

Congratulations to City of Red Deer!

Congratulations are in order for the staff of City of Red Deer for their exceptional health and safety management system. They were recognized by the Workers' Compensation Board in a luncheon last week for being one of the top performers in the province in the Partners in Injury Reduction Program.

Congratulations should also go to all the municipalities that are actively participating in the Partners in Injury Reduction program. The biggest benefit of managing health and safety is the protection of workers, however as an added bonus the WCB is providing some significant PIR rebates to eligible employers. There were 129 municipalities registered in the program in 2002; 70 of them met the requirements by obtaining or maintaining their Certificate of Recognition. Rebates totaled more than \$1.1 million for these eligible municipalities. This is the biggest rebate ever provided to the municipal sector. Many municipalities reinvest this money into their health and safety program and in events or programs that recognize their employees' contributions. If you are not currently doing this, it might be something to consider. Rebate cheques were sent out in the last week of May.

Looking beyond the municipal sector to all industries in the province, the picture is also positive. The WCB is providing a total of \$37 million to eligible employers for 2002; this is \$10 million more than the previous year. Congratulations to all of you, and keep up the good work.

Mini Conference in Sturgeon County - Wednesday July 9th

Everyone is invited to attend this mini conference. The agenda will include a presentation by the top performing City of Red Deer on their health and safety system. So this is a great opportunity to pick up pointers to enhance your health and safety program. Other presenters include representatives from Alberta Municipal Health and Safety Association, Jubilee Insurance (AAMD&C), Workers' Compensation Board, and Alberta Human Resources and Employment. Finally there will be an opportunity for open round table discussion among the delegates. Thanks to Donna Galay and Sturgeon County for hosting this event.

The mini conference is free of charge, but pre-registration is required, to arrange for catering. Register with Lorraine at 955-3701 by July 2nd. Note that space is limited to about 25 delegates, so register early to avoid disappointment. If you'd just like some more information, contact Rose Ann at 955-3701 or roseann@amhsa.net

Thanks also to Mike Madeley and the Town of Canmore. The Town hosted our last mini conference in May, providing the venue and refreshments to the delegates. This was very much appreciated!

Recognition for Health and Safety Training Commitment

AMHSA believes that health and safety training is a key part of any health and safety program. Management and workers who have a better understanding of health and safety issues have more tools to manage the risks. Therefore we have decided to introduce a recognition program. Each year we want to recognize municipalities

that have made a strong health and safety training commitment to their employees. We established the criteria as follows:

- 3 groups: cities & specialized municipalities; towns & villages; MD's & counties
- 2 separate measures within each group: highest total number of employees trained; highest percentage of employees trained

As a result, 6 awards are available. The following municipalities will receive an award in recognition for their outstanding commitment to providing health and safety training for their employees in 2002:

- City of Edmonton
- City of Cold Lake
- Town of Okotoks
- Village of Champion
- Sturgeon County
- MD of Provost

We will look for opportunities to present these awards over the next few months. Congratulations to each of you on your commitment!



Summer Health and Safety Program Development and Audit Courses Offered

There have been lots of enquiries about auditor certification courses recently. Our next schedule does not begin until late September, so we decided to offer an extra mid summer session. To become an auditor, students must successfully complete

- Health and Safety Program Development (2 days, with exam)
- Health and Safety Program Audit (2 days, with exam)
- Certification Audit back at their home municipality within 2 months of completing the courses.

The courses will be held in AMHSA's office on the following dates:

- Health and Safety Program Development - July 21 & 22
- Health and Safety Program Audit - July 23 & 24 (successful completion of the Development course is a pre-requisite for the Audit course!)

Each course is \$60.00. **Note that space is limited to 11 students**, so register early! Call Lorraine to register at 955-3701 or 1-800-267-9764.

For your information, our fall schedule should be out in late August. And as always, we can go to your site if that works for you.

New Health and Safety Resources Available

Video: The Safe Operation of Overhead Cranes

This 19 minute video identifies all the steps necessary for the safe and efficient operation of any overhead crane. It addresses:

- pre-operational checks (the hook, rope or chain, etc)
- operational checks (such as limit switches, emergency stops, etc)
- planning the lift
- operational rules
- shutdown procedures

Video: Stop it Burning

This video introduces viewers to the various types of fire extinguishers and how and when they are used. It starts with a review of the basic principles of fire causation and how fires are extinguished, and then moves into the details of different types of fires and fire extinguishers. The video provides a lot of information, but would provide the most benefit if used in conjunction with hands on training.

Both of these videos are available for rent for \$25.00 for one week, plus shipping. Contact Lorraine at 955-3701 or 1-800-267-9764 if you would like to rent either of these videos.

Book: Health and Safety Guide for Libraries

Health and Safety Guide for Libraries is the latest in a series of guides produced by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. It focuses on the hazards faced by library workers, including: environmental issues such as indoor air quality, mould, sanitation, noise, temperature and humidity, lighting; ergonomic concerns; psychosocial issues like stress and violence. It also addresses emergency preparedness, and provides sample forms and safe work practices.

Other guides in this series include

- groundskeepers safety guide
- cold weather workers safety guide
- office ergonomics safety guide
- indoor air quality health and safety guide
- violence in the workplace prevention guide
- welders health and safety guide
- noise control in industry
- wellness in the workplace

Each of these guides is available from AMHSA for \$5.00 per copy. Contact Lorraine at 955-3701 or 1-800-267-9764 if you would like to purchase any of these guides.

