



CORPORATE OFFICE

200 Brantley Lane, Magnolia, TX 77354
Office: 281-356-6038 Fax: 281-356-6224

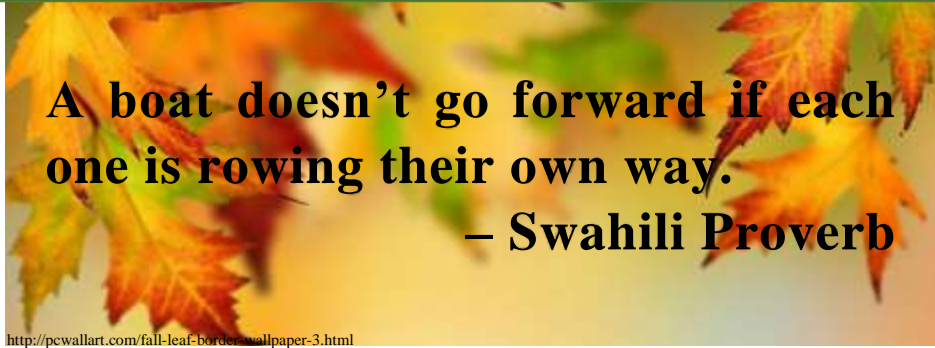
Website: www.calicheltd.com

CORPUS CHRISTI OFFICE

3636 S. Alameda, Ste. B, Box 200
Office: 361-883-7878 Cell: 713-252-7680

CONNECTION

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ASSE Statement on OSHAs Updated Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs

A statement attributed to The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) President Thomas Cecich, CSP, CIH says ASSE commends the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) “for its considerable work and purposeful engagement of stakeholders in updating the agency’s 1989 guidelines for Safety and Health Management Programs with the Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs (RPSHP).”

ASSE does have concerns, but “looks forward to working with OSHA to see that every employer has access to the new Recommended Practices...”

Click this link to read the entire article: <http://www.pressreleasepoint.com/asse-statement-oshas-updated-recommended-practices-safety-and-health-programs>

You may view/download OSHA’s Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs, learn how to get started, review Core Elements, Explore Tools, read Case Studies, and search Additional Resources at this OSHA website: <https://www.osha.gov/shpguidelines/case-studies.html>

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Study: Hearing Loss Affects One-Third of Oil and Gas Workers

We all have come to understand that continual exposure to high levels of noise can lead to hearing loss but a recent study based on hearing test results from 2014 show just how important it is to take continual action to prevent hearing loss in workers of the oil and gas industry. “More than 36 percent of workers in the oil and gas drilling subsector showed signs of noise related hearing loss.” (“Study: Hearing Loss Affects One-Third of Oil and Gas Workers”, 2016) When you think of just how many men and women are employed in this profession all over the world, you can begin to understand why 36 percent is worrying. These numbers are, “more than double compared to other industries with hazardous noise levels.” (“Study: Hearing Loss Affects One-Third of Oil and Gas Workers”, 2016) Although there may be regulations for employers to have hearing loss prevention programs, monitoring, as well as annual hearing tests in place, “WorkSafeBC’s data indicate only 15 percent of workers in oil and gas and pipeline construction in British Columbia were tested in 2014.” (“Study: Hearing Loss Affects One-Third of Oil and Gas Workers”, 2016) The number of employers making sure their workers are being tested regularly is staggeringly low. Let this study and many others be the push companies need to take a look at their compliance, enforcement to hearing regulations, and the current hearing protection devices being used as, “...data also indicate[s] hearing protection used in the oil and gas industry is in some cases insufficient and needs to be re-evaluated by employers.” (“Study: Hearing Loss Affects One-Third of Oil and Gas Workers”, 2016)

< “Study: Hearing Loss Affects One-Third of Oil and Gas Workers.” North American Oil & Gas Pipelines n.d.: 10. Print. >



