The Stark County Safety Council will be collecting Toys for Tots at their December luncheon. If you choose to participate, please bring in a new unwrapped toy to the December meeting. Also donation checks payable to “Toys for Tots” are accepted.
This newsletter is distributed monthly to keep you advised of developments in the area of OSHA law. Note: This should not be substituted for legal advice and should not be relied upon in a specific case.

SCSC Members,

The article this month has been provided by Frank Grasso from Grainger. I hope you find this information helpful.

Regards,
Susan

Upcoming Changes in Noise Reduction Ratings for Hearing Protectors
By Frank Grasso

For years safety professionals have been choosing hearing protection devices (HPDs) based on the Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) printed on every box. This single number has provided a simple way, in most cases, to differentiate the many HPDs on the market and make choices relative to the noise exposure levels that employees were facing.

In some cases of very noisy workplaces, the application of the NRR proved more difficult as OSHA required a devaluation of the NRR… and NIOSH recommended devaluation based on the type of HPD being used. Concerns about the label value came to light as a result of the complications related to correctly prescribing a safe HPD.

As a result, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will be revising how hearing protectors are tested and how they will be labeled.

A two number system.
The most notable change this revision will bring is the new appearance of the NRR label. Instead of one number there will be two. The two numbers will indicate a range that the HPD is rated for.

The higher number will indicate the protection level 1 in 5 trained users will experience. The lower number will indicate the level of protection 4 of 5 trained users will experience and it’s the lower number that will most likely be used by OSHA to determine whether the HPD being used is adequate for the exposure. The present NRR rating should fall somewhere between the two numbers.

Moving away from the single NRR rating amplifies (no pun intended) the fact that HPDs have varying degrees of effectiveness on different individuals and that the dual number system should provide for a more effective and realistic hearing conservation program.

The new system’s effectiveness will depend on the safety director’s willingness to learn as much possible about the new system and how to apply the ranges given to their applications.

Fit Validation.
With all the proposed benefit of the new labeling system there is still room for error regarding the attenuation achieved by individual users. With this known fact, the only guarantee in obtaining a true protection level is to conduct an individual fit validation. A fit validation documents the real attenuation of a particular HPD on the wearer.

Fit validation systems have been in the market for over a year now and are starting to become the most important component of a comprehensible hearing conservation program.

At this time there is not a set date for the changes to go into effect but we can expect that we may see the new labels sometime in early 2011.

Upcoming Program

December 9, 2010
Stark County Safety Council
Monthly Luncheon Series and Toy Drive
The luncheon will provide a review of 2010 issues and focus on plans and issues for 2011 with the SCSC steering committee and Chairman Susan Walters

To be a spotlight company contact Mark Rossiter
mark.rossiter@anheuser-busch.com

Upcoming Events

SCSC December Luncheon
The Stark County Safety Council will be collecting Toys for Tots at their December luncheon. If you choose to participate, please bring in a new unwrapped toy to the December meeting. Also donation checks payable to “Toys for Tots” are accepted. Thank you!

Important items to make note of:

1. Semi-Annual Reports are required to maintain your membership with the SCSC. Reports are due July 15th and January 15th each year.

2. Don’t forget to sign-in. If you do not sign the “sign-in sheet” your company will not receive credit for attending. This could hurt your company’s chances of receiving the BWC’s discount.

3. July 1, 2010 began a new 12 month period for the BWC’s rebate program. If your company is eligible, you must attend a minimum of 10 events, with your company’s CEO or a senior level manager attending one of these 10, and submit two semi-annual reports. See BWC website for complete rebate details.

4. Please complete a Program Evaluation Form following each luncheon meeting. Your input is important.

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