

REMOVING THE HAZARD FROM THE JOB

been installed. He will be in frequent consultation with the safety department in making all purchases where safety is a factor. He will also be particularly careful to see that every purchased machine complies fully with the safety regulations of the state in which it is to be operated.

The matter of price

When considering plant purchases from the standpoint of safety, the item of cost cannot be minimized. There is a constant struggle in the mind of the purchasing agent to reconcile quality, work efficiency, and safety with the price of an item.

Sometimes it may seem that the cost of an adequately safeguarded machine is out of all proportion to the cost of an unguarded machine plus the estimated cost of adding homemade safeguards. But the experience of many industrial plants has proved again and again that the best time to safeguard a machine or process is in the design stage. Safeguards planned and built as integral parts of a machine are the most efficient and durable.

The purchasing agent, through accident information supplied by the safety department, will be familiar with the costs of specific accidents in the plant. He will know that every accident has both direct and indirect costs. He will remember specific examples of accidents and their costs.

Of course, the purchasing agent must be able to defend his judgment. If he has made a study of the accident experience of his plant over a period of years, and if he has familiarized himself with accident details and accident costs, he will be able to justify his decisions. He will be firmly convinced that the safety program of his plant is necessary for production efficiency and profit, and that the safety department, with which he is cooperating, is really a produc-

tion division, producing wealth by the elimination of accident wastes.

These are arguments that must appeal to all executives who are responsible for the success of the industrial organization. The executive who is already sold on safety will be favorable to expenditures reasonably justified in the interest of accident prevention. If an executive does not have this attitude, means of increasing his interest and of broadening his understanding of the accident situation must be sought. In this undertaking, the purchasing agent can undoubtedly count upon the active co-operation of the safety man.

In some instances, the purchase of machinery or equipment involves engineering details of great importance. For such purchases, the industrial establishment will undoubtedly have a system whereby, first, definite specifications, perhaps including drawings, will be prepared by engineers. These plans and specifications will then be carefully checked by the head of the safety department before bids and estimates of cost are solicited.

The purchasing agent will have the plans and specifications at hand when he asks for prices. However, he will want to keep in close touch with the safety man throughout the negotiations of such purchases, for he will want the benefit of the latter's knowledge and experience in picking any flaw in relation to accident prevention details.

After the purchase order has been made out and before it is signed, one other most important detail should not be overlooked. This is a statement, in language that cannot possibly be misinterpreted, that the articles ordered must comply fully with the safety laws and regulations of the state in which they are to be used. This statement must be made a part of the purchase order.

References

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