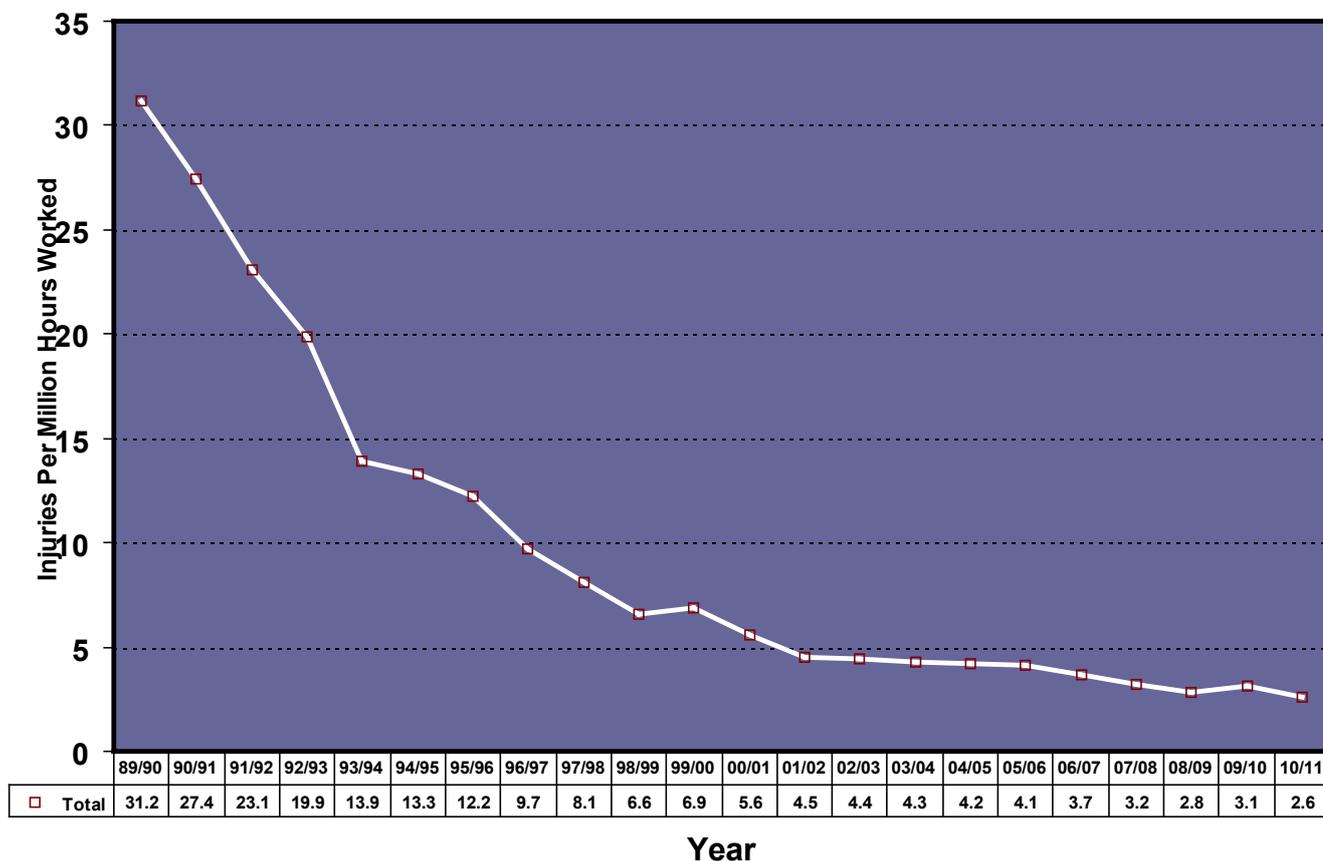
Pre-start safety meeting

Articles appearing in the weekend media recently should be responded to, not only because they are misleading, but also because those persons who work in the industry today should be informed of the facts in order to appreciate that they work in an industry that is a recognised world leader in occupational health and safety.

Safety performance in the mining sector, by any available measure and statistics, has never been better.

An examination of the *Department of Mines and Petroleum's Annual Reports on Safety Performance*, available from their website, provides irrefutable evidence of this fact.

**Western Australian Mines
Lost Time Injury Frequency Rates
1989-90 to 2010/11**



SafeWork Australia's **Notifiable Work-Related Fatalities by Industry**, January to June 2012 period, provides further evidence of the national performance of the mining industry.

