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M & E SAFETY NEWSLETTER

Take Safety Personally....

Make It Part Of Your Daily Routine

MAINTENANCE & ENGINEERING SAFETY COMMITTEE.....

The M&E Safety Committee's Mission Statement:

Create a culture of safety and accountability for M&E employees through open communications, identifying and mitigating safety concerns, and developing solutions to improve safety.

Roadway Worker Protection Training Program (GO175)

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) established a set of new regulations to improve rail transit worker safety on California's public transit systems. This new regulation is called "General Order 175" (GO175). The decision makes California the first state in the nation to adopt such comprehensive transit safety rules for "Roadway Workers" who perform maintenance and repairs on or near rail tracks.

The decision adopts new rules in General Order 175. It reflects years of discussion, debate, and collaboration amongst California's Rail Transit Authority's (RTA) industry experts and stakeholders.

Due to the fatal Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) accident that occurred on Oct. 19, 2013, the decision by the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) adopts a more protective interim of safeguards.

Example:

· Implementing safety training program(s) with a series of strict requirements to ensure that workers are well-versed in the methods required to work safely and effectively while in and/or around the Trackway.

· Maintaining written procedures to enhance safety on railway tracks.

· Insuring industry standard for personal protective clothing for workers.

· Emphasize rule compliance that is clear, easily understood and structured.

· The research of additional roadway worker technologies.

Maintenance & Engineering, System Safety, Rolling Stocks & Shops, Transportation and Operations formed a committee to review the language within General Order 175 (GO175) mandate to address the "Districts Training initiatives for its Employees.

The District will be impacted by theses new Rules, Operating Bulletins and Definitions. This will control the limitations for employees who perform different categories of work when in the Track Zone for any Track(s), Yard(s) or End of Line Storage Tracks. The Training will address the Rulings within the GO175 and be incorporated within the Districts Roadway Worker Protection Training Certification Program (RWP).

The requirements to meet GO175 compliance will be to attend the Districts eight (8) hour training class hosted by (Maintenance & Engineering Technical Training Department).

GO175 training is required for District Employees, Safety Monitors and Contractors who access wayside or perform work within the train envelope. Maintenance & Engineering expectations to meet GO175 compliance for its employees will be completed by (May 1st 2014). Your assistance and cooperation is required to meet this tight deadline.

SAFETY IS ON OUR MIND

M&E Safety Committee Symposiums

This year the M&E Safety Committee will host a series of Safety Committee Symposiums. Currently there is one schedule in Spring (May 5, 2014) and another in the Fall (Oct 28, 2014). The Safety Symposiums will be held at OKA and at Metro. Dates to follow shortly once confirmed.

BART's Safety Slogan Contest

M&E's Safety Committee challenges you to exercise your creative side of your brain and develop a Safety Slogan that will be seen and used throughout the District.

The M&E Safety Committee Safety Slogan contest has been extended through April 15, 2014. So you still have an opportunity to get your safety slogan in to Andrea Harden via email for an opportunity to have your slogan publicize in the M&E's Safety Newsletter, District literature, and placed on District maintenance vehicles system wide. The winner will receive a $50.00 gift card!

How to Prevent Falls in the Workplace

It is a fact that more than 16 percent of all workplace falls result in injuries or illness that affect the productive environment of a workplace. It becomes essential then to employ means to prevent falls at the workplace. Falls at the workplace are mainly of two kinds: those that happen in single-story structures and those that occur from a higher level.

Most falls occurring from slips and trips at the same level are caused due to slipping on an icy surface or tripping over an object. A fraction of the falls occurring from different levels happen when people fall off ladders, steps or a higher floor. It is also a fact that falls at the workplace can be prevented. Although accidents are not easy to guess, it's still quite possible to prevent them from happening. Doing away with unsafe acts and conditions can control such accidents. Look for ways to prevent slips, trips and falls from occurring at the workplace. Once these hazards are eliminated you can usually prevent accidents from taking place. Some of the precautions you can take to avoid accidents are:

Ensure that all spills and wet surfaces are immediately cleaned up from the floor. Do not allow any residual slimy leftovers to be lying around on the floor as it could be a cause for a potential slip or fall.

