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Weekly Safety Tip

October 1, 2018

SCI Safety News: The Issue with Stress

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

By: *Stefanie Valentic*

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Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* examined the working conditions of the slaughterhouse industry, leading to revolutionary changes in the way American companies treat their employees.

While workplace conditions have significantly improved with governmental oversight, legislation and OSHA, Americans in some industries still are feeling the psychological and physical effects of a negative work environment.

The American Psychological Association (APA) lists a number of factors that tend to go hand-in-hand with work-related stress, among them: low salaries, excessive workloads, few opportunities for growth or advancement, work that isn't engaging or challenging, lack of social support, not having enough control over job-related decisions, and conflicting demands or unclear performance expectations. Micki Siegel de Hernandez, health & safety director at the Communications Workers of America, discussed these factors with EHS Today as well as what employers can do to recognize and reduce workplace stress.

What causes workplace stress?

Siegel de Hernandez: Workplace stress could be caused by a number of issues. Most often it has to do with:

- how work is organized
- the demands of the workplace
- the kind of control or lack of control that workers may have in their particular job
- hazards that are in the workplace
- dangers that are in the workplace.

It also could be caused by psychological factors and issues around the organization itself, and the kind of reaction that affects that stress can



SCI Safety Slogan

*Cutting corners
can cut your life
short.*

James Lehrke- SCI



have particular chronic stress.

What are some of the physical and mental issues that could arise?

Sigel de Hernandez: When we're talking about occupational stress, it can affect people in so many ways. It can cause disease; it can cause chronic conditions — diseases like heart disease and stroke. It's related to musculoskeletal conditions. It can cause chronic pain conditions. It can cause headaches. It can cause lack of concentration. It can affect the respiratory system, the endocrine system and hormones, and it can also affect the nervous system. It can lead to reduced immune response, and the list goes on and on.

How does chronic stress affect workplace safety?

Sigel de Hernandez: For workers who are chronically stressed, they may also be suffering from anxiety as a result of that. It affects sleep. Depending upon what the stressor is, they're more prone to accidents or to injuries if they're constantly in a stressed state. There had been fatalities that had occurred as a result of that, strictly because of the number of hours worked.

Because of the demand and the physiological response in the body, people just start breaking down, It affects a person's ability to think and to make decisions, good decisions that you would make if you weren't in that stressed state. This isn't just in the United States. In Japan they have a word for this. It's called Koroshi, which is death by overwork, and it has to do with the way certain industries are structured and just excessive overtime of workers in those industries and death — that's the overwork part, sudden heart attacks, stroke and also suicides as a result of those workplace conditions.

How can companies integrate different programs to reduce stress in the workplace?

Sigel de Hernandez: There needs to be a focus on the workplace conditions that are causing stress. Occupational stress is causing companies a lot of money as well as affecting employee health, and some of those costs are hidden. It's not as easy to associate those costs, things like absenteeism for example, or a rise in healthcare cost with what is actually going on in the workplace, but I think that it does. It affects the bottom line as well as affecting the employees that work there.

So, I think when the employers really want to reduce their cost and also make the workplace a more humane place, and protect people, and reduce injuries, reduce health effects caused by stress, then you really have to be able to look at the conditions at work. It's not just a question of training managers or training supervisors. A company has to be willing to look at the kinds of demands and pressures — the procedures of a particular workplace and involve workers in decisions about how work gets structured. There are so many industries and occupations where the demand is so high.

When it exceeds a person's capacity or a workforce's capacity to really deal with stress on a regular basis, those are the kinds of things where you start seeing health problems, and you also start seeing effects on productivity, absenteeism, illness and a potential rise in workplace accidents.



SCI OSHA News: OSHA launches outreach on ammonia fertilizers

Source: <http://www.blr.com>

Date: September 27, 2018

Beginning October 1, 2018, OSHA will launch a regional emphasis program (REP) focused on reducing employee exposure to fertilizer-grade ammonium nitrate (FGAN) and agricultural anhydrous ammonium. The REP will be effective in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, Nebraska, Oklahoma, and Texas.