Notifiable Work-Related Fatalities by Industry

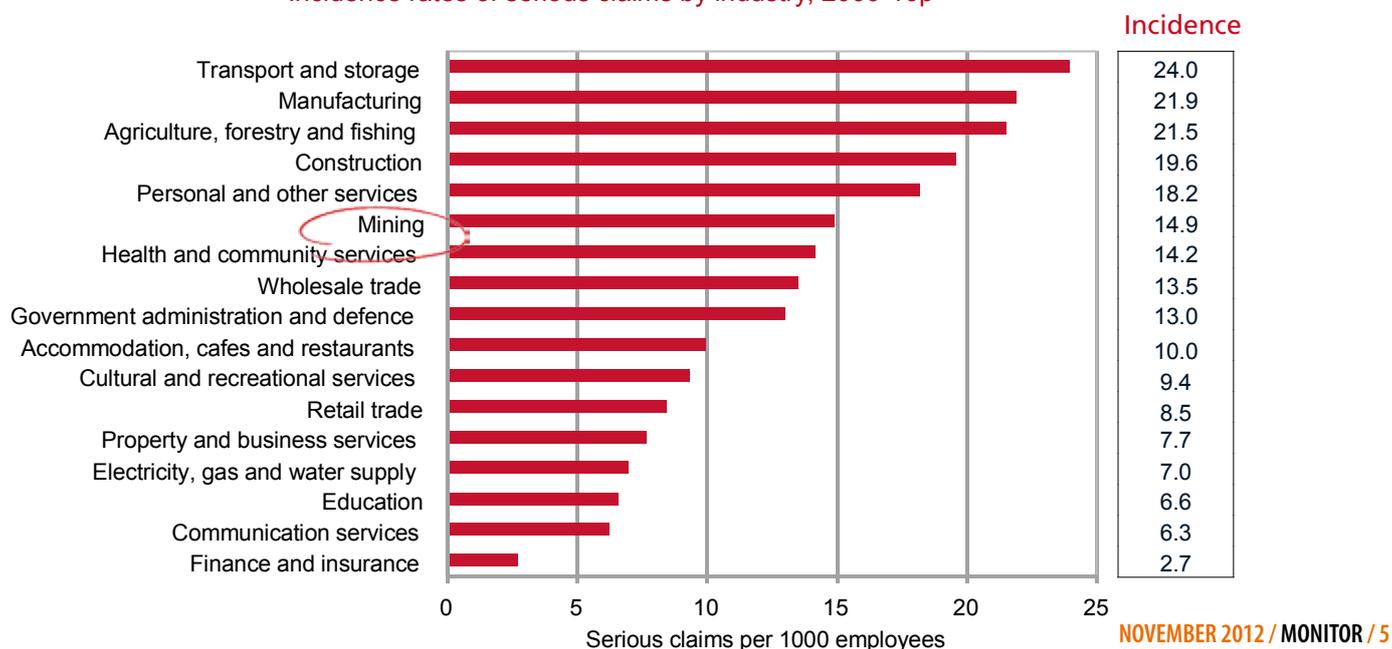
Notifiable work-related fatalities by industry, June and year-to-date

| Industry ^b | Industry of workplace | | | | | | Industry of Employer | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------|----------------|------------|----------------|-----------|----------------|----------------------|----------------|
| | Worker | | By-stander | | Totals | | Worker | |
| | Jun 2012 | Year-to - date | Jun 2012 | Year-to - date | Jun 2012 | Year-to - date | Jun 2012 | Year-to - date |
| Transport & Storage | 2 | 20 | 2 | 9 | 4 | 29 | 2 | 24 |
| Agric, Forestry & Fishing | 4 | 23 | 0 | 1 | 4 | 24 | 5 | 22 |
| Construction | 1 | 15 | 0 | 1 | 1 | 16 | 1 | 15 |
| Personal & Other Services | 0 | 4 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 2 |
| Cultural & Recreational Services | 0 | 4 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 4 |
| Wholesale Trade | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 5 | 0 | 2 |
| Manufacturing | 0 | 4 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4 | 0 | 3 |
| Retail Trade | 1 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 3 | 0 | 2 |
| Communication Services | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Health & Community Services | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| Mining | 2 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Property & Business Services | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 1 | 5 |
| Education | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Elec, Gas & Water Supply | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Accomm, Cafes & Restaurants | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Finance & Insurance | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Government Admin & Defence | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 |
| Private residence | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Industry unknown or not applicable | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Grand Total | 11 | 84 | 4 | 20 | 15 | 104 | 11 | 84 |

Mining in Western Australia has not recorded a fatality in this period.

SafeWork Australia's **Key Work Health and Safety Statistics, Australia, 2012 Report** provides comparative national data on the incidence of serious injuries 2009/10.

Incidence rates of serious claims by industry, 2009-10p



Health and safety training

The mining industry's commitment to the training of safety and health representatives, a major factor in improving its performance, is a further example of the standards being set by the industry.

WorkSafe WA Introductory Training by Industry 2010/11 Major Industry Sectors

| Industry | Reps trained per 1000 workers |
|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing | 3.0 |
| Construction | 3.2 |
| Manufacturing | 2.0 |
| Transport, Storage | 4.1 |
| Retail Trade | 0.6 |
| Mining | 26.5 |

Workers' compensation

A perusal of the Workers' Compensation Premium Rates printed in the Government Gazette on 13 April 2012 shows the rates for mining categories at the lower end of the scale and in most cases less than half of that applying in other major industry sectors.

| Division | Premium Rate |
|----------------------------------|--------------|
| Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing | 4.34 |
| Transport, Storage | 2.86 |
| Manufacturing | 2.81 |
| Personal & Other Services | 2.70 |
| Accomm, Cafes, Restaurants | 2.25 |
| Health, Community Services | 2.24 |
| Construction | 2.04 |
| Cultural & Recreational Services | 1.75 |
| Retail Trade | 1.69 |
| Wholesale Trade | 1.55 |
| Mining | 1.45 |
| Communication Services | 1.28 |
| Education | 1.23 |
| Property & Business Services | 0.66 |
| Govt Administration/Defence | 0.64 |
| Electricity, Gas, Water | 0.61 |
| Finance, Insurance | 0.25 |

Health - diesel fumes

A specific incidence of journalistic negligence was a recent article concerning diesel fumes.