See to it that all walking pathways in the office are clutter-free. Do not allow normal walkways to be littered by any object that might result in people tripping and falling over.

In case you need to reach up to something that's high up in the office, always use a safe stepladder. Never use chairs or desks to climb up to access things above your head.

Make sure that you only carry loads that you can safely handle. While carrying objects, make sure that your line of vision is not affected and that you are not carrying a load that is too heavy-weighty objects may make you stumble under their weight.

Always have good illumination around the office space. Whether indoors or near to the exteriors, ensure that lighting is adequate and visibility is not affected.

Always wear good footwear when you are walking about. We may not have control over the condition of the surface that we walk on. But we do have control over what we choose to wear on our feet. Increasing friction between the soles of your shoes and the surface on which you are walking greatly reduces the risk of slip-injuries.

Follow safety tips to choose the right shoes for the prevailing conditions. Wear hard rubber soles for greasy, concrete or wood flooring. Soft rubber shoes are good for dry surfaces. Crepe soles are best for rough concrete surfaces, dry or wet, and neoprene soles are good and safe on most wet or dry surfaces

How to Prevent Back Problems at Work

Working Together to reduce work

You can hardly afford to let back problems interfere with work. Because work schedules can be adversely affected by physical inabilities caused by continued back problems, it's best to look for ways to prevent or alleviate pain in your back. In cases of unspecified medical conditions, back aches could probably be the result of a combination of factors. These may range from genetic to lifestyle-related problems. Certain sedentary jobs are also known to aggravate the back. Back pain can make it difficult to concentrate on the job at hand, but making the effort to find out what triggers workplace back problems can help you avoid it. Whether it's a dull ache or a throbbing sensation, it can hamper your pace of work, so doing a little research will go a long way in helping you on your road to recovery.

Additionally, many occupations, such as nursing, that require odd positions and frequently bending over also make significant demands on the back. Even so, routine office work can still cause back distress. Here are a few suggestions to help avoid back pain by understanding what causes them and focusing on prevention.

The chief work-related factors associated with back pain are exerting too much force, repetitive physical movements, awkward body postures and even mental pressure or stress, which lead to muscle tension.
If there is no direct medical problem, then back aches are commonly due to lack of exercise-it's always best to remain fit. If a back problem persists despite exercise, then you need to consider looking into the cause. For instance, it could be a wrong chair, incorrect height of a table or continued wrong posture.

Remember, even if you have a job that requires continued activity, it is not an alternative to exercise. You need to regularly include a balance of cardiovascular workouts and muscle training in your exercise program to help keep your back in healthy condition. You also need to keep your weight in check. Appropriate weight as per height helps minimize stress on the back.

Certain strengthening and stretching exercises that focus on toning your back muscles are very helpful for preventing back aches. Such strengthening exercises help your back muscles as well as your lower spine. Strong and flexible muscles keep the back fit and healthy. You also need to pay proper attention to posture. Bad posture always affects the back. Slouching or sway-back positions where you compromise the bodies natural position causes muscle fatigue. You can almost always keep back muscles in good order just by keeping a healthy body balance. Finally, if you have anything stressful weighing on your mind, then you need to address it immediately. Being under constant mental stress causes your muscles to tense. The more stress you experience, the lower your tolerance to pain-minimize your sources of stress and develop coping mechanisms.

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10 Easy Ways to Reduce Workplace Injuries

Increasingly, computer-related health injuries are a leading cause of workplace occupational hazards. Computer usage is common by a substantial part of the working environment all over the world.

There are ways to reduce computer-related health trauma, by observing safety measures to counter injuries caused by the office environment. Occupational safety measures recommend healthy use of computers so as to lessen the negative impact on human health.

Safety professionals are now advocating precautions in the use of computers that have become virtual standalone offices. Health problems caused by exposure to computers occur through cumulative trauma disorders connected with prolonged interaction on machines.

Common fatigue may be more than just physical stress. Stay on guard if symptoms persist after a night of rest or interfere significantly with work-related activities. If the problem is indeed work-related then you need to look for ways to adjust to your work environment and work towards alleviating workplace health problems.

