Effective Safety Program for Contractors

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The speaker said in part: Taken as an entire industry, there are few mechanical operations in the construction game—very few hazardous machines to be guarded. It is therefore plainly evident that accident prevention in this line is distinctly one which rests on the human element.

Our company has specialized in accident prevention and has had some success in assisting members of the "A. G. C." to reduce and prevent accidents. As a brief outline of an effective safety program for contractors, I would like to submit the following, developed through years of constant effort on this particular problem. We studied more than 1,000 construction accidents and found the outstanding causes to be: 25 per cent stepping on or striking against objects; 18 per cent handling objects; 15 per cent struck by falling objects; 13 per cent falls of persons; 10 per cent flying particles in eyes; and less than 5 per cent of all accidents studied could have been prevented through the use of additional mechanical safeguards. Thus 95 per cent could have been prevented by properly educating the workmen in safe practices, or in other words by insisting on obedience in necessary rules for their own safety.

With this as a foundation, we opened a campaign to educate the foremen so they in turn could train their workmen to guard against these causes—to watch constantly and to follow through on a program requiring full co-operation from everyone on the job.

We suggest holding a foreman responsible for his results including accidents. To this end, a report form has been prepared which supplements the regular accident report. It requires the foreman's personal investigation and his written statement covering what happened—why—how and what has been done to prevent another accident like it.

A safety committee should be formed as soon as the new job starts. The timekeeper is usually the secretary and the superintendent the chairman. As each type of work is added the foreman of that crew is made a member. This committee will have complete charge of accident prevention, and by constantly training the new men and always watching the work as it progresses should have no difficulty in avoiding accidents. A safety engineer will make regular inspections, review accidents and maintain interest in accident prevention.

The system of posting bulletins around the job—placing safety slogans inserts in pay envelopes—requiring each employee to study the rules—sending safety letters to the workmen's homes—all are a part of a general program and add to the results of intelligent supervision.

Much success has followed the use of charts which analyze the accidents reported over any given period of time—usually monthly where a large crew is working. These are divided by foremen and charted as to cause. They require full co-operation from the management as does any scheme in a safety program. With the contractor's help, a safety meeting is called and each superintendent, foreman, and straw boss is present to discuss each accident and to explain to the safety committee just what happened and why.

But—and here we put it up to you—if the meeting ends there and the big boss does nothing—as happens many times—the accidents will continue. If he takes proper action and follows up the foreman, he will soon have a good record and a safe job.

Following this procedure on a certain large job, with a force averaging about 450 employees, their lost time record by months was as follows: January, none; February, one; March, none; April, one; May, three; June, one; July, none; August, none; September, five; October, none; November, four; and December, one.

The complete co-operation prevailing between this firm and their insurance company, and in fact every one of the 450 workers all down the line, which made possible this record of but sixteen lost time accidents in the whole year; five months with no lost time accidents, and with four months with but one lost time accident; should clearly indicate that safety pays big dividends and saves construction costs.

WEDNESDAY MORNING SESSION

October 4, 1933

The chairman called for the report of the Nominating Committee, and this was presented by W. F. Tubesing, Associated General Contractors of America, chairman of the committee, and officers were elected as follows:

General Chairman—John Russell, Jr., United Engineers & Constructors, Inc., 80 Park Place, Newark, N. J.

Vice-Chairman—W. G. Wheeler, Building Trades Employers Association, 2 Park Ave., New York, N. Y.

Vice-Chairman for Engineering Projects—P. R. Manetta, Jr., Thompson Starrett Co., 250 Park Ave., New York, N. Y.

Vice-Chairman for Utility Construction—C. H. Black, Stone & Webster Engineering Corp., 49 Federal St., Boston, Mass.

Vice-Chairman for U. S. Engineering Department—Capt. Elliott Vandevanter, U. S. Engineer Office, 2830 Munitions Bldg., Washington, D. C.

Secretary—Robert McKinley, General Accident Fire & Life Assurance Corp., 469 Ledyard St., Detroit, Mich.

News Letter Editor—Edgar N. Goldstine, State Compensation Insurance Fund of Calif., San Francisco, Calif.

Engineering Committee Chairman—J. C. Forester, The L. E. Myers Co., 1314 Monadnock Bldg., Chicago, Ill.

Membership Committee Chairman—Norman Wellings, Booth & Flinn, Ltd., 1942 Forbes St., Pittsburgh, Pa.

Poster Committee Chairman—James N. Doyle, James N. Doyle, Adjustment Bureau, Reg'd, 353 St. Nicholas St., Montreal, Quebec, Can.

Program Committee Chairman—R. J. Reigeluth, C. W. Blakeslee & Sons, 58 Waverly St., New Haven, Conn.

Publicity Committee Chairman—Thomas W. Walton, Henry W. Horst Co., 1505 Race St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Statistics Committee Chairman—W. A. Snow, Associated General Contractors of America, Inc., 1329 E. Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Members at Large—

W. F. Austin, 4649 Humboldt Ave., Detroit, Mich.

Miss E. S. Ghee, McLaury Marble Corp., Walnut Ave., and East 141st St., New York City.

W. R. Richards, Bureau of Contract Information, 729—15th St., N. W., Washington, D. C.