

# Health & Safety Committee News

Winter Edition 2005

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## Powered Floor Burnishers

There have been several reported cases of worker exposure to high levels of carbon monoxide associated with the use of propane-powered floor burnishers. This piece of equipment is used to polish vinyl and terrazzo floors.

### Health Concerns

Carbon Monoxide interferes with the ability of red blood cells to carry oxygen. Exposure to this toxic gas at very high concentrations more than 4,000 parts per million can result in coma or death. Propane-powered burnishers can emit carbon monoxide levels well in excess of 20,000 parts per million.

### Health Effects

Carbon monoxide is an invisible gas with no taste or smell. Some symptoms of exposure may include headache, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting and dizziness. Continued exposure can cause confusion, loss of consciousness and even death.

**Ontario Regulation 833/90 restricts the level and duration of exposure** as follows. The time weighted average exposure value for carbon monoxide is 35 ppm for an eight-hour workday or forty-hour workweek. Short-term exposure value is 400 ppm based on any fifteen-minute period.

### Precautions

Electric-powered or battery-powered burnishers should be used in place of propane-powered burnishers.

If propane-powered burnishers are used they must

be operated in accordance with manufacturers instructions and only in well ventilated areas.

Continuous carbon monoxide monitors should be used in the area where the burnishing is performed.

Workers are to be trained in reading the device and what to do in case the alarm is activated.

A competent person should maintain the equipment regularly.

## New CSA Standard for Lift Trucks

The Safety standard for lift trucks, B335-04, has been in print since May 2004. This CSA standard specifies the minimum requirements for training lift truck drivers and requirements for the design, construction, maintenance, inspection and safe operation of lift trucks. Also included are the qualifications for lift truck trainers and maintenance technicians and personnel.

### Operator Restraints

Operator restraint system (seat belts), now has language in the standard. "The user (employer) shall ensure that an operator restraint system is used".

### Practical training

"All practical training detailed in this standard, including instruction, testing, and evaluation, should be performed on an individual basis (i.e., one on one), as follows:

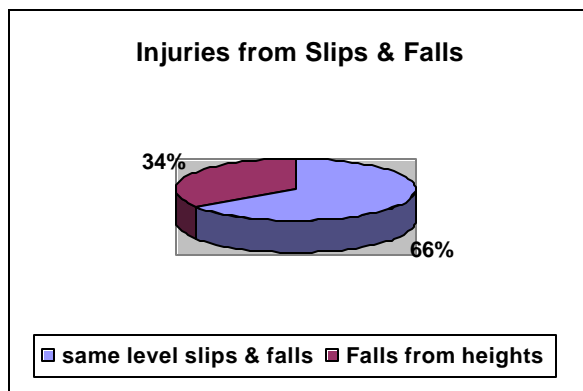
- a) Eight hours (full work day) of hands on training is required for all new trainees of high lift trucks.
- b) Four hours (1/2 working day) of hands on training is required for all new trainees of low lift or ground transport trucks.

Trainees reporting previous experience in lift truck operation, as determined and/or verified by the user, should be subjected to two hours for overview, instruction, testing, and

evaluation. Additional training time may be necessary based upon this evaluation”.

### Slips and Falls

In 2000 and 2001, 20 workers died from falls at work. One in six lost time injuries in Ontario is caused by a fall. Eighty people are injured every day in a fall at work- that’s one every 20 minutes.



Many situations that contribute to slips and falls can be dealt with proactively.

Housekeeping in the workplace is one of these ways.

- Keep the work area free from articles laying on the floor.
- Clean up spills on the floor.
- Wear footwear appropriate for the work environment.
- Walk, don’t run.
- Ensure compliance to above ground work platforms, guardrails, toe guards, covered holes in floor, proper riser height.
- Ensure snow and ice removal from walkways and parking lots.
- Ensure ladders are in good repair.

One of the Joint Health & Safety Committee functions is to “**RAC.**”

**Recognize** potential slip & fall hazards. Follow-up with an **Assessment** of that hazard.

Recommendation(s) for change should be documented and forwarded to the employer to **Control** the hazard.

### New Clause for OHSA

A new clause, section 63(6) of the Occupational Health & Safety Act was added on November 1, 2004. Bill 31 created two new Acts, one of which is, the Personal Health Information Protection Act 2004 (PHIPA) which sets rules for the collection and dissemination of personal health information and amends the OHSA. The amended Act clarify that in case of conflict between the requirements of section 63 of OHSA and requirements of PHIPA, the existing OHSA requirements will govern. Therefore, in case you are asked, PHIPA has no effect upon OHSA.

### New Fines for Industrial Sector

The Ontario Government is moving forward with its plans to cut workplace injuries by 20% over the next four years by expanding the powers of provincial health and safety inspectors to issue tickets for unsafe workplace practices to include the industrial sector.

Tickets are issued under the Provincial Offences Act and carry set fines, including court costs, of \$200.00 or \$300.00, depending on the offence. If issued a ticket, the party can choose to either pay the fine or appear in a provincial court to dispute the offence.

| Injury, Disease and Fatality Claims<br>Reported to WSIB<br>For Year -To-Date October 31, 2004 |         |
|---|---------|
| • Total reported claims for injuries and occupational disease:                                | 297,747 |
| • Total reported fatality claims:   | 466     |



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