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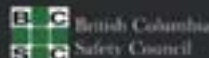
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From the editor

In this issue of *WorkSafe Magazine* we look at safety initiatives, safety award winners, and the challenges of changing long-standing safety practices and attitudes.

Our “Hands On” safety topic is a non-contact voltage tester that warns workers before they make physical contact that exposed alternating current (AC) electrical equipment is live. Electrical contact is a serious hazard for many workers. Each year an average of three B.C. workers die and 80 others sustain serious injuries from electrical contact. The feature on page 14 also provides tips for working safely around electricity.

We have two “What’s Working” profiles this issue. The first is Northern Interior Wood Products (NEWPRO), a particleboard mill in Smithers that has received three major safety awards in the past two years. NEWPRO’s focus on safety has lowered its injury rate from 10.3 in 2000 to zero in 2002 and its premiums have been cut in half in the last five years. The second is Ball Packaging in Richmond, which has also seen impressive reductions through a proactive approach to changing safety culture.

We also look at the challenges B.C. Hydro faced replacing 40-year-old tagout procedures with lockout procedures at 32 power plants around the province. B.C. Hydro made the change after some close calls caused them to re-think their work practices and look for ways to improve safety at their plants.

In “Safety Solutions” we highlight an Okanagan school district’s innovative approach to working safely at elevations. Read more about their invention, the Nifty Nabber, on page 8.

Also read how a casual conversation led to a creative new way to protect construction workers from the dangers of exposed steel dowels, or rebar.

As usual, I encourage you to submit questions to “Ask an Expert” as well as any story ideas you think might be interesting to *WorkSafe Magazine* readers.

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on occupational health and safety issues*

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To reduce the risk of injuries and protect workers, Lafarge Steel Division uses tires to cover exposed steel dowels.

Ingenuity protects both workers and materials

By Corey Van't Haaff

A casual conversation at the back of a pickup truck was all the motivation Leah-Ann Maybee, safety coordinator at Lafarge Steel Division, needed to develop a new way to protect workers from the dangers of exposed steel dowels.

Steel dowels, or rebar, are used primarily in high-rise construction. Rebar can measure from 10 mm to 35 mm in diameter and their jagged, exposed ends create a myriad of hazards to workers — including severe lacerations from casual contact and the possibility of impalement from a fall.

Maybee was having a conversation with a colleague, Kevin Iomyk, about the problem of exposed dowels when the summer tires in the back of her truck sparked an idea: “We thought, ‘How hard would it be to use tires to cover dowels?’ Some people were using conveyor belt pieces and we wondered if we cut the tires in half, how would that work?”

To test this idea, Maybee and her co-workers took tires donated by tire companies, and cut them in half crosswise using a special rescue-and-demolition blade. The tire halves were placed over groupings of six to eight dowels, and their convex shape allowed them to fit snugly without being easily dislodged by bumps.

The group conducted tests, dropping an 80-kg and a 90-kg sandbag from a height of 2.5 m, directly onto the exposed dowels.

“The nice thing with the tires is they deflect things,” says Bill Hughes, yard foreman at Lafarge. “In my opinion, it is way better than anything else we saw.”

The group also tested another form of dowel protection known as mushroom caps. The results clearly confirmed that mushroom caps are not intended for protection from impalement. “When the sandbag hit the mushroom caps, from what I saw, they were useless,” says Hughes. “The sandbag pushed the caps halfway down the bar.”

The test also compared two-by-four wooden trough protectors, which fared

better than the mushroom caps but still would have caused definite injury.

“The test was a complete success,” says Hughes. “People are concerned about a fall from a height, but I also worry about tripping right next to the bars. Another nice thing about the tires is that they give you something to grab onto — a large target that still deflects and spreads the weight over a large area.”

Don Nelson, WCB Industry Services manager for construction, says every hazard may require a different solution. “Tires are excellent for some applications,” he says. “They’re good where rebar dowelling is concentrated and the tire fits over it easily. If it’s a continuous run of dowelling, other solutions may be more appropriate.”

