

AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY ENGINEERS

Northern Virginia Chapter

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this issue

Meeting Update P.03
WISE and SPALW Update P.04
Hazard Abatement P.05
Does the Zika Virus Matter to You P.05
Where is Safety During Tough Times P.08
Contact Information P.11

UPCOMING MEETING

Monthly Mtg.
Next Meeting
Will Be Held On
March 17, 2016
at Logan's Roadhouse



A Message from the President

Greetings NOVA Family,

Spring is finally here and plenty has been going on within our Chapter. If you have been hibernating, let me fill you in on some recent and exciting updates. The executive board and Chapter membership welcomes, by ballot vote, our new Vice President, Abdon Friend. Abdon has been the webmaster and driving force behind all things tech related within our chapter, and we are excited to welcome him into the Vice President role. If anyone has any interest in stepping up and taking the role as the new webmaster, Abdon would be more than happy to show you the ropes! Let any board member know if you are interested or would like to hear more information about this volunteer opportunity.



Continued...

Message from the President cont.

The Chapter Executive Board also unanimously nominated and awarded Troy Torbett with the 2015-2016 Chapter Safety Professional of the Year (SPY) Award. Troy has demonstrated his dedication and passion for occupational safety and health for many years within our Chapter as our Awards and Honors Chair and many more within his professional roles. We wish him the best of luck in his candidacy at the Regional SPY level.

We are also exceptionally proud to share that our current Treasurer, Jorge Otorala, has been designated as Secretary of the Safety Professionals & the Latino Workforce (SPALW) common interest group Advisory Committee. His participation in this role brings a wealth of knowledge brings a rich source of knowledge and advancement to the entire Northern Virginia and DC Metro Region workforce.

I would like to take a moment to welcome and acknowledge three of our newest members who have committed to Chair positions within the Chapter. We were in need of a few critical support areas and it is admirable to see new members eager to engage in open opportunities. Please welcome Andrew Geisert as your new Membership Chair. He will be revamping our presence on social media platforms to engage potential members and keep current members informed as well as look into sponsorship opportunities. We are very excited that Caitlin Harris has taken over the role of the WISE Liaison. She will continue the monthly conference calls with other WISE Chapter Liaisons to bring events and opportunities to the NOVA Chapter.

Lastly, if you are finally getting that cabin fever, I want to remind you of a couple events we have for you to look forward to outside of our monthly meetings. In April, in place of our monthly meeting, we will be touring the Crash Test Center along with DRIVESMART VA and partnering VA ASSE Chapters. Registration is now open via our website, but please do hurry as a total headcount maximum of 100 is set for this event and it is open only to Chapter members.

Message from the President cont.

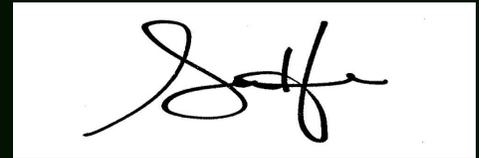
Also, registration is open for the Annual Region VI PDC in Myrtle Beach. This year is especially exciting as it is the 30th anniversary. Planning committees are already working hard to make this the best conference in the record books!

Stay safe out there and please come by a meeting sometime soon to share a meal with your fellow members!

Sincerely,

NOVA Chapter President

Sara Hoover,



December Chapter Meeting

The holiday social was a great event. Numerous toys were brought to donate to Toys for Tots. Everyone seemed to have a good time. The toys were collected and dropped off with the U.S. Marine Corps. We hope to see you at the 2016 chapter social.

January Chapter Meeting

The monthly meeting was held at Logan's Roadhouse in Fairfax. We heard a very informative presentation on Challenges of the Latino Workforce by Jorge Otalora. Additional information can be read in the SPALW update of this newsletter.

Look for NOVA ASSE on these social networks!