Membership Survey

It's that time of year again... every summer we ask for your ideas. What are we doing well; what should we add, change, drop? We use your feedback when we meet with our Board of Directors to plan for next year. The survey is being created now and will hit your mail box in the next week or so.

In case the satisfaction of shaping your association's direction is not enough reward, we hold a draw at our fall board meeting. Prizes can include the highly coveted AMHSA fleece vest, coffee mugs, videos, course registrations, etc.

Work Safe Alberta

You may have seen the advertisements on TV, or the flyers in the newspaper: "**Choose This or That**" "**Choose Safe not Sorry**"

These messages are part of the government's new initiative to help employers reduce lost time injuries by 40% by 2004. Despite the good news with the PIR program, there are still too many injuries and deaths happening in workplaces in Alberta. A 40% reduction in lost time injuries translates into 15,000 fewer injuries! Some of the strategies that Alberta Human Resources and Employment is introducing include:

- Working with Alberta Learning to identify opportunities to introduce health and safety into the classroom
- Looking at strategies to address drugs and alcohol, as well as fatigue in the workplace
- Increasing the penalties for convictions, and increasing the number of prosecutions (recently they obtained the services of a full time crown prosecutor, and a second one will be coming on board shortly)
- Publicizing the best and worst performers in terms of health and safety
- Developing mentoring programs
- Targeting poor performers - there is a list of 700 employers that will receive regular visits from officers. This list represents less than 1% of the employers in the province, but represents 31% of the lost time injuries.

Some of you may have excellent programs and have already made great strides in reducing injuries; some of you might be on the targeted list of employers. We all need to look at our values, beliefs and practices when it comes to preventing injuries and illness, and see what we can do to improve.

Let us know about any innovative programs, or good basic stuff that you are doing to improve health and safety. We'll share your ideas in upcoming issues of Safety News.

New CSA Standard for High Visibility Clothing

There is a new standard for "occupational apparel" - Z96.02 - which is intended to ensure the wearer is visually conspicuous in hazardous situations, under any light conditions and under illumination by vehicle headlights. There are performance requirements for colour, retroreflection, minimum coverage areas, and configuration of the materials (pattern). There are also specifications for the background material.

The occupational health and safety regulations, while not specifically referencing the CSA standard, do require workers who are on foot and exposed to traffic hazards to wear vests, armllets or other high visibility apparel that is clearly distinguishable. In addition, during hours of darkness or in poor light, the apparel must be

retroreflective. Because the CSA standard exists, it would be considered the industry standard for high visibility clothing, and should be followed. AMHSA recommends that you discuss your high visibility apparel needs with your suppliers and ensure you purchase apparel that meets the new standard. All apparel meeting the standard must be labelled as such.

Summer Time Hazards

Summer is a great time to be an outside worker. But summer brings a few new hazards: heat, sun, mosquitoes. As well, despite good road conditions, there are still lots of serious vehicle collisions.

Heat: The body works best within a very narrow core temperature range (near 37°C). Working in hot environments raises the core temperature, and one of the ways that the body attempts to bring it back down is by sweating. As the sweat evaporates from the surface of the skin, the skin is cooled. If the lost fluids (sweat) are not replaced, the body becomes dehydrated, and can no longer sweat. Then the core temperature cannot be controlled as well, and heat disorders result.

Sun: In addition to the heat of the sun, there is of course the concern about skin cancers. Albertans have a one in seven chance of developing skin cancer in their life time. Those who spend a great deal of time out doors, have a greater potential exposure, so a greater potential risk of developing skin cancer. Sun exposure is also linked to cataracts, premature aging of the skin, and a weakening of the immune system.

Mosquitoes: In Canada mosquitoes generally used to be considered a pest, but nothing more. Now that West Nile Virus is in Canada these little critters have become a serious concern.

That's the doom and gloom, but what can be done? The Alberta Human Resources and Employment website has information on each of these topics. They have developed a publication entitled **Working in the Heat** (publication number MG022 - revised May '03). They also have a link to Alberta Health's information on West Nile Virus, and a link to a publication by the Alberta Cancer Foundation, entitled **Sunright - Sun Safety Policy Guide for Outdoor Workers**. The AHRE website is www.whs.gov.ab.ca Go here and look for the links.

Vehicle Collisions: vehicle related injuries are the leading cause of injury death in Alberta. According to statistics from 1999, 6 people were killed in traffic deaths every week in this province. In the municipal sector, workers spend a lot of time on the road; therefore their exposure to driving hazards is high. People often think that collisions and the resulting injuries are caused by "bad drivers". What is a bad driver - 80% of us think we're better than average; half of us believe we have no bad driving behaviors. But who has never sped, run stale traffic lights, followed too close, got impatient with other drivers, failed to use signal lights, talked on a cell phone while driving? All of these behaviors lead to collisions.

The Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research asks that we become a safe driver by following these basic rules of the road:

- Courtesy: be patient, let people merge, watch for and accommodate pedestrians and cyclists
- Caution: stop and check traffic in all directions (remember those pedestrians coming from the other direction), keep your distance, obey the speed limit, check your blind spot before changing lanes, use your signal lights
- Common Sense: drive alert (remember fatigue can impair ability as much as alcohol and other

drugs), buckle up, stay focused on the task

For more information about the Alberta Centre for Injury Control and Research, go to their website:
www.med.ualberta.ca/acic