

Division of Workers' Compensation

This monthly e-newsletter provides updates on the Workplace Safety Programs at the Texas Department of Insurance (TDI), Division of Workers' Compensation (DWC). Both subscribers and non-subscribers of workers' compensation insurance are eligible for these services.

Texas Rate of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses Requiring Days Off Work Decreased in 2014

According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII), private industry employers in Texas reported 52,970 cases involving days away from work and an incidence rate of 65.2 injuries and illnesses per 10,000 full-time equivalent employees in 2014. The rate for 2014 is a decrease from 66.6 in 2013. The Texas rate is below the national rate of 97.8. (Continued on [page 6](#))

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Transportation Safety Information

Impaired Driving

According to crash statistics reported by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT), there were 1,041 fatalities and 27,869 crashes in 2014 that involved driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs.

(Continued on [page 2](#))

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Safety Tips

Recognizing and Investigating Near Misses

Near-miss reporting and investigation help identify and control safety or health hazards before they cause a more serious incident. A near miss can be defined as an incident or incidents where, given a slight change in timing and/or distance, an injury, illness, property damage, or fatality could have easily

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Transportation Safety Information

Impaired Driving (cont.)

December is designated National Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month, which is a time to raise awareness about the consequences of driving under the influence of alcohol and drugs. During this holiday season, keep the following tips in mind to help ensure the safety of your employees, friends, and families:

- Designate a sober driver before celebrations begin.
- Never serve alcohol to anyone under the age of 21.
- Plan safe parties by providing non-alcoholic drink options to guests and not serving alcohol the last hour of the gathering.
- Be prepared to get everyone home safe in case your plans or individual circumstances change.▲

TxDOT End the Streak Campaign



Commissioner of Workers' Compensation, Ryan Brannan urges employers to use safety programs and resources to help [#EndTheStreakTX](#)

TxDOT launched a new campaign in November called End the Streak to educate drivers and ask them to take responsibility to stop fatal crashes on Texas roads. According to TxDOT, at least one person has died each and every day on Texas roads since November 7, 2000. TxDOT recommends these few simple tips to stay safe on the road.

- Buckle seatbelts – all passengers need to be buckled.
- Never drink and drive – drunk driving kills; get a sober ride home.
- Pay attention – put your phone away and avoid distractions.
- Drive the speed limit – always follow speed limits and drive at slower speeds when weather or conditions warrant.

TxDOT asks all Texans to change their social media profile pictures to the campaign image available for download on its website at www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/media-center/psas/end-streak.html, and share facts it is distributing about the last 15 years of daily deaths on Texas roads using the hashtag [#EndTheStreakTX](#). The website also includes campaign videos and public service announcements.

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TxDOT End the Streak Campaign (cont.)

Employees who drive or ride in motorized vehicles as part of their jobs are at risk for fatal crashes. DWC recommends that employers establish occupational driving safety programs to prevent on-the-job transportation incidents.

Information about developing an occupational driving safety program is available on the TDI website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/drivesafe.html

Download!

DWC Resources

DWC offers more than 30 driving safety publications available in both English and Spanish on the TDI website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/targtransrltd.html.

DWC features a free occupational safety and health DVD loan library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit the TDI website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html.

DVDs on many driving dangers are found under the following headings:

- Driving Safety
- Transportation Safety (includes safe operation of buses and vans)
- Trucking Safety (covers both straight trucks and tractor trailers)

Other Resources

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration offers Drunk Driving Prevention Campaign materials on its webpages at www.trafficsafetymarketing.gov/ and www.nhtsa.gov/StopImpairedDriving. Research study results and statistics on impaired driving can be found on the main website at www.nhtsa.gov/Impaired.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) offers an Impaired Driving index page. This page links to research, statistics, social media campaigns and resources, podcasts, and eCards on its website at www.cdc.gov/motorvehiclesafety/impaired_driving/.

TxDOT offers driving safety resources on its Sober and Safe webpage at www.txdot.gov/driver.html. The 2014 statistics mentioned in the previous article are found in the Crash Contributing Factors Report, located on the agency website at www.txdot.gov/inside-txdot/forms-publications/drivers-vehicles/publications/annual-summary.html.

TxDOT's Holiday P.A.S.S. (Person Appointed to Stay Sober) Campaign information is located on its website at www.txdot.gov/driver/sober-safe/holiday-pass.html.