WISE Update

Angela Banerjee has worked to gain WISE recognition at the high school level by attending a career fair in Ripon, Wisconsin. There were two options for participation, one including a table in the gym with other companies and the other was to deliver a 20 minute presentation to students. If this is something that you are interested in you can contact Angela at angela.banerjee@acuity.com or at (920) 893-2586. She has a PowerPoint, poster template and conversation starters available to help spread the word about the WISE career path. There is also a mentoring program available to advance female safety professionals by matching seasoned safety leaders with rising talent. The 2015/16 enrollment included 70 participants. We are looking for both mentors and participants to take part. The matching takes place twice per year (March and September) and is a great opportunity to give a head start to newcomers to the profession and for women fresh in the field to learn through experience. Finally, an interesting article has recently been released, looking to see if women can help plug the labor shortage in construction. The article can be found on the wise website or at https://wise.asse.org/assets/5/6/WISE_0915.pdf. Take care and keep safe!

SPALW Update

SPALW has created a subcommittee with the purpose of start developing an ANSI standard. The standard will provide guidelines for individuals or groups within an organization that have responsibilities, authorities and relationships to positively address the unique vulnerabilities of Latino employees within their workforce. Recent reports from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) have suggested that the incidence rates for the Latino workforce continue to grow despite the fact that national incident rates keep dropping. The number of cases of nonfatal injury or illness among Hispanic construction workers nearly doubled from 1992 to 2006. ASSE and SPALW is leading some of the research to find a solution to mitigate this problem. Several members of SPALW were invited to participate of the A10 committee at the 2016 ASSE PDC.

Hazard Abatement

Hazards may be identified by a variety of means. To ensure all hazards are identified any work order, job order, or requisition that has a safety or occupational health connection must be reviewed/validated by facility manager.

Once a violation or hazard is identified the safety manager or a qualified safety professional will ensure the risk is assessed in terms of hazard severity and accident probability. This assessment should be expressed in terms of a risk assessment code (RAC) which will identify the relative seriousness of the hazard. Hazards should then be eliminated on a worst first basis. An abatement should be prepared for each RAC 1 or 2 hazard whose correction will exceed 30 days.

b. To effectively ensure hazards are corrected on a worst first basis, it is imperative that all safety and occupational health related hazards be documented in a single hazard abatement log that includes all hazards regardless of how they were identified. This should include accident reports, maintenance reports, repair reports, inspection reports, and survey reports.

Does the Zika Virus Matter to You?

You have probably heard of the Zika Virus in the news recently. This virus is spread by the mosquito bite as some other viruses are. The Center for Disease Control (CDC) list “the most common symptoms of Zika Virus as: Rash, Fever , Joint Pain , and Conjunctivitis (red eyes)” The CDC describes this illness as “usually mild with symptoms lasting from several days to a week. Severe disease requiring hospitalization is uncommon.” If that is true why should this virus matter to most of us? It matters to all of us because the virus is spread by the mosquito bite. So someone with the virus can spread the virus by getting bit by mosquitos. Like most other mosquito-borne viruses Zika can spread quickly. The danger is for women who are pregnant because the virus may cause deformities in unborn children.

Does the Zika Virus Matter to You? (continued)

To help slow down the spread of this virus the CDC has issued Travel Warnings at Alert Level 2, Practice Enhanced Precautions at <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/page/zika-travel-information>. Other countries have since been added. Mosquitos with this virus live “mostly in tropical atmospheres, and in the United States is most common in humid, hot climates in Texas and Puerto Rico” (Breitbart, 2015). However another article in Science News notes that “researchers reported the discovery of a significant population of the mosquito species capable of carrying tropical diseases such as Zika virus in a Capitol Hill neighborhood in Washington, D.C. To add insult to injury, the team identified genetic evidence that these mosquitoes have overwintered for at least the past four years, meaning they are adapting for persistence in a northern climate well out of their normal range.” The problem appears to be growing beyond the hot and humid areas. This will increase the probability that these mosquitos could impact more people.

There is no vaccine for this virus; however, with mosquitos adapting in highly populated areas the work on a vaccine will increase. It is critical that we all understand how this virus is spread. The virus is passed from person to person through mosquito bites. The virus remains in a victim’s blood for several days. Because of this, a person with Zika Virus is told to avoid mosquito bites for the first week of their illness.

