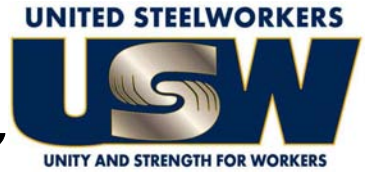




# SafeTalk



## STEELWORKERS FIGHT BACK AGAINST BEHAVIOURAL BASED SAFETY PROGRAMS



Steelworker reps from around North America recently met in Pittsburgh to develop strategies and alternatives for USW staff to oppose and eliminate behavioural based safety (BBS) programs. While BBS programs seem to peak in the nineties, the USW is still experiencing an alarming number of these programs in both Canada and the United States.

The rationale behind BBS programs is that accidents are caused by unsafe behaviours. They generally ignore the control of hazards. BBS originated with the flawed research of Herbert William Heinrich. In the 1930s, Heinrich, who worked for Traveler's Insurance Company, reviewed thousands of accident reports completed by *supervisors* and from these drew the conclusion that most accidents, illnesses and injuries in the workplace are directly attributable to "man-failures," or the unsafe actions of workers.



Nancy Lessin and Charlie Richardson reminded participants of new trends in management programs

these programs with all our energy. Instead we must work just as hard to implement comprehensive health and safety programs that find and eliminate unsafe workplace conditions that cause injuries and illness to our members."

Many experts in the health and safety field agree with the union's

## USW Local 1-1937 Meets With Fallers

The Steelworkers are continuing to fight to stop the injuries and fatalities in the BC forest industry.

Recently local 1-1937 union reps; president Darrel Wong, 2nd vice Rick Wangler and 3rd vice Rick Neuwirth along with District 3 HSE coordinator Ron Corbeil met with fallers in Campbell River and Port McNeil BC. The meetings were a follow up meeting after soliciting the fallers input last year into reducing injuries and fatalities in the industry.

While the overall injury rate for the forest industry has improved, the serious injury rate for fallers remains high. Three fallers were killed on the job this past year.

The fallers felt that reasons the rate remains high for fallers is:

- not much work-more pressure on the fallers working
- older fallers left working-longer recovery time if injured
- minds not on the job-financial and job security concerns
- they also felt the statistics could be even worse as a number of injuries are not being reported due to the pressures not to report.

assessment of these programs, for instance, Martin Anderson a Specialist Inspector of Health & Safety in the UK Health and Safety Executive said; "these programs tend to focus on intuitive issues and personal health and safety, ignoring low probability/high consequence risks.... the causes of personal safety accidents may differ to the precursors to major accidents and therefore behavioural safety programs may draw attention away from process safety. Furthermore, the tendency is to focus on individuals and fail to address *management* behaviour, thus excluding activities that have a significant impact on safety performance".

Andrew Hopkins Professor of Sociology at the National Research Centre for OHS Regulation at the Australian National University in his paper titled "What are we to make of safe behaviour programs?" summarized; "Safe behaviour programs run the risk of assuming that unsafe behaviour is the only cause of accidents worth focusing on. The reality is that unsafe behaviour is merely the last link in a causal chain and not necessarily the most effective link to focus on, for the purposes of accident prevention.... Given that it is the behaviour of management which is most critical in creating a culture of safety in any organization, behavioural safety observations are likely to have their greatest impact if directed upwards, at managers".

In their paper Strategies to promote safe behaviour as part of a health and safety management system Mark Fleming and Ronny Lardner, chartered psychologists at the Keil Centre in Edinburgh Scotland said; "to focus solely on changing individual behaviour without considering necessary changes to how people are organized, managed, motivated, rewarded and their physical work environment, tools and equipment, can result in treating the symptom only, without addressing the root causes of unsafe behaviour.

Training programs will be piloted early in the new year.

## HAZARD ALERT

Injury Type : Fatal

Core Activity : Gravel pit

A bulldozer backed into an empty settling pond (no water in the pond) off a 9-foot drop. The operator, who was not wearing a seat belt, was ejected from the bulldozer and sustained fatal injuries.

Injury Type : Fractured leg, bruising

Core Activity : Grapple yarding

A worker was assisting a grapple yarding crew with rigging up for yarding. He entered a hazard area on the landing without permission from the yarder operator and was struck by the grapple.