OSHA states that the REP will begin with a 90-day period focused on education and prevention outreach to encourage employers to bring their facilities into compliance with OSHA standards. During this period, OSHA says it will continue to respond to complaints, referrals, hospitalizations, and fatalities. Enforcement activities will begin after the outreach period and run through September 30, 2019, unless extended.

“This program is an enforcement tool to emphasize the obligations under existing OSHA standards,” said OSHA Regional Administrator Kimberly Stille in Kansas City, Missouri. “The 90-day outreach period is an opportunity for employers to proactively seek compliance assistance to ensure they are adequately protecting workers.”

Oxidizers are explosion hazards

FGAN is a nitrogen-containing fertilizer. It is also an oxidizer that in the presence of combustible materials presents the risk of explosions and fires. The most notable FGAN incident is a 2013 explosion and fire at a fertilizer plant in West, Texas, that resulted in 15 deaths, injuries to members of the community, and extensive damage to the facility and surrounding homes. Following the incident, OSHA cited the owner of the facility for violations related to hazards associated with improper storage of FGAN under 29 CFR 1910.109(i).



Outdoor-Live Well

Did you know spending time outdoors is good for your health? The latest research shows there is a physiological and psychological attraction to nature. The research also suggests getting outside during the workday can improve creativity and productivity. So why not make your next meeting an outdoor walking meeting.

Fall is a perfect time to step outside and enjoy all the outdoors has to offer. Embrace the colors, smells, textures & sounds. Science shows that spending time in the great outdoors is not only beneficial for your body but your brain as well. Researchers noted that simply staring at an image of natural scenery for 40 seconds was enough to trigger the brain into a more relaxed state.

Here are five reasons why you should get outside this fall.

- 1. Getting out makes exercise easier:** Research shows that those who exercise outside are eager to return for a future workout than those who stick to just an indoor gym. The smells, the colors and sounds of nature help you be more active.
- 2. Nature increases brain function:** Taking in a bit of nature can help your concentration skills, increases creativity and helps to kick your brain into high gear. So ditch the caffeine and instead take a walk outdoors.
- 3. It amps up your Vitamin D intake:** Getting outside for some much needed Vitamin D can help with bone growth, cell growth, inflammation reduction and immune function.
- 4. The outdoors may help us age gracefully:** Research published in the *Journal of Aging Health* shows that getting outside on a daily basis may help older people stay healthy and functioning longer. Outdoor activities can help dementia and stroke patients improve social skills and confidence, while even increasing mobility and dexterity.
- 5. The outdoors makes us happy:** In addition to decreasing stress levels, spending time in nature boosts your mood and can shift your view to a more positive one.

OSHA’s AN standard

OSHA’s FGAN standard is based on 1970 edition of the National Fire Protection Association’s (NFPA) *Code for the Storage of Ammonium Nitrate* (NFPA 490). The standard applies to the storage or possession of FGAN in all industries except transportation and U.S. Coast Guard-regulated facilities. Among the requirements:

- Storage buildings must have adequate ventilation or be of a construction that will be self-ventilating in the event of fire.
- All flooring in storage and handling areas must be of noncombustible material or protected against impregnation by FGAN and must be without open drains, traps, tunnels, pits, or pockets into which any molten FGAN could flow and be confined in the event of fire.
- Containers of FGAN must not be accepted for storage when the temperature of the FGAN exceeds 130° F.
- Warehouses must have adequate ventilation or be capable of adequate ventilation in case of fire.
- Height or depth of piles must be limited by the pressure-setting tendency of the product. However, in no case may the FGAN be piled higher at any point than 36 inches below the roof or supporting and spreader beams overhead.
- No more than 2,500 tons of bagged FGAN may be stored in a building or structure not equipped with an automatic sprinkler system.
- Suitable fire control devices, such as small hoses or portable fire extinguishers, must be provided throughout the warehouse and in the loading and unloading areas.
- Water supplies and fire hydrants must be available in accordance with recognized good practices.

OSHA provides guidance on the storage and use of FGAN in the fertilizer industry at https://www.osha.gov/dep/fertilizer_industry

Embrace Reality

Depressed? Stressed? Need someone to talk with? Join us on Tuesday October 2, 2018

Time: 5:00 -6:00 pm

Where: 2108 Kohler Memorial Drive Suite 220

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In Loving Memory... Jessica, Kristin and Nick



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