“Mosquitoes like water and can be found in and around water sources. They prefer stagnant water and will make a home in an old flower pot, tire, hole, or bucket. Once they find a home they breed to their hearts content. Using repellents and eliminating sources of stagnant water can help keep the population down.” (Fort, 2015)

Does the Zika Virus Matter to You? (continued)

If you have workers in locations that are hot and humid take the following steps:

Provide repellents to workers to use.

Prevent breeding areas for mosquitos.

Encourage workers to stay home for one week after they get the virus.

Conduct a risk assessment before sending any workers to the countries listed by the CDC with travel warnings.

Do not send pregnant workers or workers who live in a home with a pregnant woman travel to areas that have a hazard of the virus.

The U.S. is offering to remove pregnant employees from the affected areas. This will be a continuous option (Zika, 2015).

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Where is Safety during the Tough Times?

At work when the #\$\$@ hits the fan does your safety program go the way of the Dodo bird? In too many organizations when things get tough, one of the first programs cut is safety. Managers somehow think the money or effort saved by cutting the safety program will help the organization make it through the tough time. Furthermore, they are not often interested in being persuaded otherwise.

Let me share an example with you. A previous employer needed to make significant cuts to balance the next year's budget. One of cuts the Chief of Staff called for was the payroll of the Safety Technician in the office. The Safety Manager explained the results of cutting the Safety Technician and the work he did would result in lower accident rates and fewer accident reports, but that did not mean the accidents were not occurring. The Chief of Staff said the following in a staff meeting, "If it comes down to a plumber or a safety specialist to meet the budget the safety specialist is gone." The decision was made. The Safety Technician was terminated, and the Safety Manager was directed not to do the work of this position. The result was that the accident rates of the organization went down dramatically. The Chief of Staff thought he was a genius and told the Safety Manager so. The Chief of Staff chose to forget what the Safety Manager had told him about the result.

The accidents were still occurring, but there was no one to keep the accident reporting program working. As time passed, the accidents continued unabated and finally a fatal accident occurred. During the accident investigation, it came to light that accidents were not being properly reported and that the number of accidents had in fact been increasing. This increase had also raised the risk for a fatal accident. This cut was not the cause, but a contributing factor.

Where is Safety during the Tough Times?

(continued)

We cannot know for sure if the Safety Technician had been left in place that the fatal accident would not have occurred. What we do know is that if accident reporting would have been monitored and the increase in accidents and the corresponding increase in risk recognized that this oversight would have made the risks known to organizational officials who could have made informed decisions. These informed decisions could have increased the potential that workers would have followed procedures and likely prevented the fatal accident.

“All too many companies, however, don’t see the value of safety officers until it’s too late—and it’s up to the safety professional to change that by providing an ongoing reminder of safety’s value to the company’s financial and employee health” (Selling, 2015). Safety is one of those programs that may share in budget cuts, however, when cuts are suggested all must understand what can happen when the safety program is reduced.

An article in Industrial Safety and Health News (Ten, 2015) identified ten areas where safety programs might be vulnerable:

Consultants

Staff

Hazard Recognition

Repairs

Hazard Reporting

Safety Meeting

Safety Fairs

Training

Personal Protective Equipment

Where is Safety during the Tough Times?

(continued)

Awards and Prizes

I experienced the cut in hazard reporting in my example. I know from experience that this list is accurate. The time to sell safety to the C suites is now. What can you do to prevent damage to the safety program in tough times?

Do not wait until tough times to try to convince anyone how important safety is. Their minds will be hard to convince in the heat of tough times.

Ensure the safety budget is well known and managers understand how important the budget is.

Focus on the vulnerable areas listed earlier.

Give more emphasis to labor because it is the most expensive item in a budget. That makes the salaries for safety professionals especially tempting.

Take every opportunity to sell the savings safety makes for the organization.

By taking these steps you can keep the cost and benefits of the safety program in the minds of those who make decision in your organization. This will help when the #\$\$@ hits the fan.

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Invite a Friend

Don't keep what we have to offer as a chapter to yourself. Share this newsletter with a friend and invite them to join us at a meeting and if they like what they experience ask them to join.

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Officer/Committee contact information can be found [here](#).

NORTHERN VIRGINIA ASSE

American Society of Safety Engineers
Northern Virginia Chapter
PO BOX 65
Oakton, VA 22124