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Employees help northern mill achieve safety high

NEWPRO's shift supervisor Doug Vander Schaaf works the controls of the particleboard cooler.

By Stuart Colceugh

The 60 employees at Northern Interior Wood Products' (NEWPRO's) Smithers particleboard mill are enjoying a totally new experience lately. They're winning safety awards.

The mill has received three major awards in the past two years from its industry trade group, the U.S.-based Composite Panel Association (CPA), including top honours in 2002 for the best overall safety performance in North America among mills its size.

The awards highlight a remarkable about-face for Western Canada's largest particleboard producer, which was once a poor safety performer. The recordable injury rate at the Smithers plant (NEWPRO has another mill in Wanham, Alberta) dropped from 10.3 in 2000 to zero last year, and WCB premiums have been cut by more than half in the last five years.

Transformation is threefold

So how does a mill transform itself in just a few short years? The answer, in NEWPRO's case, is threefold: a proactive new safety philosophy, an increase in employee participation, and an extensive safety orientation program for new employees.

"It all started when the plant was bought in 1996 by our present owner," says Roger Smith, who took over as mill manager a year and a half ago. "Back then, we were typically at the bottom of the CPA's safety list. We had a lot of minor incidents and some major ones too, like severed fingers, back injuries, and arm-pinching injuries. Plus the company was losing a lot of money through time losses. Something had to be done."

Particleboard manufacturing can be a hazardous business. Employees are

constantly exposed to chemicals and high-speed processing machines as they use heat and pressure to combine wood residues and adhesive resins to form finished panels. According to Smith, the most common injuries are lacerations from not wearing gloves and eye injuries from not wearing safety glasses.

Employee incentives key

As a first step in its transformation, NEWPRO invested money in updating its safe work procedures, safety processes, and equipment. It also established an incentive-based safety program, with help from the CPA, in which employees were given prizes for working accident-free.

"A pat on the back goes only so far," says Jaecen Aspa, the mill's production coordinator and safety director, "but the incentive program has really worked



Maintenance worker Werner Grosch does a little fine-tuning of the boards at NEWPRO's hockey rink.

well.” The mill rewarded employees collectively for each spot they moved up from the bottom of the CPA’s safety list, initially with \$100 per spot and then \$300. Within two years they had moved up 40 spots, to the top of the list.

“We have an ice rink we built with the money and a gazebo,” says Aspa. “And we’re looking at buying a barbecue for the lunchroom area.” The incentive program also awards employees individually with increasingly valuable rewards for each accident-free anniversary.

Getting everyone involved

But the real key to the mill’s safety conversion has been employee involvement. “The workers were a little skeptical at first,” says Werner Grosch, safety committee chair and IWA Canada 1-424 local vice-president. “But once they realized that management was serious about making improvements, they signed on 100 percent.” Now, he says, the plant’s joint safety committee has a predominant influence on plant operations at all levels, and management routinely acts on its recommendations.

Comprising both hourly and salaried

employees, the committee meets every month to appraise the mill’s performance, devise ways to improve it, and create procedures that everyone can follow. Two different employees are selected on a rotational basis each month to conduct safety rounds with the committee, looking out for potential hazards. That way, everyone has a chance to participate. Committee minutes are posted each month for everyone to see.

Employee involvement has also changed the way safety infractions are dealt with, says Smith. “Previously, if you got caught in a lockout violation you were written up; the next time you were suspended. Now, it’s positive rather than negative reinforcement. It’s not just supervisors trying to catch unsafe behaviour, it’s employees looking out for each other.”

New workers well trained

And while some mills allow only a few hours of paid safety training for new workers, NEWPRO devotes a full 40 hours — or more if necessary. In addition to learning policies, rules, and procedures, new recruits learn how to use emergency eyewashes and showers, fire extinguishers, and alarms. They also train in the use of forklifts, personal protective equipment, hazardous materials, and material safety data sheets.

But the main thing they learn is that safety is a top priority at NEWPRO and that employees — new and old — are expected to speak up if they see something amiss.

