



SAFETY UPDATE



November 2012

OSHA Urges Worker Protection During Hurricane Cleanup

As New Jerseyans clean up the havoc wreaked by Hurricane Sandy, OSHA and the US Environmental Protection Agency have issued warnings about the dangers of cleanup activities.

Common hazards include downed electrical wires, carbon monoxide and live current from portable generators, fall and struck-by hazards from tree-trimming or working at heights, being caught in unprotected excavations or confined spaces, burns, lacerations, musculoskeletal injuries, being struck by traffic or heavy equipment, and encountering contaminated water.

Here are a few of the protections OSHA and EPA urge when dealing with water damage and debris removal:

- Avoid direct contact with floodwater because of the danger of sewage contamination
- Wear protective gear and provide it to workers – hard-soled shoes, work gloves, masks, safety glasses
- Separate hazardous waste – paints, cleaners, oils, batteries, pesticides and other chemicals – and dispose of it properly; municipalities, the state and the EPA have set up hazardous material disposal programs specifically for post-hurricane cleanup
- Assess risks before entering a building or home
- Educate workers on the risks and hazards and protective measures they should take

OSHA's Hazard Exposure and Risk Assessment

Matrix contains information on the tasks, operations and hazards associated with disaster response and recovery. The matrix and specific information pertaining to Hurricane Sandy can be found online:

www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/hurricane/index.html

www.osha.gov/sandy

www.epa.gov/sandy

OSHA 300 Called “A Log to Live By”

In an article published by Joint Commission Resources in October, the OSHA 300 Log is cited as “an invaluable resource that should be integrated into monitoring and analysis” within a company’s safety program.

The Joint Commission, an independent, not-for-profit group that accredits and certifies healthcare organizations in the US, called the log “far more than recordkeeping” and said it helps reduce worker injuries and illnesses when incidents are properly documented. The article, titled, “OSHA 300: A Log to Live By,” can be found via the November 1, 2012, OSHA “QuickTakes” at

www.osha.gov/as/opa/quicktakes/qt11012012.html

Coming in February: AGC Safety Management Training

The next AGC of America Safety Management Training Course is scheduled for February 27 -

March 1, 2013, on the first floor of AGC's headquarters in Arlington, VA. The three-day course provides training in the basic skills needed to manage a company safety program in the construction industry, and is designed for project managers, construction foremen, supervisors and other construction personnel responsible for worker safety. Register online at www.agc.org/SMTC or call the AGC Meetings Department, 703.837.5304.

Rule Update: OSHA Head Protection Standards

In the Federal Register on November 16, 2012, OSHA published notice of its final rule updating its head protection standards to incorporate national consensus standards. Thus, the final rule recognizes the 2009 edition of the American National Standard for Industrial Head Protection, and applies to personal protection equipment provisions for general industry, shipyard employment, longshoring, marine terminals and construction.

Two Hazardous Materials Rules Pushed Back

In October, EPA and OSHA each pushed back rules on hazardous materials of concern to the construction industry. We had previously posted the announcements on the Hot Topics page on BCANJ's website.

Lead Paint Rule. EPA delayed the inclusion of commercial buildings in a residential lead paint rule until 2015. Because lead-based paint can still be used in commercial and industrial buildings, the proposed inclusion would apply to every commercial building in the country, regardless of the construction date. The three-year delay is to give EPA more time to approve a test kit for the presence of lead-based paint that meets the accuracy standard EPA stated it would require when the residential rule was implemented in 2010.

Silica Dust Rule. OSHA halted the development of the silica dust regulation because of news about high levels of crystalline silica dust in the hydraulic fracturing process, also known as fracking. Environmentalists have been concerned about the impact of fracking on land and water, but a report released in May of this year by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) revealed that the hundreds of thousands of pounds of "frac sand" used in the process kick up large amounts of silica dust, posing a huge risk for workers. In fact, says NIOSH, nearly every step in the process that uses frac sand, from mining to transporting to filling hoppers, releases silica – in amounts at least 10 times higher than current NIOSH standards on a third of the 11 fracking sites tested. OSHA has been working on a new silica regulation for years, but the NIOSH data has now stalled the process, combined with concern from industry lobbyists that the cost to implement changes to lower the risk of exposure would reach billions of dollars.

Nominations for OSHA Advisory Committee

OSHA is seeking nominations for eight new members to serve on its 15-member Advisory Committee on Construction Safety and Health. Nominations will be accepted until January 7, 2013, by mail, fax or e-mail at www.regulations.gov for individuals willing to serve two-year terms representing employee, employer and public groups and state safety and health agencies.

For information on safety issues, regulations and training, contact BCANJ at 732.225.2265.