



SafeTalk



DECEMBER 2007 - VOLUME 6, ISSUE 12

Ken Neumann Appointed NIDMAR Co-Chair



Canadian National Director Ken Neumann was recently appointed as the NIDMAR labour co-chair. Ken a long-time board member replaces the retiring Brian Payne from the CEP.

Ken Neumann has spent his career as a union advocate and is a passionate believer in the consensus-based approach to disability management.

Ken has been active with the National Institute of Disability Management And Research (NIDMAR) since 1996. Neumann has a personal stake in improving the productive life of people with disabilities. His younger sister suffered brain damage from measles while still a child.

"It's close and dear to my heart when I see lives have been changed," he said.

Neumann stresses that the USW have always been at the forefront of return to work initiatives in Canada and traces some of that back to his early days at Cominco when the union negotiated certain jobs that could only be retained by disabled workers.

"We took the obligation to bargain, regardless of seniority, for these jobs to be kept for disabled workers. It meant a lot to the individuals."

Now as labour co-chair he is in a position to work toward getting stakeholders involved in "putting their money where their mouths are." He calls it unconscionable that as many as 1,000 workers die on the job each year. And he sees it as crucial to apply more government pressure to bring in legislative changes that ensure accommodations for injured workers. While he is proud of the "leaps and bounds" NIDMAR has made in disability management training, he says there is still a lot of work to be done. During the next while, he plans to work on increasing more labour involvement and to involve the Canadian Labour Congress at higher levels.

Neumann also sees the need to raise the awareness and stature of the designations. "There is not as much buy-in in Canada as we would like to see." On top of that, he's keen to help move forward NIDMAR's next major project, the new Pacific Coast University for Workplace Health Sciences.

Coming Events

January 21-24 Local 1-423 H&S School, Kelowna BC

May 11-15 National HS&E Conference, Toronto Ontario



District 3 Health, Safety and Environment coordinator Ron Corbeil, seen here surrounded by the District 3 HS&E committee, presented Nick Doubinin (l) and Glen McDonald a small token of appreciation for their years of dedication to the health and safety of union members.

At the November meeting of the District 3 Health, Safety and Environment committee the members took some time to recognize two individuals who were attending their last committee meeting. Nick Doubinin is the health and safety director for Local 1-2171. He started in the forest industry close to forty years ago working mostly as a grapple yarder operator at the then McMillan & Blodel Port McNeill division. Nick became active in the union serving as the camp committee chair.

Nick went to work for the local in 1988, serving as it's second vice-president. He also held the position of financial-secretary before becoming the first vice-president and health and safety director. Nick's passion for safety, especially for his fellow loggers will be deeply missed.

Glen McDonald is from Local 5442 in Selkirk Manitoba. Glen is the health and safety chairperson for the Southern Manitoba area council. He is a familiar face at health and safety schools. Glen has been a health and safety instructor for over 20 years with the Steelworkers and the Manitoba Federation of Labour and the Workers of Tomorrow Safety Centre.

Glen Started at Manitoba Rolling Mills in 1978, becoming a certified millwright in 1986.

He became a union steward and health and safety committee member in 1980. He has been on the health and safety committee ever since, the majority time as co-chair.

Glen was elected treasurer in the early 80's and held that position for 5 terms when he was elected trustee and held that position ever since. He sits on the Apprentice Board of Manitoba and has been very involved with the Selkirk and District Labour Council.

Glen intends on working in the health and safety field after he retires and we know that will be beneficial for our members in Manitoba.



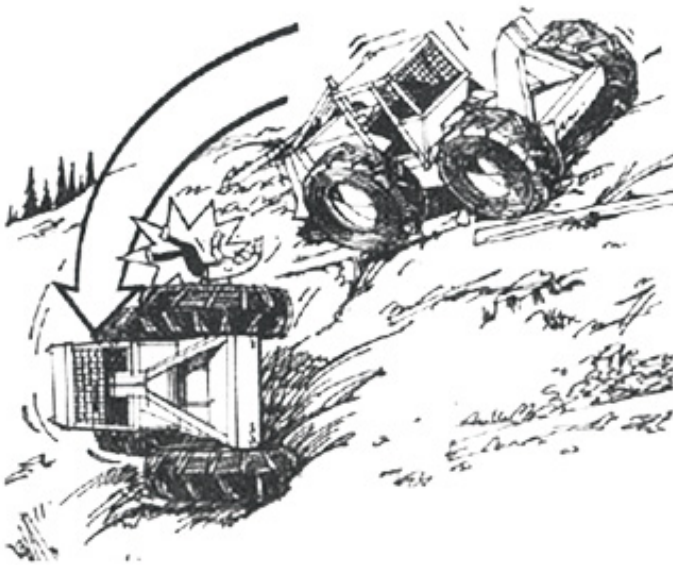
MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY & SAFE NEW YEAR