“Our new philosophy means that if an employee brings something forward, we’ll deal with it,” says Smith. “In past years nobody would have mentioned it. They would have just lived with it. There wasn’t the awareness that there is now.”



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Fall protection initiatives get high marks



By Dawn Knoll

Several times a year Central Okanagan School District 23 workers have to access school roofs to retrieve balls, pick up garbage, or clean debris from the drains. Performing these simple tasks meant that employees were often working within two metres (6 feet) of the roof's edge, which meant gearing up in full fall restraint and being tied off to an anchor point as required by Part 11 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

"We knew that the effort required, usually by the school custodian, to retrieve a lost ball from the roof was cumbersome at best," says Ken Emmons, District 23 health and safety officer. Emmons turned to the district's Operations health and safety committee for an easier way to make sure that employees still complied with the Regulation, but weren't being placed at risk while working at elevations.

In the end, it was the combined expertise of zone coordinator Bill Redlich, joint committee member Sam Carlsson, and welder Robin McMillan that led to the creation of the Nifty Nabber.

"It's quite ingenious," says Emmons. The concept comes from an existing device, called an E-Z Reacher, used by sanitation workers, gardeners, and hospital cleaning personnel as a grabbing tool. The E-Z Reacher is

Welder Robin McMillan demonstrates how easy it is to safely retrieve debris from the roof's edge with an innovative new tool called the Nifty Naber.

“We needed to modify the existing tool to increase its reach so that our employees, with their arms fully extended could use it to work outside the two-metre limit of the roof's edge.”

approximately two metres long with a trigger handle and non-slip gripper cups. “We needed to modify the existing tool to increase its reach so that our employees, with their arms fully extended, could use it to work outside the two-metre limit of the roof's edge,” says Emmons.

Clayton Anderson, president of A & G Supplies in Kelowna, agreed to donate an E-Z Reacher to be used as a prototype for the project. To the back of

this, McMillan welded an aluminum plate that was light enough to extend the tool's reach without injuring the worker using it, and strong enough to withstand being used to pull debris away from the rooftop drains.

“We couldn't have asked for better results,” says Emmons. “We have a working Nifty Nabber that, at \$100 each, doesn't break the bank.” Emmons sees the Nifty Nabber as a valuable tool that will benefit other school districts, as well as anyone who is working within two metres of a roof's edge.

Other fall protection initiatives developed, with input from the joint

health and safety committee, include the installation of a multi-level ship ladder at Kelowna's Mount Boucherie Senior Secondary, so workers carrying tools or equipment can safely manoeuvre from one roof level to the next. Also, appropriate rooftop units (those weighing more than 363 kg) have been designated with a fall restraint and an arrow pointing to the tie-off connection.



