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Weekly Safety Tip

September 3, 2018

SCI Safety Tip: Fire Drills: Why, When, and How (Part 2)

By: Chris Kilbourne

Source: <https://ehsdailyadvisor.blr.com>

Date: Sep 21, 2010

Fire Drill Frequency

How often you conduct fire drills depends in part on the requirements of your local fire code and in part on fire hazards in your workplace. In a workplace with serious fire hazards (for example, flammable materials or difficult egress as in high rise buildings), fire drills should be conducted at least once every 3 months. In other workplaces every 6 months may be adequate.

Fire Drills: Announced or Unannounced

Employees probably prefer announced drills, and it might be easier for supervisors to plan for the event and minimize workflow disruption. But unannounced drills more accurately measure evacuation readiness in most cases.

Whether fire drills are announced or unannounced really depends on the goal of a particular drill.

For example, if you are introducing employees to new evacuation procedures or routes, an announced drill is probably more appropriate, since this will give everyone a chance to practice in a more secure way. Employees will know this isn't "the real thing," and will therefore more likely be calm and focused on learning the new information. Similarly, if you want to drill one department or work area in specific emergency procedures, or if you want to see how a group of workers will respond to one of their evacuation routes being blocked, giving employees and group fire marshals a chance to discuss the simulation and develop team strategies might be a good idea.



SCI Safety Slogan

*Working without
safety is a dead-
end job.*

James Lehrke - SCI



On the other hand, there's nothing like surprising people to see how they will react. And since emergency situations are never planned, you want to see how you're people will react if they think it is "the real thing." So unannounced drills can also be very useful.

Fire Drill Evaluation

To make sure drill objectives have been met and employees have conducted themselves properly and effectively during the drill, the safety staff should observe the drill and evaluate it immediately following the event.

When evaluating fire drills, ask questions such as:

- Did your fire alarm activate properly?
- Did all employees hear the alarm?
- Did any voice communication system operate properly and were instructions audible?
- Did electro-magnetic locking devices release locked doors upon the fire alarm system signal?
- Did employees check work areas for fire?
- Did they close doors and windows (if applicable) before evacuating?
- >Was equipment properly shutdown?
- Did all employees participate in the drill?
- Did employees carry out emergency duties properly?
- Did employees follow assigned evacuation routes?
- Were corridors and stairwells clear and unobstructed?
- Did any employees who need assistance evacuating get it?
- Did employees go directly to assembly areas after evacuating the building?
- Did someone check to make sure all employees were accounted for?

SCI OSHA News: VPPPA 2018: Addressing Cultural Barriers in a Hispanic Workforce

Source: <https://www.ehstoday.com>

By: Stefanie Valentic

Date: August 31, 2018

Getting to the root cause of Hispanic workforce fatalities begins with identifying cultural challenges.

The rate of fatalities among the Hispanic population in the construction industry rose 7% from 2005 to 2017.

This trend is expected to continue if companies don't identify and address the barriers to working with a non-English speaking demographic, Dr. Ahmed Al-Bayati, Western Carolina University assistant professor told Safety+ Symposium attendees.

"The job is to understand values and expectations so we can communicate them to workers," he said.

Conveying safety to Hispanic workers begins with understanding the root causes of the higher fatality rate. Hispanic workers typically have a different education level and immigration status.

While safety professionals cannot fix those challenges, they can work on addressing the cultural barriers, language barriers and experience.

According to OSHA regulations, safety training and materials must be understandable to all employees. This begins with translating literature and workshops to Spanish. However, it is harder to tackle cultural barriers.

Cultural differences lead to unshared assumptions regarding work, safety and personal interactions. This can easily lead to miscommunication between workers and supervisors, Dr. Al-Bayati said.

"It is not easy to define culture, it has a wide-ranging definition," he told attendees.

This deficiency and lack of awareness leads to unsafe behaviors, resulting in higher injuries and fatalities.



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Quick Tips for Healthy Living

7 Tips for Parents- How to Keep Kids in Sports Safe

1. Start your child's sports participation with a good sports physical. Check with your primary care provider or school athletic department for more about what the physical should include.
2. Ask your child's coach or sports organizers what type of training or conditioning your child should do *before* starting the sport. Inadequate training can increase the risks for injury. If an activity such as [weight training](#) is recommended, make sure your child has good guidance for how to do it safely.
3. Make sure your child has the right protective equipment for the sport. It needs to be the right size, too. Improperly sized equipment can be a safety hazard. Your child's coach or the sport's organizers can guide you on the equipment needs for the sport. In some cases, gently used equipment may be available.
4. Check that your child knows how to correctly use the equipment. Follow up with the child to ensure she/he consistently uses it correctly. As an example, a helmet that isn't properly fitted and secured provides inadequate protection and may cause additional injury if it comes off.
5. Regularly remind your child to [stay hydrated](#) while playing and waiting to play. A filled water bottle is an essential part of your child's safety equipment. Even on a cool, cloudy day, drinking enough water is important.
6. Track your child's nutrition. Overeating to quickly bulk up or under-eating to reach a weight goal can be harmful. In some cases the harm can be long-term. Visit with your primary care provider or a registered dietitian for reliable guidance about your child's nutrition needs.
7. Focus on fun. The main reason kids like sports is that they're fun. Help your kids have fun by avoiding strict expectations. Overly high expectations can actually hurt your child's performance. Instead, focus on manageable goals that help your child focus on processes and techniques. Regularly acknowledge skill improvements, effort and positive teamwork.

Dr. Al-Bayati explained how a majority of Hispanic workers will accept a supervisor's instructions without a second thought, even if the direction is unclear. They are unlikely to ask questions.

"Because you are a person of authority, you need to inform everyone who the safety leader is, that they need to follow orders and that he/she has full authority," he said. Best practices that supervisors can follow include not taking silence as an indication of understanding, provide more details about ongoing tasks and increase the frequency of safety walks. In addition, managers should emphasize that questions are encouraged.

The second aspect to the cultural barriers is family values among workers.

"Hispanic workers often work with their family and close friends on job sites," Dr. Al-Bayati indicated.

Because of this, employees are more likely to break rules in order to help other family members or friends.

The remedy to this issue would be to hire a safety professional to act as both a bilingual and cultural leader. This employee should receive special training. Workers should be instructed to follow the directions of this manager and be told that he/she has the full authority to stop work if an unsafe act occurs.

"Continually emphasize that you care about your crew members, consider them as a family and they should talk to you directly if the instructions are not clear or the work conditions are not safe," he said.

The last challenge Dr. Al-Bayati discussed stressed clear and concise communication.

"Hispanic workers may prefer detailed and step-by-step directions," he said. "However, they normally do not get such directions from their supervisors."

Step-by-step procedures should be provided to Hispanic workers with each task. They may not ask questions because, from a cultural standpoint, this shows inexperience and weakness.

"It is very important to account for Hispanic workers' expectations and values," Dr. Al-Bayati concluded. "There are no regulations to address active cultural differences. It is an overall construction industry deficiency rather than supervisors' shortcomings."

We'd always like your feedback. Let us know what articles you'd like to see!

*In Loving Memory... Jessica,
Kristin and Nick*



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