



# Lake County Contractors Association

## Safety News

February, 2007

### Counting the Days - In Demand OSHA Recordkeeping Questions

By Nancy Hauter, OSHA

Lately, I have been getting a lot of questions about OSHA Recordkeeping rules. Maybe that is because it's posting time, but I thought it might be a good idea to review the common areas of interest. The most popular questions seem to be about counting the number of days. Does the first day count? How many days do I have to count? Do I count weekends or just work days? What if there is a holiday? If someone is out a whole year do I record 365 days? Let's see if we can put these issues to rest.

In 2001, OSHA revised its recordkeeping standard. The changes were meant to make the system simpler, easier to use and understand, and to update the data on which the system is based. The first thing to do is to determine if the case in question is recordable according to OSHA Standard 29 CFR 1904 Recording and Reporting Occupational Injuries and Illnesses. Assuming that the case is recordable, you start counting days away from work, days of restricted work activity or job transfer (DART) on the day after the injury occurred or the illness began.

You must count the number of calendar days the employee was unable to work, regardless of whether or not the employee was scheduled to work on those days. Weekend days, holidays, vacation days or other days off are included in the total number of days recorded if the employee would not have been able to work on those days because of a work related injury or illness.

OSHA allows you to stop counting days when the DART results in 180 days. The reason is that OSHA believes the "180" notation indicates a case of exceptional severity and that counting days away beyond that point would provide little if any additional data.

I hope this information is helpful to you as you go about filling in your OSHA 300 logs. Don't forget to post your 2006 Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses (OSHA Form 300A) from February 1 to April 20.

### Propane Safety

By Mike Hirvela, Camosy

The heating season is upon us, and many contractors use propane heaters to provide a quick and easy solution to putting temporary heat into the buildings we construct. Propane comes in several conveniently-sized portable containers, is found on many job sites and in factories (as fuel for forklifts for example), and in our own backyards (gas grills), and it is considered safe and convenient to use. So much so, that we can become complacent about having it around. But it's not harmless. Recently, an LCCA contractor had a worker report shortness of breath. His

MD diagnosed him with propane inhalation which resulted in breathing difficulties and a lost time injury.

There are some things to know about propane:

- Propane is a flammable gas and is liquid under pressure. A 20-lb bottle of propane has about 2.5 gallons of liquid in it. A 100-lb bottle has about 12.5 gallons of liquid inside.
- The liquid, if released to the atmosphere, will refrigerate to its boiling point of Minus 44 deg F. There is the potential for frostbite if skin contact occurs with the liquid. Leaky valves usually show frost because the vapor is so cold. Wear liquid resistant gloves and eye or face protection when handling cylinders, hoses, and components. Oh, by the way, don't use propane hose for natural gas. Natural gas molecules are smaller and may seep out.
- Each cubic foot of propane liquid expands to 270 cu ft of propane vapor – large amounts of energy are stored in relatively small containers.
- Propane is not a poison – it is an asphyxiant. It smothers you by decreasing the oxygen content of the air.
- Propane vapor is 1.5 times heavier than air. Propane 'gas' does not rise. It sinks and accumulates in low areas. Therefore, do not store propane tanks inside structures.
- Propane is colorless, odorless and not visible to the eye, so it is odorized to aid in leak detection. The leak detection substance is ethyl mercaptan. Its basis is the same component of skunk musk.
- Breathing ethyl mercaptan can irritate the lungs, causing coughing and/or shortness of breath. High exposures to ethyl mercaptan may cause a build-up of fluid in the lungs (pulmonary edema – similar to pneumonia) and can cause severe respiratory problems.

Propane, when handled correctly and carefully, can provide convenient temporary heat solutions for buildings under construction, and is an energy source for forklifts and other machinery. Please be sure you know and understand the properties of propane to prevent injury to yourself or others.

### Safety Training

For information on classes scheduled, or to register on-line go to <http://www.lcca-il.org/events>. The easiest way to get your employees trained is to let us schedule a class specifically for you. We will make sure the content is tailored to your employees and your industry. Call Lisa at the LCCA Office for all your safety training needs.