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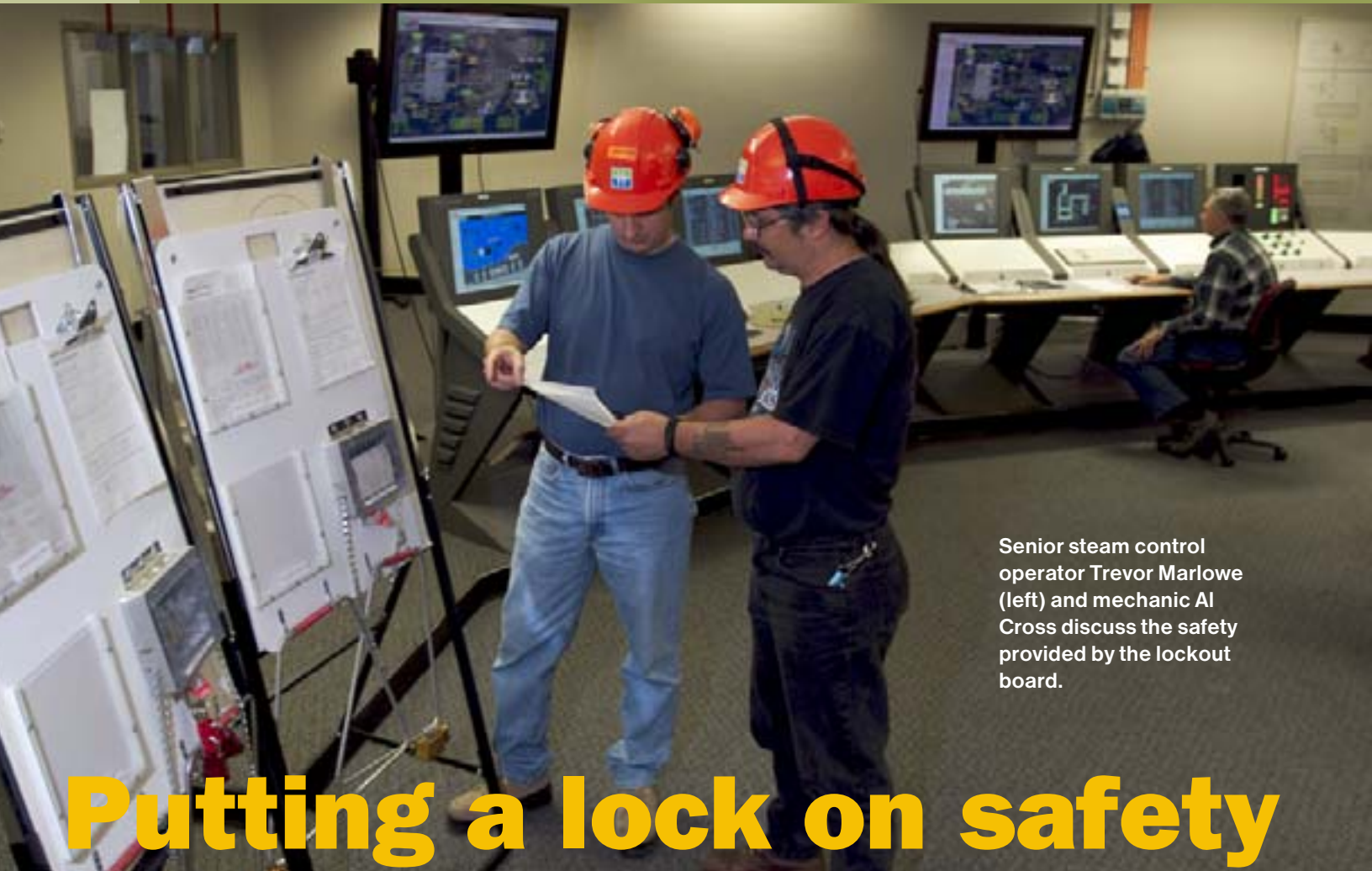
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Senior steam control operator Trevor Marlowe (left) and mechanic Al Cross discuss the safety provided by the lockout board.

Putting a lock on safety

By Ian Gray

B.C. Hydro undertakes a challenging project to replace 40-year-old tagout procedures in its 32 power plants.

Electrical generating plants are by their very nature full of hazards: gigantic spinning turbines, torrents of coursing water and/or high-pressure flows of scalding steam, thousands of watts of electricity, and an abundance of moving parts and machinery — all of which can injure or kill if not properly controlled.

Despite the constant presence of these and other potentially deadly hazards, B.C. Hydro has maintained a good safety record at its hydro and thermal generating plants over the years. But after a recent close call, the

organization decided to implement a comprehensive new lockout system to replace tagout procedures that had been the cornerstone of safety at B.C. Hydro since its inception in the early 1960s.

Lockout vs. tagout

Lockout is the use of a lock (or several locks) to secure isolation points that render machinery or equipment inoperable. The purpose is to prevent any energy-isolating device — such as a switch, circuit breaker, or valve — from being accidentally switched on while workers are performing maintenance or repairs.

Tagout on transmission and distribution lines, on the other hand, is a written

warning attached to the energy-isolating device, telling workers not to energize the power lines until the maintenance has been completed and the tags removed. In the tagout system, workers are provided with additional protection by the use of personal protective grounds in proximity to their work location.