HAZARD ALERT

Skidder Incidents on the Rise

A number of skidder incidents have been reported this year. They have ranged from a few bumps to fatal injuries. Two skidder rollover fatalities occurred in the first 10 months of 2007 in the British Columbia forests, compared to none at all the previous year. Each operator died on slopes steeper than his equipment's limitations.



From these reports the following preventative actions and safe work procedures are recommended:

- Refuse to work if it is unsafe
- Seat belts must be kept in good working order
- Work up/down slope whenever possible
- Use extreme caution when working on side slope; watch closely for stability hazards

The Regulation Says:

26.16 Slope Limitations

3 (a) a rubber tired skidder must not be operated on a slope that exceeds 35%

Mexico's Largest Copper Mine Fraught With Health, Safety Dangers

Employees at Mexico's largest copper mine are exposed to dangerous levels of mineral dust and acid mist, according to a report released by the union whose strike has idled the mine since July. Representatives of Mexico's National Mining and Metal Workers Union say they are prepared to strike until Grupo Mexico SAB agrees to conduct a "massive cleanup operation" and implement safety and training programs. The union will send the report to President Felipe Calderón.

About 1,300 workers went on strike July 30 to protest health and safety conditions at the open-pit Cananea copper mine 30 miles south of the Arizona border in the northwestern Mexican state of Sonora.

A telephone call left with Grupo Mexico seeking comment was not immediately returned. In the past, the company has said it is willing to negotiate health and safety issues to end the strike.

A U.S. pulmonary specialist, two Mexican doctors and three industrial hygienists compiled the report after visiting the mine and interviewing and examining the lungs of 68 workers.

The United Steelworkers union, which represents workers of a Grupo Mexico-owned U.S. copper mine, paid for the group's travel to Mexico.

The report found that a failure to maintain equipment and correct visible safety hazards meant that "workers have been exposed to high levels of toxic dusts and acid mists" and "work in simply dangerous surroundings."

"In 16 years of inspecting mines in the U.S., Mexico, Guatemala, Indonesia and China, I have never seen a place – operated by a transnational corporation with so many resources – that has such bad conditions," said Garret Brown, the study's coordinator

The report alleges that the company dismantled dust collectors in the mine's processing plants two years ago, leaving workers exposed to 10 times more breathable quartz silica than what Mexican law allows. The study also alleges that workers were exposed to hazardous levels of sulfuric acid mist in plants where lead sheets are plated with copper ore.

The mist "is so concentrated it's eating away the steel structure of the buildings," Brown said. "You literally have piles of dust 2 to 3 feet high all over the processing plants."

Dr. Robert Cohen, a pulmonary specialist at Cook County Hospital in Chicago, Ill., told the news conference the medical team found a high prevalence of early signs of respiratory disease among the 68 workers.

Notes from Associated Press

Christmas Tree Safety Tips

- Get a freshly cut tree. It will stay green longer and be less of a fire hazard. Try to pick a tree with a strong green colour and noticeable fragrance.
 - Always test for freshness before buying. A tree with high moisture content is safer. Very few needles should fall when tapped.
 - Place the tree in a stand that will hold 2 to 3 litres of water and top it up daily. Make sure it is always immersed in water:
 - Use a tree stand that has widespread legs for better balance.
 - Do not set your tree up near a heat source such as a radiator, television, fireplace, heating duct or sunny window.
 - Remove the tree within 10 to 14 days, that amount of time in a heated building, even the freshest tree can start to dry out.
- Turn off all tree and display lights before retiring for the night or before leaving the house.**