This topic was addressed in depth at the Minesafe Conference first held in Perth in 1990 and in subsequent conferences held in 1993, 1996, 1998 and 2000.

In 1990 a session dedicated to atmospheric contaminants, which included addresses by the world's leading authorities and was summarised by the renowned Sir Richard Doll, the Emeritus Professor of Medicine, Cancer Studies, Oxford, provided a complete coverage of all aspects of diesel particulates.

The session also included a scholarly paper on methodologies and practices in place for monitoring atmospheric contaminants in the mining industry in WA by the late, highly regarded, State Mining Engineer, Jim Torlach.

The monitoring and regulation of diesel particulates in underground mines in WA is an outstanding aspect of the commitment of regulators to ensuring healthy workplaces.

Health - Mine Workers' Health Certificates

The mining sector is the only major industry sector that requires employees to undergo initial and five-year health checks in order to ensure that its workplaces do not cause any deterioration in the health of its workers. This program has been in place since 1995.

OHS regulation

The Department of Mines and Petroleum has been provided with increased resources, funded by a per capita levy on the mining industry, which continues to support the independent activities of its regulatory authority. It has done so for the past 20 years. Suggestions of collusion with industry in its activities is patently absurd.

It is important that OHS professionals working in the industry today are fully conversant with the remarkable achievements of the industry in occupational health and safety over the past 25 years and realise that they work in an industry that is a world leader in occupational health and safety. They should also be prepared to defend this standing with facts and figures.

Australian Work Health and Safety Strategy 2012-2022



SafeWork Australia has now finalised its national OHS strategy for the 10 year period 2012-2022 identifying seven action areas:

- Healthy and Safe by Design
- Supply Chains and Networks
- Health and Safety Capabilities
- Leadership and Culture
- Research and Evaluation
- Government
- Responsive and Effective Regulatory Framework

Targets to be achieved by 2022:

- a reduction in the number of worker fatalities due to injury of at least 20 per cent
- a reduction in the incidence of claims resulting in one or more weeks off work of at least 30 per cent
- a reduction in the incidence rate of claims for musculoskeletal disorders resulting in one or more weeks off work of at least 30 per cent

Source: Safe Work Australia

Healthy, safe and productive working lives

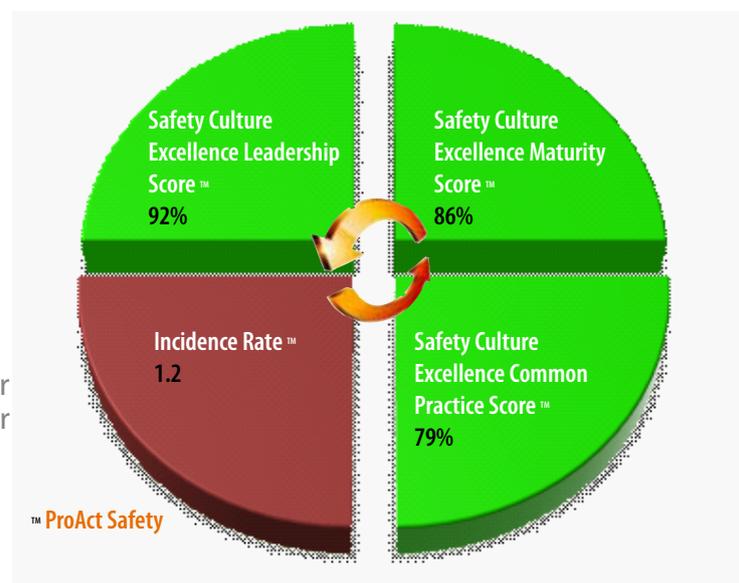
Measuring safety excellence: a practical approach

A recent interesting article by Shawn Galloway of ProAct Safety, Houston, Texas, who conducted a workshop for MARCSTA in 2011, provides a framework to measure safety excellence that is not only practical but internally implementable, as well.

He suggests that excellence is achieved when successful performance is continually repeated, unprompted, producing predictable positive results. He asks how predictable are your results based on your measurement systems? If you achieve success, do your measurements tell you why, or even the difference (between) luck or purposeful intent?

The full article is available at <http://ohsonline.com/articles/2012/10/01/measuring-safety-excellence.aspx>

Source: OHS online





AN ASSOCIATION IDENTIFIED BETWEEN MUSCULO-SKELETAL PAIN AND CHRONIC HEADACHE

A Norwegian study reported at the European Headache and Migraine Trust International Congress has found that chronic musculo-skeletal complaints and chronic daily headache share a bidirectional causal relationship in which patients with either condition are predisposed over time to develop the other one.