“Tagout works well,” says Al Geissler, Generations manager of safety and maintenance services. “But within generation stations, the rotating machines and water passages cannot be secured with grounds; therefore locks on the isolating devices are used.”

With lockout, an accident is less likely because there is a physical restraint that





cannot be removed without the correct key. The key is in the possession or under control of each employee working on the machine.

According to Sandy Burpee, lockout project manager (recently retired), this shift has meant that each worker is now responsible for knowing the sources of hazardous energy and for maintaining isolation themselves. "Under the old system, workers relied on a person in charge to maintain the isolation of the hazardous energy and apply the tags," he says, "but now, control and responsibility have been put in the hands of the workers, which has contributed to a greater understanding and ownership of safety on the job."

Major corporate change required

Although it sounds relatively straightforward, moving from tagout to lockout was no easy task. In total, the project impacted approximately 950 workers, managers, and contractors, took over two and a half years to complete, and cost \$5 million.

Meeting the physical requirements of lockout was demanding enough, given the variation and size of equipment in the generating stations — from the huge turbines and generators to a variety of electronic, hydraulic, and pneumatic systems — but the greatest challenge, according to Burpee, was the change in safety culture.

uncomfortable with the changes and expressed doubt about the need for lockout. Many were unsure about the changes and the impact that they would have on their jobs."

Employee involvement was key

"To overcome employee apprehension, it was absolutely essential that we involve front-line workers and managers as partners right from the beginning," says Burpee. "So at the start of the project we created a working group consisting of three managers and nine workers from principally affected trades."

The working group was active throughout the process, initially determining the required changes and developing recommended approaches. The group then drafted new rules and procedures, and eventually refined those procedures based on employee feedback and experience gained through pilot testing and implementation. The working group reported to a steering committee, which

represented B.C. Hydro management and its unions, and also liaised frequently with affected groups of employees.

Stan Burkitt, sub-foreman electrician at the Peace Canyon hydro electrical facility, and a member of the working group, says the process worked well because there was constant communication with employees, a comprehensive peer-to-peer-based training program, and plenty of opportunities to incorporate worker feedback. "We wanted to do more than just inform our co-workers," he says. "We had to ensure that they were involved in a meaningful way. That was the only way we were going to get it right, and get buy-in from the other workers on the floor.

"Because front-line employees were involved in every step of the project, by the time full implementation was underway, I think managers and workers, including myself, had really taken ownership of the project and accepted greater responsibility for their own personal safety," says Burkitt. "The switch to lockout made each of us look at our work practices, and in some cases we realized the way we had been doing things for all these years wasn't necessarily the safest within our generating stations."



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Press mechanic Bruno Rizzuto on half-pound redraw press checks the quality of salmon cans.



Cooperation and commitment turn Ball Packaging around

By Helena Bryan

In 2002, senior executives from Ball Packaging Products' head office in Denver, Colorado, made a special trip to the Richmond, B.C. plant — to tie on aprons and flip steaks for close to 80 employees, many of them from the United Steelworkers' Union. The facility produces millions of salmon cans annually, supplying 100 percent of the Canadian market and 30 percent of the Alaskan market. Certainly something to celebrate, but that wasn't the reason behind the barbecue. The executives were there to acknowledge employees for working a full year without a time-loss accident.

Recognition

Recognizing employees for working safely is one initiative, rolled out in February 2001, that has helped the Richmond plant turn around a time-loss record that "had us near the bottom rung in North America," says human resources manager Lynne McKinnell. The facility recorded 11 lost-time accidents in 1999 and 2000 respectively, racking up a whopping 986 days of lost time. But with zero time-loss accidents in 2002, and zero to date in 2003, the Richmond plant is now sitting nicely on the top rung of the health and safety ladder. And that's where they want to stay.

Awareness

They have the tools necessary for maintaining the turnaround, including a new safety awareness program that goes well beyond hanging a few posters and handing out buttons, although these are one part of it.

Employees do wear yellow buttons that read, "Safety First," and two health and safety bulletin boards in the foyer are notable for their size. But in Ball's case, these visuals reflect a new culture in which employees and management take health and safety very seriously. "Every meeting in the plant now has safety at the top of the agenda," says

McKinnell. That's every meeting, on top of the monthly health and safety meetings.