The National Safety Council's (NSC) Our Driving Concern program offers information for employers about impaired driving on its website at www.nsc.org/safety_road/Employer%20Traffic%20Safety/Pages/Impaired-Driving-Brochure.pdf.

The Network of Employers for Traffic Safety offers impaired driving statistics on its website at <http://trafficsafety.org/safety/risk/impaired-driving-resources>.

The Governors Highway Safety Association provides information about drugged driving on its website at www.ghsa.org/html/media/pressreleases/2015/20150930drugged.html.

Safety Tips (cont.)

Recognizing and Investigating Near Misses (cont.)

occurred. As the frequency of near misses increases, so does the likelihood of a serious injury or fatality.

An effective accident prevention program includes a requirement and process to report all near-miss incidents. After a near miss is reported, employers should conduct an investigation in a timely manner.

Goals of an investigation are to:

- Find out what happened and determine immediate and underlying causes.
- Rethink the safety hazard.
- Introduce ways to prevent a reoccurrence.
- Establish training needs.

The investigation should provide answers to who, what, when, where, why, and how. An employer should interview all persons involved and look for all direct and indirect causes. A successful investigation always strives to find the pertinent facts and not to place blame or fault. ▲

Download!

DWC Resources

DWC offers the following accident investigation publication:

- *Accident Investigation Safety Training Program*

This publication and many other safety publications are available in both English and Spanish on the agency website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html.

DWC features a free occupational safety and health DVD loan library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit the TDI website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html. DVDs on accident investigation and related topics are found under the following headings:

- Accident Investigation
- Close Calls/Near Misses

Other Resources

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) provides an Incident Investigation Safety and Health Topics page on the agency website at www.osha.gov/dcsp/products/topics/incidentinvestigation/index.html. This index page gives general guidelines and links to additional resources.

San Angelo and Midland Companies Receive Lone Star Safety Awards

Commissioner of Workers' Compensation Ryan Brannan recently traveled to West Texas to present Coverlay Manufacturing, Inc. and Dickson Process Systems with the DWC Lone Star Safety Award. The award recognizes Texas employers with low numbers of work-related injuries and illnesses as well as excellent safety programs that can serve as models for other employers.

Coverlay Manufacturing has 32 employees in San Angelo and manufactures laminated acrylonitrile butadiene styrene (ABS) plastic, which is used in automotive parts. Dickson Process Systems has approximately 50 employees in Midland and fabricates liquid pressure vessels for the oil and gas industry.

"These exceptional safety and health programs serve as models for other employers," Brannan said. "The Division relies on employers like Coverlay Manufacturing and Dickson Process Systems to provide guidance and information as needed to address safety and health issues in this state."



Dickson Process Systems –Midland *Metal Tank Manufacturing*

Pictured: Ann Dickson, Treasurer; Rick Epler, Environmental Health and Safety Manager; Ben Dickson, Vice President; Clark Dickson, President; Commissioner Ryan Brannan; and Susan Baze, Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) Safety Consultant

Both companies are also recipients of the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) designation by the state and federal OSHA. The SHARP award recognizes small, private sector Texas employers for exemplary safety and health programs. ▲

More Information!

For more information and eligibility criteria for the Lone Star Safety and SHARP awards, visit www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/index.html.



Coverlay Manufacturing, Inc. – San Angelo *Plastics Product Manufacturing*

Pictured: Commissioner Ryan Brannan; Mark Smith, Vice President; and Paul Cornwell, President/Owner

Texas Workplace Injury, Illness Rate Decreased in 2014 (cont.)

The median days away from work, a key measure of severity of injuries and illnesses, for private sector employers in Texas was eight in 2014, which was unchanged from 2013. (Table 1)

TABLE 1. Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work, Private Industry, Texas 2013-2014

PRIVATE INDUSTRY	2013	2014
Number of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work	51,890	52,970
Incidence rate of nonfatal occupational injuries and illnesses involving days away from work per 10,000 full-time employees	66.6	65.2
Median days away from work	8	8

The data in this report are the latest available from SOII conducted by the DWC in cooperation with BLS. It covers the circumstances of the injuries and illnesses as well as the characteristics of the employees reported in the cases that involved days away from work. The occupational injury and illness incidence rates are based on a statistical sample of approximately 10,000 private businesses in Texas. This data assists employers, safety professionals, and policymakers in identifying occupational safety and health issues in the state. Employers with questions about participating in this survey may call DWC at (866) 237-6405.