1. Counter the effect of carpal tunnel syndrome of the wrist and hand by relieving yourself of the mouse and keyboard from time to time. Take breaks to let your fingers relax and enjoy hand rubs in between.

Here are 10 easy steps to do ensure a healthy work environment: (Cont.)

2. You need to adjust the location of work and the angle of the machine in such a way that your body continuously maintains an unstrained and comfortable position. Your arms, forearms and shoulders should be fully relaxed.

3. More often it is the continuous exposure to the computer monitor that may be the cause of eyestrain. In this case you should always have a quality glare filter fixed on your monitor screen.

4. Work with a light screen background (dark type or images on white or pale background). You'll find it is easier on your eyes.

5. Place the monitor and source documents so that they are about the same distance from your eyes. Use a document holder immediately next to the monitor.

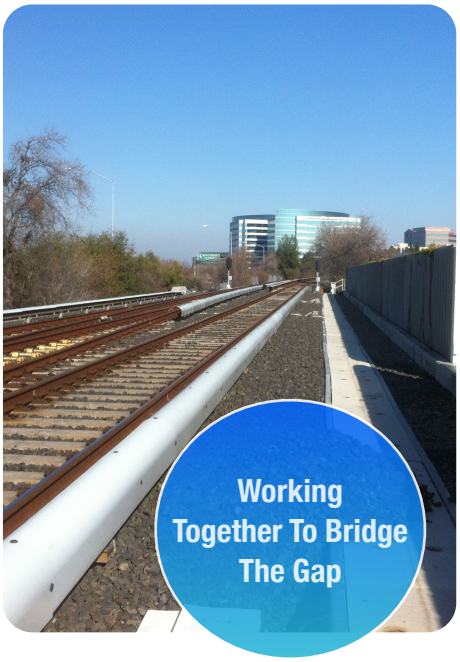
6. Rest the muscles of your eyes by focusing on a distant object occasionally.

7. Change your body position periodically throughout the day.

8. The position of the keyboard should be at a proper level in front of you. It is important to ensure proper elbow height that enables you to type with straight wrists.

9. It's important to be completely relaxed while working on the computer. Injuries and pain can be a problem if you remain constantly tensed as that affects the muscles of the neck and shoulders.

10. A good chair significantly reduces the risk of lower back pain or injury. An ergonomic chair provides comfortable lumbar support and allows for a variety of seated postures.



New PPE Requirements

Effective March 1st additional Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) requirements will be in effect for several M&E departments - this includes wearing safety glasses and hard hat when wayside in Yard proper or in local control areas. The new requirement includes wearing safety glasses and hard hat when in shops, yards and wayside. If you do not already have safety glasses and a hard hat BART will provide them. If you need prescription safety glasses BART will provide those as well. There is a special form to fill out for prescription safety glasses which has been faxed to all reporting locations.

As a reminder all Train Control and Communication staff should be wearing steel toe shoes and have whistles and hard hats in their possession at all times. Also please note that safety glasses are now required when entering non revenue vehicle shop. Because of the new more stringent safety requirements; audits for compliance will be taken periodically. This is in keeping with the BART IIPP and OR&P Rule 2902. Thanks for your cooperation and understanding as we all do our part to increase safety awareness and enhance the Safety Culture at BART.

CHIEF ENGINEER'S & SAFETY COMMITTEE CORNER

M&E SAFETY COMMITTEE

The implementation of General Order 175 and the revision of our safety rules are well under way, and it is a very positive step for the District and our employees. The creation and implementation of safety rules is a very complex process. They have to be clear, concise, not conflict, and make sense. I am sure we won't have it perfect the first time out, but the goal is to end up with the best safety program in the industry. We just completed a draft of OR&P paragraph 6400, Blanket Work Area Protections with represented employees, managers and the Safety Department that should be ready to implement soon. If you have concerns or suggestions for improvements, please be sure to let us know what they are. I know this process can be trying, but the goal will be well worth it. One reminder to close, please be sure you understand our rules for 3rd rail safety and follow them, and make sure you probe before you work!