Cooperation

"It's a cooperative, solutions-oriented approach to safety," reports WCB occupational safety officer Bruce Jackson. But it wasn't always so. Mechanic and union president Ray Larocque, an 18-year veteran of the company, explains: "We used to be in arbitration four or five times a year. Now, we resolve things in-house, and there's trust on both sides." That trust is the result of a little give at both ends of the table. "The company listens, and as a result has earned the respect of workers."

Indeed, if an employee has an idea for an improvement on the floor, no matter how minor, it gets reviewed right away and a formal response is provided, whether the idea is a go or not (see "Encouraging the 'Aha' factor"). And suggestions do get turned into reality. Mechanic and health and safety committee member Roy Palmer recently identified a problem with the trouble lights on all the plant machinery. In fact, several employees had reported burning their hands and forearms on them. Within a couple of weeks, all the incandescent trouble lights had been switched to cooler fluorescent ones. "It wasn't a life-saving change," says McKinnell, "but it was the kind of problem that kept tripping people up."

Commitment

The clearest example of the company's commitment to health and safety is an assessment program for which the accumulated results rival a small library in size. Involving more than 1000 questions requiring written responses and thorough documentation, the risk assessment covers five topics: Program Management and Administration;

Record Keeping, WCB, and Medical Services; Industrial Health and Hygiene; Work Practice and Hazard Control; and Compliance and Housekeeping. With a complete audit of the plant done every two years, Jackson says Ball's OHS Program audit is one of the most comprehensive he has ever seen.

As for employees, their commitment is everywhere you look. The plant positively gleams, despite the fact that it's in operation around the clock and almost a city-block in length. "It's spotless," says Larocque. "It looks like it could be a restaurant. Everyone's responsible for their own area, and everybody leads by example," he explains. "It helps to know safety comes before dollars. You might get told to speed things up occasionally, but if there's some spilled oil on the floor, you know it's your duty to clean up first rather than generate more product."

The investment on both sides pays off beyond the obvious reward of reduced accidents and injuries. As Larocque says, "In our line of business, a safe, clean shop sells cans." And that means enhanced job security for employees. For employers, above-average safety performance can mean the difference

between having a competitive edge or not. And in today's global arena, that's an edge worth having.

Encouraging the "Aha" factor

"When it comes to ergonomics, or making a job safer, the people on the floor, who actually do the work, usually have the best ideas," says mechanic Ray Larocque of Ball Packaging in Richmond. Here's how to generate the kind of inspiration that leads to innovation:

- Have an official process in place for dealing with ideas from employees and make sure everybody knows about it.
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Non-contact voltage detector reduces risk

By Dawn Knoll

Working around electricity is dangerous. On average, three B.C. workers die and 80 workers sustain serious injuries each year from electrical contact involving low voltages (750 V and below) and high voltages, usually from contact with high-voltage power lines. Injuries can include retinal damage, loss of fingers and limbs, burns, and electric shock symptoms such as cardiac arrest.

Although electrical contact is a dangerous hazard for many B.C. workers, it can be easily prevented in most cases by following proper safety procedures and by using a non-contact voltage tester that warns workers that

exposed alternating current (AC) electrical equipment is live, without requiring physical contact. This device detects the alternating electric field, which is present whenever there is AC

voltage, even if no current is flowing. Non-contact voltage testers give visual and/or audible signals up to one metre from the electrical source.

Resources

Working Safely Around Electricity explains the dangers of working on or around energized low-voltage equipment and near high-voltage conductors.

Lockout defines lockout, explains policy and procedures, and provides guidance on compliance with Regulation requirements.