SAFETY WORD SEARCH

S	A	E	A	R	P	L	U	G	S	Q	D	F	G	Z	N
F	G	A	Q	D	H	M	E	R	V	A	U	X	W	O	P
J	L	T	O	F	A	J	K	W	I	E	T	J	I	T	K
G	F	I	R	S	T	A	I	D	F	X	O	S	T	X	H
D	E	H	K	V	M	U	T	N	A	T	S	A	W	C	A
F	E	W	G	E	A	W	F	Q	Y	I	F	B	K	N	R
U	T	L	R	Y	E	O	X	A	M	N	X	V	A	M	D
J	S	P	O	T	T	E	R	E	O	G	P	T	P	K	H
Q	E	U	L	O	B	S	E	C	C	U	I	D	F	P	A
R	D	K	M	P	L	V	H	G	J	I	L	L	G	R	T
G	T	Q	Z	K	I	S	S	B	E	S	T	P	U	E	U
S	A	F	E	T	Y	D	U	K	W	H	E	O	J	D	R
D	L	H	I	X	J	F	X	O	U	E	K	V	C	D	Q
O	M	G	D	Z	F	I	L	T	E	R	P	D	O	A	F
O	U	X	R	A	R	G	Y	H	V	B	Q	M	I	L	O
F	R	U	I	T	X	R	H	Y	G	I	E	N	E	B	G

WORD KEY

Safety	Mask	Spotter	Ear Plugs	Hard Hat
Extinguisher	Gloves	Fugitive Emission	Team	Hygiene
Filter	Ladder	VPP	First Aid	



The Importance of Noise

Oh, the noise, noise, noise... Our environment has changed considerably when it comes to noise. Once upon a time, hearing loss was considered to be a problem for our grandparents; however, in contrast to the early 1900's, our hobbies have gotten noisier and we are seeing significant hearing loss in young adults. Occupational noise exposure is not the only cause of hearing loss. The Mayo Clinic's website has good information on hearing loss (<http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/hearing-loss/basics/definition/con-20027684>).

Aging is a common cause of hearing loss and runs in families. People whose parents and grandparents developed hearing loss are at risk for hearing loss themselves. In order to hear, we have hair cells in the ear that act like a microphone and translate sound into nerve impulses that our brains will interpret. The problem comes from these hair cells being brittle and breaking with age. Unfortunately, these cells do not regrow, and the person gradually loses their hearing. Since this occurs over years, they are often unaware of the hearing loss and think others are mumbling.

The other common cause of hearing loss is from the trauma of loud sounds. Constant exposure to sounds above 80 or 85 dB can gradually break the hair cells, and as the number of hair cells decline, the person has difficulty hearing. It's much like turning down the volume on an amplifier; that is up until all of the hair cells are gone. Then, it is like having an amplifier without a microphone. Without a microphone to receive the sound, no amount of amplification will help you hear what you want to hear.

Since hearing loss is gradual and permanent, it is important that everyone know that hearing loss can be caused by noise from any source. Of course, noise exposure at work can contribute, but if you or your workers are involved in noise hobbies like motorcycles, hunting/target practice, power tools or loud music including use personal earphones to name a few, they are at risk for hearing loss.

That is why it is important to educate your workers on the effects of work and non-work related noise. Encourage them to take their hearing protection home with them and to protect their hearing. It should be precious to them, and they should know that any loss is permanent. Anyone with hearing aids will tell you that hearing aids help, but can never replace normal hearing.

Finally, make sure your hearing conservation program does more than track your workers' hearing.

You should have a good noise monitoring program to measure both area noise maps of your facilities and personal noise dosimetry on your workers. Many work facilities will have noisy areas, but what matters to the worker's hearing is how long they work in the area. A plan to do personal noise dosimetry is important to determine if the workers are in high noise areas long enough to cause hearing loss, effectively identifying the potential for hearing loss to be work or non-work related.

Audiometric testing is required by OSHA, but if it is not properly managed, it will not help you determine if hearing loss is work or non-work related. Do you know how the hearing tests are being done and are you receiving the results? How many hearing shifts have you had and was it work related? If your worker has a shift in their hearing, can you reconstruct their hearing exposure and can you determine if there are other causes of the hearing loss besides the work related exposure? If you have troubles answering these questions, then you should review your hearing conservation program to ensure you are protecting the health of your employees.

There is a fairly new tool to ensure your workers are protected. Just like a respirator, if the protection doesn't fit, then the protection doesn't work. There are new tools to test a worker's ability to properly wear their hearing protection. It can help ensure that they are, in fact, protected and to what degree the protection is effective. That way, if they have noise exposure at work, you can know that their hearing was protected at work.

Hearing conservation programs often run year after year, but if your program is properly designed you can ensure your worker's hearing related safety. With our Industrial Hygiene and Occupational Medicine staff, we can review your program and ensure that your workers are protected.

Bruce Packard, MD, MPH, Caliche Occupational Health Physician

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