The new observation of a bidirectional relationship between chronic musculo-skeletal pain and chronic daily headache, that is, headache on an average of 15 or more days per month, may also have impact in terms of understanding the relevant pathophysiology. It suggests the disorders may share a common underlying cause.

Dr Lars Storner of the Norwegian University of Science and Technology says that the research shows that chronic pain in the body is probably very much related to chronic headache – they are both basically brain disorders. He added that the results clearly show there are no separate physiological baskets for migraine and back pain. They are both part of an entire pain matrix that is impaired.

Source: MedConnect 28 Sept 2012

Paperless offices resulting in increased levels of neck, back, shoulder and arm pain

A University of Sydney Research Study has found that moves since 1980 to improve occupational health and safety and workplace design may have been completely reversed by changing work practices, including duration of computer work and less task variability.

The survey of more than 900 office workers found a direct correlation between the amount of time spent at a computer and the likelihood of experiencing musculo-skeletal pain over a 12 month period.

Eighty-five percent of people who spent more than eight hours a day working with a computer experienced neck pain, 74% reported shoulder pain and 70% reported low back pain.

Karin Griffiths, the lead author of the research team, said that “better workstation design, seating and health education has not resulted in any observable decrease in the number of office workers reporting pain over the last 20-30 years. In fact, recent research shows that prolonged sitting and the lack of physical activity associated with computer work is the main problem and may be contributing to cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity along with musculoskeletal pain.”

According to Griffiths, with long term computer-based work here to stay, the key to preventing musculo-skeletal pain among office workers lies in changing workstation design and how we do our jobs so that we are obliged to stand and walk more often during work hours.

Other ways of reducing the risk of musculo-skeletal symptoms at work could include discouraging internal emails on the same floor to encourage employees to walk to their colleagues instead, “kitchen table” type meetings that encourage people to stand and walk, or work systems that require frequent standing breaks, such as placement of phones on a standing bench.

Source: SafetySolutions

SELF-TESTING STATIONS AT THE WORKPLACE ENCOURAGE HEALTHIER BEHAVIOURS

A US study appearing in the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine* in November has found that self-testing stations partnered with wellness programs that tackled smoking, problem drinking, low fruit intake, physical inactivity, and low-sleep quality, could improve workers' health-related quality of life.

The study involved 498 heavy equipment operators and found that 46.8% had depressive symptoms; 32.8% were problem drinkers and about 29% smoked cigarettes.

It also found 40% were classified as overweight and 45% were obese.

Researchers said that an earlier study found self-testing stations, where workers could test their blood pressure and weight, were useful.

They found that employees determined to be high risk after the initial visit to the workstation were more likely to revisit and reduce the health risks, whereas the health risk of other employees who did not visit was not changed or increased.

The self-testing workplace stations may encourage employees to modify their unhealthy behaviour. If combined with other wellness programs, such as smoking cessation, diet and physical action interventions, the workplace station may produce even better outcomes.

Source: OHS Alert 15 November



EXCESSIVE STRESS AFFECTS NINE IN 10 YOUNG CANADIANS



The instability in today's economy is contributing to high stress levels in young Canadians with 90 per cent of 18-24 year olds experiencing excessive stress and 72 per cent of adult Canadians overwhelmed, according to the third annual Sunlife Canadian Health Index.

Finances and work life are cited as two of the biggest sources of anxiety for all Canadians surveyed.

Other top sources of stress include personal relationships and personal health issues.

The report endorses the belief that employment has a positive effect on one's overall health, said the recently retired chair of the Workforce Advisory Committee for the Mental Health Commission of Canada, adding that positive elements that are attributed to having a full-time job do help to keep illnesses at bay and Canadians optimistic, while maintaining a healthy lifestyle.

Source: Canadian HR Reporter Nov 2012

Employers' right to conduct workplace drug testing in Quebec

The province of Quebec has affirmed the right of employers to subject an employee to drug testing where there are serious, reasonable and probable grounds for doing so.

Where such grounds exist, screening for the presence of drugs represents a fair balance between an employee's right to preservation of his/her dignity and privacy and management's right to safeguard the legitimate economic interests of its business and organise the work being done by its workforce.

The arbitrator concluded that:

An employer operating in an environment that entails significant risks to worker health and safety is justified in asking an employee to submit to drug and alcohol testing where it has reasonable cause to believe that the employee may be under the influence of intoxicating substances on the work premises.

In certain circumstances, drug testing, when it forms part of a set of actions taken by the employer, is a reasonable measure enabling the employer to maintain a productive and safe working environment while ensuring minimal impairment of Charter rights.