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Steps to reduce electrical contact

- Before you begin work, look up and check to ensure your machinery or equipment will not come in contact with overhead power lines.
- Keep machinery or equipment at least 3 to 6 m (10 to 20 ft.) away from power lines.
- Attach special non-contact voltage testers to insulated hot sticks when working around high-voltage conductors.
- Do not rely solely upon these testers to indicate the presence of voltage in situations where the electric field may be shielded by metal. Non-contact voltage detectors may *not* work properly around closely bundled three-phase conductors because of the cancelling effect of the three phases.
- Follow procedures for de-energizing and lockout, where required. The voltage detector provides an additional check to verify that the equipment has been completely de-energized; it does not replace other safety procedures.
- Do not consider high-voltage conductors safe until they are effectively grounded.
- Wear personal protective gear, including eye protection, to guard against mechanical and explosive hazards. Safety eyewear has been designed specifically for electricians, with lenses to filter out the harmful rays of an electric arc flash as well as to protect from mechanical hazards.



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Policy decisions

The following is a summary of policy decisions finalized by the WCB Board of Directors.

Decision summaries are posted on the WCB web site at WorkSafebc.com/law_and_policy/policy_decision/.

Miscellaneous changes to the Prevention Manual

The Board of Directors has approved amendments to eight items in the *Prevention Manual*. The changes made include corrections to statutory citations and revisions to improve the user's understanding of the policy, resulting in an updated and improved *Prevention Manual*.

For more information, contact Nick Attewell at 604 273-2266, local 2618, or toll-free at 1 888 621-7233, local 2618.

Retirement of Prevention policies in the Policy and Procedure Manual

The Board of Directors has approved the retirement of 10 policies from the Prevention Division's *Policy and Procedure Manual*. The policies contained outdated information and/or have been superseded by policy, guidelines, or subsequent statutory changes, and therefore are unnecessary or inaccurate.

The retirement of these policies follows a direction of the former Panel of Administrators to consolidate and/or retire prevention policy into the *Prevention Manual* in order to eliminate multiple sources of prevention policy and to decrease confusion and complexity in

the system. To date, 222 policies from the *Policy and Procedure Manual* have been retired and/or consolidated (including the above-mentioned 10 policies), and 51 remain to be considered.

For more information, contact Nick Attewell at 604 273-2266, local 2618, or toll-free at 1 888 621-7233, local 2618.

Retiring Workers' Compensation Reporter decisions nos. 1-423

The policies of the Board of Directors currently include *Workers' Compensation Reporter* decisions nos. 1-423. In order to reduce the number of sources of policy, a strategy has been approved for retiring these decisions over time.

An index of retired decisions, with an explanation of the concept of retirement, appears on the WCB web site at WorkSafebc.com. The index will also appear as an appendix to each policy manual.

At their June 17, 2003 meeting, the Board of Directors approved the retirement of a further 118 decisions. Those decisions are being added to the index.

For more information, contact Heather Greene at 604 276-5160.

Revisions to Chapter 1 — Rehabilitation Services and Claims Manual

Effective June 30, 2002, the *Workers Compensation Amendment Act, 2002* (Bill 49) significantly amended the *Workers Compensation Act* in relation to benefits for injured workers. To facilitate the

implementation of the policies developed to implement Bill 49, the *Rehabilitation Services and Claims Manual* was restructured into two volumes. Chapter 1 of each volume was amended to explain the distinction between Volume I and Volume II.

At their June 17, 2003 meeting, the Board of Directors approved revisions to Chapter 1 to expand and clarify this explanation. In particular, an addendum has been created for Chapter 1 in Volume I that provides a mechanism for identifying the few changes made to Volume I since June 30, 2002.

The Board of Directors has also incorporated into Volume I the policy amendments made last year to the definition of "recurrence" in Volume II for purposes of section 35.1 of the *Act*, which contains the transitional provisions for Bill 49.

For more information, contact Joe Pinto at 604 276-3118, toll-free at 1 888 967-5377, local 3118.

