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How to Reach the Individual Worker on Safety

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You will agree that no one method has proved satisfactory in getting the individual worker interested in safety. It requires many things.

The other day I noticed one of our stockroom employees had his hand bandaged. I asked, "Joe, how'd you hurt your hand? Get caught in a lawnmower?"

"No," said Joe "I was trying to close a freight car door and pulled it shut on my fingers. The nurse dressed my hand, and said I ought to rest a little before going back on the job. But while sitting there, I thought about those red and green lights on the safety board, and I sure didn't want a red light checked up against our department."

That was interesting. There was at least one man in our plant who had been reminded of safety, and who wanted to keep the green light blinking.

I like to start teaching safety to employees right in the employment department. If you are hiring a punch press or a rubber mill operator, you can include some safety questions in your interview. If the man is hired, safety should be included in your talk to the new employee—we have a safety booklet which is given to all new and reinstated employees—he is required to read it and sign a perforated slip in the back of the book indicating his willingness to co-operate in our safety program.

After the employee is in the department a few days, the shift foreman speaks to him about Safety, and asks him to sign a card indicating that the departmental exposures have been called to his attention, and that he has been instructed to report all injuries to the foreman, to the medical department, etc. These cards are kept as a permanent record.

No doubt we all agree that the most important individual in getting safety across to the worker is the supervisor and foreman. He must be sold—he must accept the responsibility for safety in his department. The foreman who has a good safety record has a good production record. He knows how to handle employee relations. His scrap and departmental costs are in line, and the manage-

ment rates him as a good foreman. Most of our departments have safety rules which are used by the foremen as a basis in carrying on their safety work.

Departmental safety committees have assisted all of us in keeping the employees interested in safety. Also employee group meetings, departmental or plant wide, with talks by the foremen to their men. Costs of accidents, major accident causes, and departmental exposures might be used as material for these meetings.

Plant inspections in an effort to keep in touch with new jobs, to follow up on cleanliness and order, and to see that the equipment is properly guarded and in good repair are essential.

Plant Police—we used to call them guards—can serve as inspectors throughout the plant and on company premises in seeing that safety rules are enforced; that running and horseplay are not permitted; that automobile and truck traffic is under control; that the aiseways are kept open, and that electric trucks are not operated at excessive speeds. They can also constantly keep checking on fire prevention.

In our mill and calander room operations, we follow the practice of having all operators at the start of shifts check the safeties and roll travel and record them—which warns the operator of the necessity of keeping this equipment in good operating condition, and daily reminds him of safety.

Where employee representative plans are in operation, it is a good policy to have some of these representatives on general plant safety committees.

Investigation of accidents will impress the facts on certain employees that we are interested in preventing recurrences. Accident hearings before the safety committee, with the injured man, his foreman and witnesses present, tend to spread the gospel of safety, and this is a splendid time for recruiting more safety converts.

Various educational and publicity methods are good, such as bulletin boards—house organs—safety boards—safety slides, etc. The safety director at the National Cash Register Company has told

me that they are photographing some of the posters published by the National Safety Council and are making slides and showing these to employees at noon day shows—they select the ones carrying the most humor and greatest safety appeal.

It is surprising how many industrial accidents are carried in our local newspapers as news stories—sometimes these can be used. I noticed an item recently where a man had walked between some

railroad cars which were being switched and was crushed to death. This was cut out of the paper and placed on all our bulletin boards, and was called to the attention of our foremen, our traffic department, and our plant police.

I believe that contests, new stunts, things spectacular, are also essential. We must keep everyone in the organization interested.

Do We Have Occupational Disease Hazards in the Rubber Industry?

By DR. J. NEWTON SHIRLEY

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We do have occupational disease hazards in the rubber industry. This is true of all large industries where chemistry and the compounding of chemicals play a large part in the manufacturing of the finished product.

But through the efficient work of our predecessors the industry has progressed from one of the worst producers of occupational disease to one of the safest for the workers. This has been accomplished through the efforts of the industrial physician, the safety engineer, the public health department and the industrial disease section of the State Department of Labor.

Industrial chemistry is bringing new chemicals into every day use. It is the duty of the men who know that such materials are to be used, to be sure that they are used safely.

Most of you are familiar with the extensive work done by Dr. L. J. D. Healy, consulting chemist, formerly with the Fisk Rubber Co. He has listed all the compounding materials into groups and has noted the health hazards of each, together with a suggestion of what care should be taken in handling them.

Unquestionably, lead poisoning was the outstanding hazard in the industry which first attracted attention. Precautions were taken to safeguard the worker. Local exhaust hoods were installed where

litharge (the common form of lead used) was weighed out. The workers were supplied with respirators and were required to clean up properly before lunch and after completing the day's work.

Periodic physical examinations of workers in the compound room, with a rotation of the men on this particular job, were further steps in safeguarding the workmen in this department. Some mills used master batching of litharge to reduce the lead dust. Today, lead has been very largely eliminated in rubber compounding. This has removed the extensive lead hazard which formerly existed but has introduced it in another way. The use of lead becomes sporadic and the safety measures formerly employed are apt to be disregarded by workmen exposed to litharge dust in dangerous amounts.

Similar dust hazards are present to a much less extent in the handling of several other inorganic materials. Some of the fillers used in compounding contain a small amount of free silica (diatomaceous earth, Fuller's earth, clay, infusorial earth and especially silica and ground quartz). These materials may be handled in large amounts, as in the receiving department and the compound room. The workmen in these departments should be supplied with and required to use respirators of an approved type. I believe that actual cases of silicosis in the rubber