Industries

At the major industry sector level, the service providing industries reported 25,570 more nonfatal injuries and illnesses requiring days away from work than the goods producing industries. However, the incidence rate for the goods producing industries was 12 percent higher than the rate for service providing industries. The top five industry sectors reporting the highest number of cases requiring days away from work were trade, transportation, and utilities; manufacturing; education and health

services; leisure and hospitality; and construction. The trade, transportation, and utilities industries had the highest incidence rate (96.4). Meanwhile, employees who were injured in the natural resources and mining industry sector experienced the highest median days away from work (16). (Table 2)

TABLE 2. Number and Incidence Rate of Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work by Selected Major Industry Sectors, Private Industry, Texas 2014

INDUSTRY	INCIDENCE RATE	NUMBER OF CASES	MEDIAN DAYS AWAY FROM WORK
PRIVATE INDUSTRY	65.2	52,970	8
GOODS PRODUCING	71.0	13,700	12
Natural resources and mining	80.7	2,980	16
Construction	63.4	4,100	15
Manufacturing	72.5	6,630	9
SERVICE PROVIDING	63.4	39,270	7
Trade, transportation, and utilities	96.4	19,310	9
Information	56.2	1,090	11
Financial activities	26.0	1,670	11
Professional and business services	29.6	3,580	6
Education and health services	59.8	6,630	5
Leisure and hospitality	66.8	5,300	5
Other services	70.7	1,690	4

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Texas Workplace Injury, Illness Rate Decreased in 2014 (cont.)

Occupations

In the major occupational groups, transportation and material moving occupations experienced the highest incidence rate (171.8) and accounted for 22 percent (11,660) of the total number of cases involving days away from work in 2014. Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations followed with the second highest rate (166.5) and median days away from work (13), and accounted for 13 percent (6,860) of the total

number of cases involving days away from work. For the protective occupations, the incidence rate (48.2) decreased 70 percent, and the median days away from work decreased by 76 percent, from 21 in 2013 to five in 2014. Legal occupations had relatively low incidence rates and numbers, while the median days away from work was the highest at 19. (Table 3)

TABLE 3. Incidence Rates and Numbers of Nonfatal Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work and Median Days Away from Work by Major Occupational Group, Private Industry, Texas 2014

MAJOR OCCUPATIONAL GROUP	INCIDENCE RATE	NUMBER OF CASES	MEDIAN DAYS AWAY FROM WORK
Transportation and material moving occupations	171.8	11,660	12
Installation, maintenance, and repair occupations	166.5	6,860	13
Building and grounds cleaning and maintenance occupations	121.6	2,520	5
Healthcare support occupations	104.6	1,940	5
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	102.6	630	8
Construction and extraction occupations	91.7	4,820	14
Production occupations	87.8	5,500	10
Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations	65.6	2,740	7
Food preparation and serving related occupations	65.4	4,560	5
Community and social service occupations	54.0	220	9
Protective service occupations	48.2	420	5
Personal care and service occupations	37.3	980	5
Sales and related occupations	34.1	3,400	4
Office and administrative support occupations	34.0	4,600	8
Education, training, and library occupations	32.1	230	4
Management occupations	29.4	1,220	5
Life, physical, and social science occupations	23.1	140	2
Arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	13.5	100	2
Business and financial occupations	5.1	200	7
Architecture and engineering occupations	4.6	90	5
Legal occupations	3.7	20	19
Computer and mathematical occupations	3.1	90	4

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Case Characteristics

The sprains, strains, and tears category is the leading nature of occupational injuries with 18,590 cases, accounting for 35 percent of the 52,970 total cases requiring days away from work. The back was the body part reported to be the most affected with 9,470 cases. The category of floors, walkways, and ground surfaces was the highest reported source

for cases requiring days away from work with 8,870, followed by vehicles with 7,030 and person, injured or ill employee with 6,560 cases. Overexertion and bodily reaction was the leading event or exposure, reporting 15,490 cases. Second was contact with object and equipment with 15,160 cases, and third was falls, slips or trips with 13,680. (Table 4)

TABLE 4. Incidence Rates and Numbers of Nonfatal Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work by Selected Characteristics, Private Industry, Texas 2014