Policy clarification of appeal rights

Policy item #108.50, Appeals Against Decisions on Applications for Reconsideration, was deleted from the *Rehabilitation Services and Claims Manual* effective March 3, 2003, as part of the policy changes made to implement the *Workers Compensation Amendment Act (No. 2), 2002* (Bill 63). Questions have arisen as to the applicability of this policy item to the WCB Review Division or the Workers' Compensation Appeal Tribunal (WCAT) in considering pre-

Continued on page 18



Infractions

The purpose of "Infractions," a regular item in *WorkSafe Magazine*, is to highlight the importance of making workplaces safe. The WCB Compliance Section and the editors of *WorkSafe Magazine* believe British Columbians should know who has been penalized and why. We hope this information will help make B.C. workplaces safer. The delay between the date of infractions and publication of the infractions in this magazine is partially a result of allowing time for employers and other interested parties to respond to the initial penalty and for the appeal process.

Note: Dates shown indicate when infractions were imposed. Addresses shown are locations where infractions occurred, and not necessarily the addresses of the penalized businesses.

595348 SR200200806 May 02, 2003
\$2,739
Southtown Holdings Inc.
DBA The Garage Pub & Grill
2179 Omineca Avenue
South Hazelton

Failure to control environmental tobacco smoke and limit worker exposure to second-hand smoke in the workplace.

582713 SR200200904 May 02, 2003
\$1,781
CSR Holdings Ltd.
DBA The Office Bar & Grill
21525 Dewdney Trunk Road
Maple Ridge

Repeat order for allowing patrons to smoke at the bar in close proximity to workers.

224309 SR200200896 May 09, 2003
\$3,292
OB Roofing Ltd.
4001 Remi Place
Burnaby

Repeat violations of fall protection, instruction, and supervision requirements.

Policy decisions

Continued from page 17

March 3, 2003 WCB decisions on reconsideration under the Bill 63 transitional provisions.

At their June 17, 2003 meeting, the Board of Directors issued a policy clarification stating that policy item #108.50 was not intended to, and does not, apply to the Review Division or WCAT.

For more information, contact Heather Greene at 604 276-5160.

Deposit accounts

The Board of Directors has approved amendments to policy AP1-37-5, Deposit Accounts, of the *Assessment Manual*.

The amended policy provides direction on transfers from the deposit account system to the classification system. The policy sets out the following three types of transfers:

- A deposit account employer requests transfer into the classification system.
- A deposit account employer's operations are transferred to either a new employer or an existing employer in the classification system.
- The WCB transfers a deposit account employer into the classification system where the employer is unable to maintain its creditworthiness.

Policy provides guidance on the effective date of these transfers. It also clarifies the process for the recovery of any deposit account unfinalled claims and other liabilities to ensure that these liabilities do not become the responsibility of the classification system.

The amendments are effective June 17, 2003, and apply to all decisions made on or after that date.

For more information, contact Syrus Bacha at 604 244-6125, toll-free at 1 888 922-2768, local 6125.

Permanent disability evaluation schedule

The Board of Directors approved a number of changes to the Permanent Disability Evaluation Schedule (PDES) and associated policies contained in Chapter 6, Permanent Disability Awards, of the *Rehabilitation Services and Claims Manual*, Volumes I and II.

The major changes to the PDES include the following:

- Changes to the percentages of disability for the partial amputation of the digits of the hand and the reduction in the number of hand charts from 12 to five charts

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For the phone number of your local provider, download the WorkSafe Education Partners listing from the WorkSafe courses web page at www.worksafebc.com/news/worksafe_courses/default.asp, or call the Prevention Information Line at 604 276-3100, toll-free in B.C. at 1 888 621-SAFE (7233).

www.worksafebc.com/news/worksafe_courses/default.asp

- Changes to the spine to include thoracic spine rotation
- Changes to increase the percentage of disability for limited pronation movement (3 percent to 6 percent of total disability) and a decrease in the percentage for supination movement (5 percent to 4 percent)

The effective date of these changes is August 1, 2003. The changes apply to all section 23(1) assessments and reassessments undertaken with reference to the Permanent Disability Evaluation Schedule on or after August 1, 2003. The revisions to the *Rehabilitation Services and Claims Manual* to reflect these changes will be distributed shortly.

For more information, contact James Watson at 604 231-8650, toll-free at 1 888 967-5377, local 8650.

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