

MAFES Dawg Tracks



August 6, 2007

Facilities Maintenance



Facilities maintenance safety shouldn't fall on the shoulders of maintenance managers solely. We, the employees, should feel and practice a shared responsibility of safety. We look to the manager to provide us with continued utilities through proper maintenance practices, but it is everyone's responsibility to watch for possible hazards or reasons that could cause an accident to a fellow employee or to us from the equipment.

What's the Danger?

In all of our facilities, we work all over and aren't restricted to one particular area. With this fact in mind, it means that we could be exposed to an injury resulting from a chemical splash, electrocution, falls, or runovers by equipment.

We spend our time trying to sell safety in a multitude of ways to keep our fellow workers and ourselves safe and out of "Harm's Way." Regardless of the time and media channels that we endeavor to keep safety on all employees' minds, an accident or incident comes out of nowhere and "Bam," someone is injured. Nonetheless, we keep plugging away to try to keep anyone from getting hurt.

HOW DO WE PROTECT OURSELVES?

Wear the Gear:

Obviously, we shouldn't have to be reminded by anyone to wear the proper protective gear when doing any particular job that requires special protection. Not only does this extend to the proper PPE in special work, like spraying, but to normal work that exposed us to the great Mississippi sun and heat.

Although not very many of, if any at all, practice this, we should fasten our seatbelts anytime we mount a tractor or equipment. Especially on tractors, it has been proven over and over again that with the ROPS (Rollover Protective Structure) and by using seatbelts to buckle up, you have a better chance of not getting killed. The National Safety Council did a survey recently that showed no fatalities where seat belts and ROPS were used simultaneously. Also, earplugs need to be worn to eliminate loud noises. We are in the deep summer heat of Mississippi, so we need to remember to wear heat protection and drink plenty of liquids, but no caffeine or alcohol laden beverages.

Hazard Communication:

Another aspect of safety is that we all should be conscious of the chemicals that we use. Refer to the MSDS for instructions on the various types of PPE that we need to use and the proper care of handling fuels and proper methods of refueling our equipment.

Electrical:

Obey all warning signs regarding electrical hazards. We shouldn't get ourselves into situations of working with any aspect of electricity that we aren't familiar with and trained in their use. If we are in a situation of using boom trucks or trucks for loading and unloading grain, hay or other commodities, we must know and make everyone else aware of the safety issues required when working with elevated equipment around power lines. An example is standing on an aluminum ladder and working close to power lines.

Lockout/Tag out:

This is one aspect of safety that many companies fall short in and it isn't confined to maintenance people. We must be conscious of the power source when working on and repairing a piece of equipment or unclogging a part in the field. A formal "lockout/tag out" program doesn't have to be fancy and formal with all the "Christmas bells and whistles."

A policy with a simple tag denoting no power source while a machine is under repair or in the field when a combine, baler, etc. has to be temporarily stopped to unclog a part should be used. As an extra precaution, remove the key from the ignition. For a more complex repair, disconnect the batter cables so that the unit is immobile while being repaired.

FINAL WORD:

Remembering that "***SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY***" AND ***IT IS NOT A DIRTY WORD***, hopefully, we become more aware of all aspects of staying safe and assisting our fellow employees, especially new employees of the importance of taking a little more time to maintain a safe atmosphere in all aspects of our daily duties.

**SAFETY IS A STATE OF
MIND!!
ACCIDENTS ARE AN
ABSENCE OF MIND !!!**