Source: Canadian HR Reporter

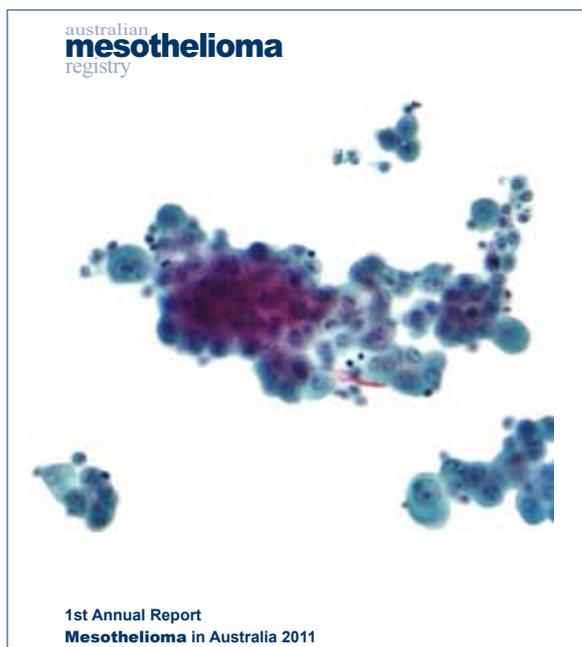
First Australian mesothelioma report from SafeWork Australia

This initial annual report covering newly diagnosed cases of mesothelioma in Australia cautions that the 612 cases reported in 2011 is likely to underestimate the total number diagnosed due to possible delays in confirming or coding some diagnoses.

Men account for 84.5 per cent of diagnosed cases and 78.8% of the cases are people aged 65 or older at diagnosis.

Construction and building trades had the highest exposure likelihood, followed by electrical and related trades.

Source: OHS Online



Australian National Asbestos Safety Agency

The Australian Government has established an Office of Asbestos Safety which will pave the way for a national approach to asbestos awareness and management in Australia in response to a comprehensive review commissioned in October 2010.

The new office will be tasked with developing a national strategic plan by 1 July 2013.

A full website for the organisation will be developed in the coming months.

Source: Safety Solutions September 2012

Electricians at high risk of asbestos exposure

Hundreds of electricians around the country may have contracted mesothelioma from working on meter boards which may contain asbestos.

The Electrical Trade Union has issued a warning to its members and has requested State Governments to carry out an audit of meter boards in government owned buildings.

The latest concern comes after a NSW worker, who worked as an electrician from 1982-1995, was recently diagnosed with mesothelioma.

Source: ABC

Rail sleepers expose asbestos fears

In Victoria, disagreement about the dangers associated with the theft and burning of railway sleepers warrants informed clarification.

The Firewood Association of Australia has banned members from selling sleepers because they are potentially lethal when burned. The Association found that asbestos fibres from train brakes and brake-locks, phased out in 1985, had become trapped on the sleepers' surface.

A Metro Trains spokesman has denied any asbestos link and rejected concerns that the sleepers were a danger to people's health. Testing is conducted on sleepers and while there are low-level traces of hydrofluorocarbon from oils and grease association with rolling stock, there is no evidence to suggest any health risk associated with sleepers. However, a community fact sheet issued by the Department of Health has warned against using sleepers as firewood because "they may also contain asbestos from train brake linings that may be released when burnt".

Source: Monash Weekly

New material reduces pollution produced by vehicles that run on diesel fuel

In a study published in Science on 17 August researchers reported that when a man-made version of the oxide **mullite** (originally found off the Isle of Mull in Scotland) replaces platinum, the rare and expensive metal currently used in diesel engines to try to control the amount of pollution released into the environment, pollution is up to 45 per cent lower than with platinum catalysts.

Diesel engines (as opposed to petrol) produce more nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO²), which are known as Nox Pollutants.

In June the World Health Organization upgraded the classification of diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans, putting it in the same category as cigarette smoke and asbestos.

Author of the study, Dr Cho, Senior Professor of Materials Science and Engineering and Physics at UT Dallas, said that the goal is to move away from precious metals and replace them with oxides that can be found commonly in the environment.

Until this experiment with mullite they had not found a catalyst made of materials that are less expensive to produce.

Source: Environmental Protection Media Inc.



