



SafeTalk



Long Hours Increase Risk of Injury



Steelworkers District 3 Health, Safety & Environment coordinator Ron Corbeil says *"the research is clear - when we look at long shifts and safety, long shifts injure workers."*

Responding to forest industry spokesman Rick Jeffrey's remarks that; "there is absolutely no empirical evidence to relate shifting to safety," Corbeil pointed out that there is a lot of research on long shifts increasing the risk of workplace injuries.

A recent Yale university study conducted over four years at five Alcoa Aluminum plants in the US found that "long hours of work extending back as far as a week significantly increase the risk of having an injury."

In addition, a report on the impact of overtime and long work hours on occupational injuries and illnesses in the US by researchers from University of Massachusetts Medical School and Environ Health Sciences Institute shows that working in jobs with overtime schedules was associated with a 61 percent higher injury hazard rate compared to jobs without overtime. Working at least 12 hours per day was associated with a 37 percent increase in hazard rate and working at least 60 hours a day was associated with a 23 percent increased hazard rate.

A 2004 US study on overtime and extended work shifts for the US Department of Health and Human Services reports that: "A pattern of deteriorating performance on psychological tests and injuries while working long hours was observed across study findings, particularly in very long shifts and when 12-hour shifts were combined with more than 40 hours of work a week."

Coming Events

October 5 UBC Ergonomic Quality in Facility Design Conference, Vancouver BC

October 15 BC Fed Basic OH&S, Prince George BC

October 31 BC Fed OH&S Kamloops BC

November 1 BC Fed OH&S, Clearwater BC

November 3-4 Local 1-405 H&S Conference, Cranbrook BC

Audit Confirms no Funds Missing

A detailed report proves allegations against Napoleon Gómez are unfounded and fraudulent.

An independent audit of a \$55 million fund owned by the National Miners' and Metalworkers' Union (SNTMMSRM) in Mexico shows all funds are accounted for, exonerating SNTMMSRM general secretary Napoleon Gómez Urrutia of all charges of theft or misappropriation of funds.

"This is a powerful affirmation for Napoleón, the union, and labour leaders around the world who have repeatedly denounced the false charges levied against Napoleón," said International Metalworkers' Federation general secretary Marcello Malentacchi. "Not only does this audit prove that the charges raised against Napoleón are unfounded and fraudulent, but it highlights just how far Grupo Mexico and the Mexican government will go to seize control of the SNTMMSRM."

The audit was commissioned by the IMF and conducted by Horwath Berney Audit S.A. in Geneva, Switzerland. Representatives from the SNTMMSRM, United Steel Workers, AFL-CIO and the IMF held a press conference in Mexico City announcing the audit findings and calling on the government to:

- immediately release all frozen accounts belonging to Gómez and the union;
- drop all charges still pending against Gómez;
- prosecute in a court of law, immediately and transparently, all those responsible in the corruption of documents and facts; and
- investigate Grupo Mexico's involvement in the recent murder of Reinaldo Hernandez González, a miner and SNTMMSRM member.

Documents including the auditors' report, an Executive Summary of the audit report, and a statement signed by 17 members of the IMF Executive Committee was delivered to Mexican President Felipe Calderón and the governors of two Mexican states where charges against Gómez are still pending.

HAZARD ALERT

Logging Truck Driver Killed When Trailer Rolls



A logging truck driver was in the process of connecting a trailer when it rolled over him. At the loading area, a green spur road on a 25% grade, the trailer was mechanically removed from the back of the truck and attached to the jeep. The driver set the maxi-brake on the truck. He then released the trailer's maxi-control switch in the cab.

The driver crouched behind the jeep and connected the two air-line hoses between the jeep and the trailer. He then opened the manual gate valve at this location. This allowed air to go past the jeep to the trailer, releasing the trailer's brake while the driver was still behind the jeep finishing the electrical connections. The entire unit was held by only the truck's brakes. However, the weight of the trailer and jeep was able to overcome the traction between the wheels and the steep road surface. As the truck was pushed downhill, the driver was run over by the leading wheels of the trailer.

Safe Work Practices:

- Develop and implement a safe work procedure outlining the sequence of steps required to park, to connect trailer and jeep, and to air up brake systems in all situations.
- Drivers must ensure that all maxi-brakes are set and that the truck/trailer unit is stable and will not move before dismounting from the cab.
- Plan the cherry-picking and stacking of logs on right-of-ways to avoid areas that are extremely steep or confined.
- Plan roads to avoid steep grades, and ensure the road is prepared to hold logging truck traffic.

Irish Authority to Pursue 'Trouble Free' Firms

Firms which have a history of not reporting or under reporting workplace accidents are about to come under scrutiny from the Health and Safety Authority of Ireland.

Martin O'Halloran, CEO of the Authority, said that under reporting of workplace accidents were a symptom of a lack of proper attention to health and safety issues within a firm. He announced that starting October 1st inspectors from the Authority would be zeroing in on firms with a history of low reporting or no reporting of accidents and serious incidents.

Mr. O'Halloran said, "The evidence available to us is that there is wide scale under reporting of accidents and serious incidents. It is our belief that under reporting is good indicator of a poor safety culture and practice in a firm."

MINERS DIG DEEP FOR DONATIONS

Members of USW local 7552 at the Agrium potash mine near Vanscoy Sask., located 32 kilometres southwest of Saskatoon are collecting funds to help a former worker who was left a paraplegic after an accident there one year ago.



Paul Goddard, here with his partner, Tanya Eckersley

"It could easily have been anyone underground," said miner Perry Gursky, one of the fund's organizers.

"God forbid anybody else should ever be in a wheelchair."

Paul Goddard was crushed with heavy pieces of rock while working nearly 1,000 metres underground on Aug. 31, 2006.

Goddard had just stepped off a giant mining machine when large chunks of rock weighing about 900 kilograms fell on top of him.

Pushed down to his knees, Goddard had to wait for the dust to settle before he noticed his right arm was stuck in a conveyor belt that was slowly ripping off his skin.

He tried to move, to stand up, but he couldn't. His spinal cord was severed and doctors say he will never walk again.

Gursky said donations are going into a trust fund to help pay the mortgage on a wheelchair-accessible home for Goddard, 30, and his 24-year-old partner, Tanya Eckersley.

The new two-bedroom condo unit in Willowgrove, to be completed next month, meets design demands for paraplegics. It has lots of open space, a large bathroom, appliances with front controls and, most importantly, an elevator to the basement.

Gursky sent letters about the fundraiser to all of the mine's 450 employees, even senior management, asking for donations equal to 10 hours of pay.

According to government reports, "cutting and ground control processes at Agrium were substandard and unacceptable" before Goddard was injured on Aug. 31, 2006.

The company had no written procedures for ground checks, and most checks done prior to mining were limited to visual inspections.

"Any pre-operation checks were haphazard at best," one officer with Saskatchewan Labour's occupational health and safety branch wrote in a February report.

"Other Saskatoon area potash mines have long recognized . . . visual checks do not provide a sufficient margin of safety." A final government report in April cites Agrium's failure to identify risks and follow established mine safety systems as immediate causes of the accident. Inadequate training of supervisors and workers were listed as other causes.

Gursky said he has received positive feedback from many miners wanting to help Goddard.