NATURE OF INJURY, ILLNESS	INCIDENCE RATE	NUMBER OF CASES
Fractures	6.4	5,230
Sprains, strains, tears	22.9	18,590
Amputations	.5	420
Bruises, contusions	5.7	4,640
Chemical burns and corrosions	.5	400
Heat (thermal) burns	1.3	1,050
Soreness, pain	8.5	6,880
Cuts, lacerations, punctures	7.8	6,320
Carpal tunnel syndrome	.1	70
Tendonitis	--	40
Multiple traumatic injuries	1.7	1,370
PART OF BODY AFFECTED	INCIDENCE RATE	NUMBER OF CASES
Head	5.9	4,820
Eye	1.8	1,480
Neck	1.1	860
Trunk	16.0	12,990
Back	11.7	9,470
Upper extremities	20.1	16,320
Shoulder	4.7	3,800
Arm	2.8	2,250
Wrist	2.2	1,750
Hands	9.7	7,870
Lower extremities	15.0	12,200
Knee	5.5	4,440
Ankle	3.3	2,640
Foot	3.3	2,640
Toe, Toenail	.9	720
Body systems	1.0	830
Multiple body parts	6.0	4,870

SOURCE OF INJURY, ILLNESS	INCIDENCE RATE	NUMBER OF CASES
Chemicals, chemical products	1.0	770
Containers	7.8	6,360
Furniture, fixtures	2.5	2,050
Machinery	3.8	3,070
Parts and materials	7.0	5,700
Person, injured or ill worker	8.1	6,560
Worker motion or position	7.9	6,390
Person, other than injured or ill workers	2.8	2,310
Patient	2.1	1,700
Floors, walkways, ground surfaces	10.9	8,870
Ladder	1.5	1,180
Handtools	2.8	2,290
Vehicles	8.7	7,030
Trucks	2.9	2,360
Cart, dolly, hand truck-nonpowered	1.1	870

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Texas Workplace Injury, Illness Rate Decreased in 2014 (cont.)

TABLE 4. (CONT.) Incidence Rates and Numbers of Nonfatal Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work by Selected Characteristics, Private Industry, Texas 2014

EVENT OR EXPOSURE	INCIDENCE RATE	NUMBER OF CASES
Violence and other injuries by persons or animal	2.5	2,060
Intentional injury by other person	.7	600
Injury by person-unintentional or intent unknown	.3	220
Animal and insect related incidents	1.5	1,250
Transportation incidents	4.9	3,970
Roadway incidents involving motorized land vehicles	3.4	2,780
Fires and explosions	.1	100
Falls, slips, trips	16.8	13,680
Slips, trips without fall	2.6	2,090
Fall on same level	10.4	8,440
Fall to lower level	3.7	2,970
Exposure to harmful substances or environments	3.1	2,480
Contact with object, equipment	18.7	15,160
Struck by object or equipment	11.4	9,240
Struck against object or equipment	3.4	2,720
Caught in or compressed by object or equipment	3.1	2,550
Overexertion and bodily reaction	19.1	15,490
Repetitive motion involving microtasks	.9	730
Overexertion in lifting or lowering	6.9	5,630

Demographics

Employees ages 35 to 44 reported 12,380 cases involving days away from work, accounting for 23 percent of the total number of the cases. Employees in the 16 to 19 age group reported the lowest number of cases (1,500), while employees ages 65 and over experienced the highest median days away from work (30). (Table 5)

TABLE 5. Number of Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work by Age of Employee and Major Industry Sector, Private Industry, Texas 2014

AGE	PRIVATE INDUSTRY	GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	SERVICE PROVIDING INDUSTRIES	MEDIAN DAYS AWAY FROM WORK
16 to 19	1,500	330	1,170	3
20 to 24	5,300	1,430	3,880	5
25 to 34	11,720	3,490	8,230	6
35 to 44	12,380	2,870	9,510	9
45 to 54	12,170	3,310	8,870	10
55 to 64	8,350	1,740	6,610	14
65 and over	1,510	540	970	30

Length of Service

Employees with one to five years of service reported 18,020 cases and accounted for 34 percent of the 52,970 total private industry cases requiring days away from work. Employees having less than three months of service reported the lowest number of cases with 7,530. (Table 6)

TABLE 6. Number of Nonfatal Occupational Injuries and Illnesses Involving Days Away from Work by Length of Service and Major Industry Sector, Private Industry, Texas 2014

LENGTH OF SERVICE WITH EMPLOYER	PRIVATE INDUSTRY	GOODS PRODUCING INDUSTRIES	SERVICE PROVIDING INDUSTRIES
Less than 3 months	7,530	2,440	5,100
3 months to 11 months	12,160	3,680	8,490
1 year to 5 years	18,020	4,290	13,730
More than 5 years	14,890	3,290	11,600

DWC released previous communications in 2015 reporting on 2014 data from the BLS occupational safety and health statistical series. On September 17, 2015, the DWC issued the first report, which covered work-related fatalities from the 2014 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (located at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/documents/2014newsrelease.pdf).