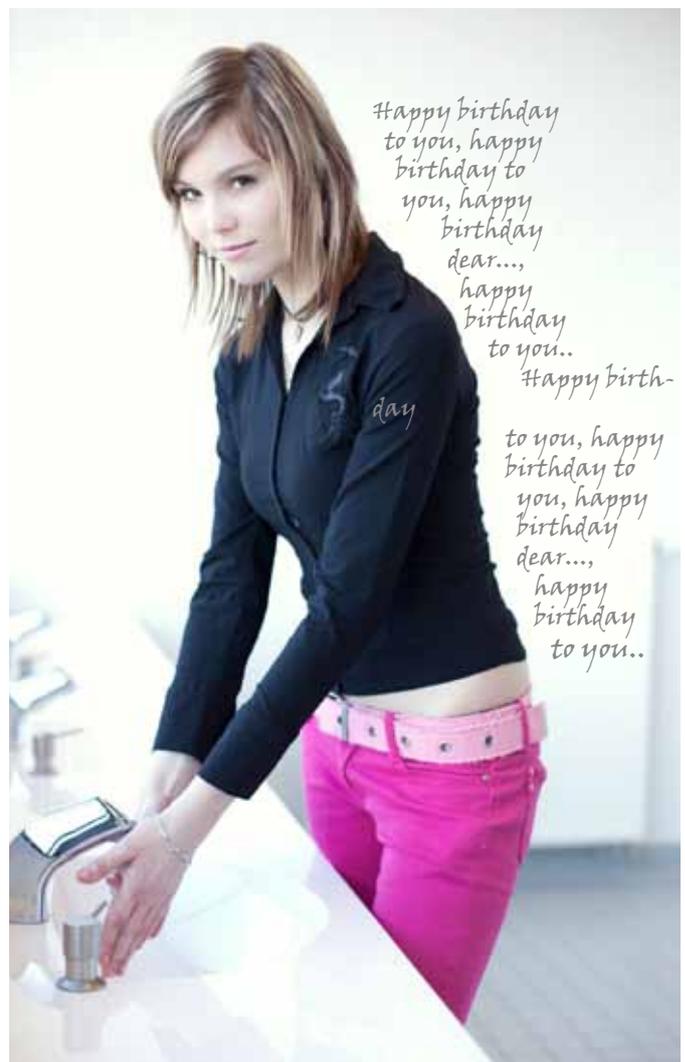
Clean rest rooms a measure of how employers value their employees

A new national hand washing survey reveals that the majority of US workers (83 per cent) believe that the state and cleanliness of their workplace rest rooms is one indicator of how a company values their employees.

Unfortunately, the survey revealed that the majority of employees don't wash their hands long enough. The Centre for Disease Control recommends washing hands for at least 20 seconds and suggests singing "Happy Birthday" twice to allow enough time to remove and rinse away germs.

The Centre stresses that correctly washing your hands is the best way to prevent infection and illness.

Source: EHS Today September 2012



EXCESSIVE OVERTIME DOUBLES DEPRESSION RISK

A 2012 British research study published in *PLoS ONE Journal* has found that people who work 11 or more hours a day have double the odds of becoming depressed compared with those who don't work overtime.

But why is this important for us as employers to know?

Common mental illnesses, such as depression, are an important public health concern. According to projections by the World Health Organization, depressive disorders will be the leading cause of disease burden in high-income countries by 2030.

In addition to human misery, mental illnesses often result in substantial work impairment and lost work days.

Employers should:

- think of cutting down on the need for overtime by reorganising duties or employing extra staff.
- encourage an environment where employees have more say over their duties, promotional prospects and safety.
- take into account the personal lives of employees and recognise that the demands of home will sometimes clash with the demands of work, and
- make sure that everyone is properly trained for their job, among other measures.

Also, employers should not stigmatise the issue of mental illness, but invite employees to openly discuss the issue by implementing a stress management program where all employees can participate.

Read more: <http://blog.firstreference.com>



Economic burden of mental illnesses in Canada

In Canada, the Mental Health Commission (MHC) advises that mental illnesses and mental health issues are the leading cause of short and long-term disability, at a cost of \$51 bn per year, with almost \$20 bn coming from workplace losses.

Source: *First Reference blog*

The MHC has championed the development of a National Standard on Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace intended to provide systematic guidelines for Canadian employers that will enable them to develop and continuously improve psychologically safe and healthy work environments for their employees.

The voluntary standard is expected to be available in early 2013.

Canada is the first country in the world to develop such a standard.

Depression stigma may be fading

A new survey conducted in the USA has shown that most Americans understand what depression is and believe that there is no shame in seeking treatment for this mental health problem.

Dr Douglas Jacobs, founder of the company which conducted the poll, said that efforts to reduce the stigma and increase the public's knowledge of depression through events like National Depression Screening Day, are having an effect.

This annual event in which community organisations, colleges and military installations offer free, anonymous mental health screenings is meant to inform Americans about the signs and symptoms of depression and suicide and appropriate treatment options.

The researchers also found that 67 per cent of Americans believe depression is usually treatable.

Source: *Medicine Net*

In Australia, events to reduce stigma relating to mental health include R U OK? Day, a national day of action dedicated to encouraging all Australians to ask family, friends and colleagues "Are you OK?".

European companies failing to address psychosocial risks

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work has released two new reports which look at the reasons why, with 79% of managers in the European Union being concerned about stress at work, and 40% concerned with workplace harassment and violence, 74% of European businesses still do not have procedures in place to deal with these issues.

The reports come at a time when increasing numbers of European workers are reporting problems with stress, and with a recent opinion poll showing that 80% of workers expect stress levels to increase in the next five years.

The reports looked at the factors that make businesses more likely to succeed in addressing these issues, including concerns being raised directly by employees, and an awareness of the business case for taking this issue seriously. Currently some 50-60% of all working days lost are thought to be related to psychosocial risks.

Source: *The reports: Drivers and barriers for psychosocial risk management; Management of psychosocial risks at work*

Sleep quality and psychological health and safety

The Institute for Breathing and Sleep (IBAS), an incorporated not-for-profit organisation located at the Austin Hospital in Melbourne, is devoted to improving the lives of those affected by sleep and respiratory disorders.