**REMEMBER:** If you have ten or more (or will pay for 10 students) we will bring the training to your office, or a site of your choice, or hold your class at the LCCA Office. First Aid, CPR, OSHA 10-Hour, Excavation Competent Person, Power Line, Confined Space, Respiratory Safety/Silica, Scaffold User or Competent Person, and much more are available for you. Since the LCCA Safety & Education Fund subsidizes the cost, the price is hard to beat. Training dates are subject to our instructors' schedules, so if you want a particular date, call the LCCA Office as soon as possible.

### **Safety Training in Spanish?**

As more and more Hispanics get into the construction business, comprehension of safety training materials is a problem. Even if they speak passable English, they might be much more comfortable having the class in their native language. And their comprehension will improve! Currently, the Safety Committee is considering offering the OSHA 10-hour Class in Spanish. If you would be interested in sending employees to this course, let us know by emailing [gdotwy@lcca-il.org](mailto:gdotwy@lcca-il.org) or calling the LCCA Office. If there seems to be a demand, we will put together the course. Thanks for your input.

### **Congratulations Safety Award Winners**

This year 46 members earned Safety Awards for their safety efforts in 2006. Award Winners, except for Division 4, all had zero Lost Workday Accidents. It can be done! Honorable Mention awards are presented to all applicants who have a Lost Workday Accident ratio less than the national average as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. In each case, the contractor is judged against similar size and same type of work. For example, the Highway, Street & Bridge category average is 3.6 for Division 2 contractors while Division 2 Electrical Contractors average is 2.9. If you did not participate in the award program but would still like to know the national average for your classification, just email me at [gdotwy@lcca-il.org](mailto:gdotwy@lcca-il.org) and include your total hours worked and your NAICS code. If you do not know the NAICS code, just give us the old SIC code or your major type of work. I will reply with the average LWD ratio for you to compare to your own results.

Awards will be presented at the February Membership Meeting on Thursday, February 22. The meeting will be held at the Country Squire Banquets in Grayslake and starts at 6:00 p.m. If you would like to attend, you may register online at [www.lcca-il.org/events](http://www.lcca-il.org/events). Congratulations to all the winners.

#### **Division I - Less than 20,000 Hours**

Award Winners

American Acoustics, Inc.

Illinois Architectural Glass & Aluminum, LLC

Keno & Sons Construction Company

Premium Concrete Cutting, Inc.

#### **Division II - 20,001 - 100,000 Hours**

Award Winners

Car-Min Construction Co., Inc.

Century Automatic Sprinkler Co., Inc.

D.L. Franzen Construction, Inc.

Glenbrook Excavating & Concrete, Inc.

Green Mechanical, Inc.

Greg Greenhill Construction Company, Inc.

John Keno & Company, Inc.

Kirschhoffer Truck Service, Inc.

Lakeland/Larsen Elevator Corp.

Lenny Hoffman Excavating, Inc.

Payne & Dolan, Inc.

Roughneck Concrete Drilling & Sawing Co., Inc.

Stuckey Construction Co., Inc.

Division II Honorable Mention

DK Contractors, Inc.

Manosos General Contracting, Inc.

MK Industries, Inc.

Rasch Construction & Engineering

Waukegan Roofing Co., Inc.

#### **Division III - 100,001 - 500,000 Hours**

Award Winners

Becker Electrical Group

Boller Construction Company, Inc.

Martin Petersen Company, Inc.

Ragnar Benson Construction, LLC

William A. Randolph, Inc.

Division III Honorable Mention

Alliance Contractors, Inc.

Althoff Industries, Inc.

Bane-Nelson, Inc.

Berger Excavating Contractors, Inc.

Camosy, Inc.

Carey Electric Contracting, Inc.

Cecchin Plumbing & Heating, Inc.

Curran Contracting Company

International Decorators, Inc.

Joseph J. Henderson & Son, Inc.

Mechanical, Inc.

Plaza Excavating Contractors

Riley Construction Company, Inc.

Thatcher Foundations Inc.

Thelen Sand & Gravel, Inc.

#### **Division IV - Over 500,000 Hours**

Award Winner

Graycor Industrial Constructors, Inc.

Division IV Honorable Mention

Continental Electrical Construction Company

Kelso-Burnett Company

Turner Construction Company