Injury Type : Serious injuries to hand

Core Activity : Wooden truss manufacture

A worker's hand was injured as he tried to remove a staple from a 2x4 while a radial arm saw was still running.

Injury Type : Amputated fingertip

Core Activity : Lumber mill

A young worker was piling boards in a lumber mill when one glove got caught in a drive pulley.

Injury Type : Close call

Core Activity : Crane operation

A sling used to lift an air test bushing (about 15 feet long by 2 inches deep and weighing 1,000 pounds) was rigged so the sling eye applied the load to the safety catch of the crane hook during the lift. The safety catch failed, permitting the sling-supported end of the load to fall and hit the concrete floor 15 feet below. No workers were in the area.

Injury Type : Serious burns

Core Activity : Acute care facility

A worker was test firing the steam boiler on oil. There was a large loud bang and a portion of the burner of the Number 4 steam boiler blew off. The worker was showered in burning diesel oil and his shirt caught fire.

Injury Type : Violence in the workplace

Core Activity : Cheque cashing business

A person entered a store, produced a gun, and ordered a worker to hand over all the money on site. When the thief had the money, he ordered the worker to open the back door and to lock it behind him as he made his escape.

Injury Type : Broken bones, mild concussion, puncture wound

Core Activity : Ski hill operation

Two workers were performing routine maintenance on a T-bar ski lift from a lift suspended about 20 feet above grade. The lift was moving the workers to the next tower when one worker was dragged out of the lift by his lanyard, which was still attached to the previous tower. Significant torque was applied to the lift as the worker was dragged out, and the lift broke away from the cable. The second (injured) worker rode the lift to the ground.



### 'Tis the season ... to beware of lead in Christmas lights, according to Cornell researcher

By [Susan Lang](#)

With the holiday season approaching, a Cornell environmental analyst has made an illuminating discovery: Many Christmas light sets contain such high levels of lead that they exceed limits set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) for windowsills or floors.

"Whether exposure to lead in Christmas lights affects blood lead levels in humans is unknown, though research increasingly shows that any exposure to lead -- especially by children -- is hazardous to health in that it is implicated in a wide range of health concerns," said Joseph Laquatra, a professor of design and environmental analysis in Cornell's College of Human Ecology, who led the study. "No standards exist for lead content in this product, and no protocols exist for conducting tests on it."

The study, conducted with Lelia M. Coyne, a chemist and certified lead risk assessor in Lincoln, Neb., and Mark R. Pierce, a Cornell extension associate in Laquatra's department, is published in the December issue of the *Journal of Environmental Health* (71:5).

Researchers tested the lead levels of 10 sets of indoor/outdoor Christmas lights, some recently purchased in Nebraska and New York, others from the 1970s. The researchers found detectable levels of lead in all of them; and all were above EPA/HUD regulatory limits for equivalent areas of windowsills and floors. They also found no significant differences in lead levels among manufacturers, year of purchase, or how many years the lights had been used.

Lead is used in the polyvinyl chloride (PVC) jacketing of the Christmas light cords, said Laquatra, to prevent them from cracking or crumbling and to make them resistant to heat, light and moisture damage. Lead makes up 2-5 percent of PVC jacketing in different types of wires, he said.

"While some products are starting to have warning labels, there is no coordinated drive to encourage manufacturers to pursue alternatives," Laquatra said.

"Consumers should be aware that lead is in all appliance cords," he said, noting that although American manufacturers have been moving away from using lead as a PVC stabilizer in the last five years, at present there is no way to know how much lead exists in jacketing or in various products without independent testing.

"Despite awareness of the dangers of lead exposure, lead is continually found in products that expose people to high levels of this toxin," Laquatra said, "including deteriorating paint, jewelry, motor vehicle wheel weights that easily fall from vehicles, charms on children's tennis shoes, mini blinds, artificial Christmas trees, ceramics, hair dyes and cosmetics."

When it comes to Christmas lights, the researchers pointed out that lead could be ingested from hand-to-mouth contact after handling the lights; lead also can be released into the air during installation and removal. The researchers recommend that children not handle Christmas lights, and that anyone who does, should wash their hands immediately after handling.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY & SAFE NEW YEAR**