The Institute claims that the true cost of respiratory problems and poor sleep to the community is far greater than commonly perceived, and has profound consequences for long-term health.

An earlier initiative of IBAS was their involvement in the development of preventative health checks in Victorian workplaces.

Dr David Berlowitz, a lead investigator, says that sleep and breathing are strongly implicated in mental health issues, public and workplace safety, personal relationships, and serious cardio-vascular problems – all with substantial economic impact.

Researchers from IBAS also recently put workers through simulated driving tests immediately following night shifts and found their ability to control a vehicle was significantly impaired.

Dr Mark Howard said that workers' ability to drive in a straight line and stick to the speed limit deteriorated and it was evident that there is a much higher crash risk in people driving home after night shift.

Source: SkyNews 12 Oct 2012

Australasian Sleep Association (ASA) to tackle occupational health and safety

The ASA has established an Occupational Health, Safety and Performance Group to provide improved collaboration on the importance of sleep to Australian workplace health and safety.

This initiative is an important breakthrough which will, for the first time, connect academics and medical expertise to industry for the purpose of improving occupational health and safety.

The mining industry will have representation on the group.



The association of insomnia and costly workplace accidents

A new study by researchers at Harvard Medical School, Boston, suggests that occupational safety is influenced to a large degree by what workers do – or don't do – before ever coming to work.

Researchers surveyed more than 10,000 people in the USA and found that insomnia was responsible for 274,000 workplace accidents and errors each year, adding up to \$31 bn in extra costs.

While the research isn't conclusive, and depends upon recollections, it does suggest a connection between a lack of sleep and workplace accidents and errors.

Lead author, Victoria Shahly, said that the findings could encourage workplaces to pay more attention to insomnia and screen employees for the condition.

Shahly said that accidents and errors directly affect the corporate bottom line.

Source: ISHN

Training and assessment competencies to be held by trainers and assessors

All OHS trainers and assessors are reminded that from 1 July 2013 they must:

- i) hold the TAE40110 Certificate IV in Training and Assessment from the TAE10 Training and Assessment Training Package as a minimum qualification or be able to demonstrate equivalence of competencies; and
- ii) be able to demonstrate vocational competencies at least to the level being delivered and assessed; and
- iii) be able to demonstrate how they are continuing to develop their VET knowledge and skills as well as maintaining their industry currency and trainer/assessor competence.

Source: National Skills Standards Council

VET regulator launches blitz on “White Card” training

The Australian Skills Quality Authority is to undertake a review of the entry-level OHS training (the White Card formerly Blue Card) required to work on construction sites.

Chief Commissioner Chris Robinson said that a number of concerns had been raised regarding the quality of training and assessment provided by some registered training organisations offering the White Card program.

“We have received reports that some training courses are simply too short to give participants the knowledge and experience they need and the training offered by some is of poor quality.”

Concerns have also been raised about on-line assessment and whether the RTO’s are certain of the identity of the person completing the assessment online.

Unfortunately the damage has already been done with tens of thousands of workers holding a White Card which does not require refreshing.

MARCSTA listed all the concerns now being raised at the time the card was introduced and has maintained its requirement for classroom training by competent trainers occupying a full day.

New online claims manager training qualification

WorkCover WA has advised that the Personal Injury Education Foundation (PIEF) have developed a new online vocational training qualification for Claims Managers, called the Certificate IV in Personal Injury Management (Claims Management).

The skills developed in this qualification will assist a Claims Manager to be accountable for the active management of an injured person’s claim.

It will provide the knowledge required for a Claims Manager to undertake the role, building upon the Claims Manager’s behavioural and communication skills and promoting strong working relationships between the injured person, employers and service providers.

The next rollout of the program commences in February 2013 and will finish in June 2013.

For further information contact PIEF on (03) 9940 4893 or email training_pief@pief.com.au.

Source: WorkCoverWA



Personal Injury
Education Foundation



AROUND THE GLOBE

Europe

Primary school teachers to bring safety and health into the classroom

The European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (EU-OSHA), together with the Napo Consortium, is presenting an exciting new project aimed at introducing basic health and safety knowledge to primary school children. The 'Napo for Teachers' initiative makes a variety of educational aids available to teachers online. Aimed at children aged between 7 and 11, the resources are based on the cartoon character Napo, who helps EU-OSHA to spread the message of workplace safety and health in a light and engaging way.

The free, downloadable lesson plans cover topics that primary school children are likely to encounter at home and at school, including safety signs, risks to the skin and back and the identification of risks and hazards.

Each of the six lesson plans includes a dedicated help sheet for teachers to introduce them to the subject and is accompanied by tailored video clips and language-free resources.

The Napo video clips and creative activities are intended to explore the topics in an enjoyable and informative way, while the interactive nature of the lesson plans ensures the children are kept interested and involved in the topics.

The free toolkits can be downloaded from http://www.napofilm.net/en/napo-for-teachers/?utm_source=pr_pdf&utm_medium=paper&utm_campaign=napo2012

New research promises less knee surgery

A daily dose of strontium ranelate has been associated with a significant delay in the narrowing of joint space in adults with symptomatic primary knee osteoarthritis.

