

THE

CONNECTION

DECEMBER 2003

Cold Weather Tips

STRECHING REDUCES WEAR AND TEAR

Construction workers pushing to complete the Tyson Events Center in Sioux City, Iowa, do stretching exercises in the morning to make sure they don't pull muscles or yank joints according to an article in the Sioux City Journal.



Back Pain Caused by Stress?

Studies show people who often suppress their emotions or feel stressed can develop serious muscle tension in the back area; this can restrict blood flow to the muscles and nerves that control posture. Become aware of your posture and mental stress. Practice relaxation techniques to ease the tension.

Weather conditions don't have to be arctic to affect workers. Even mildly cold temperatures call for protective measures. The following are some tips to help survive the ice blast of winter.

Consider sock liners. Feet and toes are often the first extremities to suffer frostbite. When protecting their feet, many workers make the mistake of putting on several pairs of socks, and then trying to cram their feet into their boots. This tight fit restricts blood flow, and makes the feet and toes even more vulnerable to frostbite. Instead, you should use either silk or polypropylene sock liners under a single pair of thick socks.

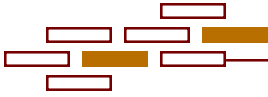
Layer Clothing. Except for socks, you should wear several layers of breathable, loose fitting clothing. It's also important that your garments be able to vent perspiration, since moisture dramatically reduces the insulating properties of clothing.

Wear a hat. Up to 90 percent of your body heat can escape through the top of your head.. A hard hat liner is just what you need for those chilling winter winds.

Know the signs of cold stress. The symptoms of cold stress include involuntary and uncontrollable shivering, gradual stiffness in joints, difficulty in moving hands and fingers, loss of memory, and drowsiness.

Buddy up. Teaming up with a buddy can be an effective way to monitor reactions to intense cold.





Notes from the Office

What should you do if you have a lost check? Call our office to have your check reissued. We will stop payment on the existing check and send you out a new one. In the event that the lost check shows up, say as in the mail. Please do not tear up the check. Simply write void across it and mail it back to our office.

The end of the year is fast approaching. Now is the time for you to check your address and social security number on your check stub to be sure all information is correct. You will need to contact our office of any errors by December 30, 2003. This way, you will be assured of receiving your W2 in a timely fashion and that your social security account with the IRS is accurate.

Fatal Accidents in Michigan Construction 2002

The Michigan construction industry experienced twenty-three deaths of construction workers on Michigan jobsites. The impact of fatal construction accidents goes beyond the individual involved. The victim's family is devastated, both emotionally and monetarily. Almost all accidents are preventable. A better job of recognizing and controlling the hazards by the whole Michigan construction industry could save lives. To put the 2002 year in perspective, the relatively small construction industry only comprises 4-5% of the total work force in Michigan. The 23 deaths experienced by our industry were more than 50% of the deaths that occurred in all Michigan industry.



Moving Items is Dangerous Work

Workers should recognize that moving items is very dangerous work. If they drop something or put it down incorrectly, they could lose a finger or toe. Also, the machines workers rely on to make a move safer can increase the risk of an amputation. Conveyors, cranes and other material handling devices may lower the risk of back strain, but they also accounted for 675 amputations.

Workers must use this equipment carefully. Material handling devices are just another type of machine. By failing to respect their moving parts, just as with a machine that cuts or grinds, a worker could wind up with an amputation.

SMOKE DETECTORS AND FIRE EXTINGUISHERS



If you don't have these lifesaving devices, put them at the top of your shopping list. Smoke detectors should be installed on each floor of your home and outside each bedroom. Avoid placing smoke detectors in the kitchen, where false alarms are common. Test your smoke detectors at least once a month, and replace their batteries once a year. Also, buy a fire extinguisher for your home and make a habit of inspecting it on a regular basis. Make sure every member of your household knows what the smoke detector alarms sound like and what to do if these is a fire.



We welcome your comments and suggestions about the Connection. To submit articles and/or topic ideas, please call: (269) 629-9708 or send to P.O. Box 460, Richland, Mi 49083. Also visit our website at: www.CLS-Skilledlabor.com

"Damn contemporary architecture!"