The head of the Centre for Investigation in Bone and Articular Cartilage Metabolism at the University of Liege in Belgium, Dr Jean-Yves Reginster, said that the findings suggest that strontium ranelate could reduce the need for knee surgery in osteoarthritis patients.

Strontium ranelate is approved in more than 100 countries worldwide although not yet approved in the USA.

Source: MedConnect

USA - Australia

Construction industry OHS performance under the microscope

An international collaboration between Australian RMIT University and researchers from the Center for Innovation in Construction Safety and Health at Virginia Tech in the US is underway involving an international benchmarking study of construction OHS practices and performance in both countries over five years.

According to RMIT's Professor Helen Lingard the construction industry is characterised by intense competition, conflict and pressure to drive down prices, all contributing to the industry's poor OHS performance.

In the financial year 2008/09 the construction industry recorded more fatalities than any other industry and the fatality rate was more than twice the rate for all industries.

Professor Lingard says that addressing the whole of the construction industry work system has the potential to lead to real breakthroughs in the reduction of construction accidents, illnesses and fatalities that remain at an unacceptably high level in both the US and Australia.

The outcome of the collaborative study will be keenly awaited.

Source: SafetySolutions September 2012

National census of fatal occupational injuries 2011

According to results from the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries program conducted by the US Bureau of Labor Statistics, preliminary figures indicate that fatal work injuries in 2011 were marginally lower than the previous year declining from 4,690 to 4,609.

The rate of fatal injuries was 3.5 per 100,000 full time equivalent workers compared to 3.6 for 2010.

Sectoral Performance

Fatal work injuries in private construction declined by 7%. It was the fifth consecutive year of lower fatality counts.

Work-related fatalities in the private mining industry (which includes oil and gas extraction) were down 10%.

Fatal work injuries in private truck transportation rose 14%.

Fatal work injuries in workers 20-24 years were up nearly 18%. Fatalities in other age groups declined.

Falls From Height

The fatal falls data were considered noteworthy because the 666 deaths in 2011 accounted for 14% of all fatal work injuries. Of these 115 resulted from a fall of 10 feet (3m) or less.

Source: OHS Online Sep 2012

UK

Proposals to water down OHS requirements

A two-pronged attack on health and safety by the UK Government will expose workers and members of the public to greater risk of injury, campaigners have warned.

The Association of Personal Injury Lawyers has urged the Health and Safety Executive to reconsider proposals to exempt self-employed people from health and safety law and to water down the regulatory requirements to report injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences.

The APIL President, Karl Tonks, said for instance if, as proposed, major injuries to the public – such as pedestrians injured near building sites – are no longer reported to the HSE, innocent people will be put at greater risk of harm as serious problems may not be addressed.

He added that as the law stands, self-employed people are not expected to take any disproportionate steps to meet with health and safety regulations, so the notion that the law is some sort of burden is a myth.

Source: Haverhill Echo Nov 2012

Australia

Focus on Dementia

A new report from the Australian Institute of Health (AIHW) has again highlighted the explosion in the number of people who will suffer dementia over the next 40 years.

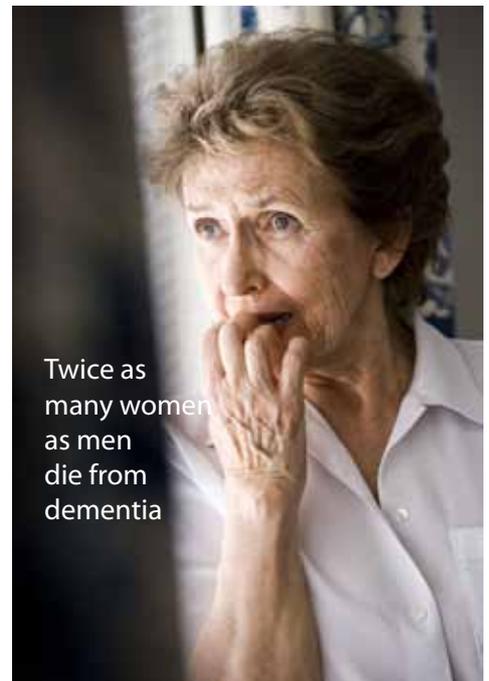
Currently some 300,000 suffer dementia; by 2020 the number will increase to 400,000 and by 2050 the number will be close to 1 million.

The report Dementia in Australia reveals that the disease was the third leading cause of death in 2010 accounting for six per cent of all deaths.

Twice as many women as men die from dementia.

Almost three quarters of people with dementia are aged over 75 years with 70 per cent living in the community as opposed to nursing homes.

Source: AIHW



Twice as many women as men die from dementia



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All training providers listed provide the General Safety Induction program.

C denotes the Work Safely in the Construction Industry program.
O denotes the OHS for Supervisors and Managers program.
S denotes the Extended Working Hours program.
R denotes Conduct Local Risk Control program
U denotes the Underground program.



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