On October 29, 2015, DWC reported that there were 194,642 nonfatal injuries and illnesses in the private sector in Texas in 2014 (report located at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/documents/2014nfnwsrlse.pdf). This report is a companion to the October 29, 2015 report.

Additional Texas nonfatal occupational injury and illness data are available by contacting DWC at (512) 804-5020, by email at InjuryAnalysis@tdi.texas.gov, or by visiting the TDI website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/index.html. Details about the national BLS injury and illness data are available on the BLS website at www.bls.gov/news.release/osh2.nr0.htm.

Note: Beginning with survey year 2011, the classification system used to code case characteristics and occupations was revised and created a break in series. Case characteristics (nature, body part, source, and event) and many occupations for years after 2011 are not comparable to data for years prior to 2011.

Details about the data reported in this report:

- *Incidence rates represent the number of injuries and illnesses per 10,000 full-time employees and were calculated as: $(N / EH) \times 20,000,000$ where, N=number of injuries and illnesses, EH=total hours worked by all employees during the calendar year, 20,000,000=base for 10,000 full-time equivalent employees (working 40 hours per week, 50 weeks per year).*
- *Days away from work cases include those that result in days away from work with or without job transfer or restriction.*
- *Data excludes farms with fewer than 11 employees.*

- *Data for mining (Sector 21 in the North American Industry Classification System— United States, 2002) includes establishments not governed by the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) rules and reporting, such as those in oil and gas extraction and related support activities. Data for mining operators in coal, metal, and nonmetal mining are provided to BLS by the MSHA, U.S. Department of Labor. Independent mining contractors are excluded from the coal, metal, and nonmetal mining industries. These data do not reflect the changes OSHA made to its recordkeeping requirements effective January 1, 2002; therefore, estimates for these industries are not comparable to estimates in other industries.*
- *Data for employers in rail transportation are provided to BLS by the Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation. These data do not reflect the changes OSHA made to its recordkeeping requirements effective January 1, 2002; therefore, estimates for these industries are not comparable to estimates in other industries. Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses, November 19, 2015. ▲*

Custom Onsite Training

DWC offers affordable safety training courses that can be delivered onsite to businesses, groups, and trade associations. Training focuses on industries or occupations that experience high incidences of injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in Texas.

DWC offers more than 30 onsite courses, including:

Accident Investigation

An effective accident investigation is a systematic process of recording what happened, who was involved, the resulting injuries, and by determining the causes and eliminating them. This program provides employers and employees with the necessary tools to work together and create an accident investigation team. Through lecture, discussion, and hands-on exercises attendees learn the following:

- accident investigation theory
- how to build an investigator's tool kit
- how to assemble an accident investigation team
- effective information gathering techniques
- to develop corrective actions based on accident analysis

(Length: 1-3 hours. Can be delivered via teleconference at no cost.)

The DWC Training Program Descriptions guide at www.tdi.texas.gov/pubs/videoresource/ghsphstrainingp.pdf provides information on course content and length. Cost for onsite training varies according to the travel costs to the training location. Many courses are offered at no cost to any business/industry via teleconference or webinar. ▲

Book Your Training Class!

To request training, or for more information, call (512) 804-4610 or email safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov.

Free OSHA 10-Hour Construction Classes

DWC offers free OSHA 10-Hour Construction classes in both English and Spanish in Austin, Fort Worth, El Paso, Houston, and San Antonio. Each two-day course is presented by authorized instructors and designed to train employers and employees in the essentials of occupational health and safety for construction. Classes cover specific OSHA standards and requirements for the construction industry and teach safety awareness, which helps to recognize and reduce the risks of job site hazards. Participants who successfully complete the course receive an OSHA 10-Hour Construction class completion card within six to eight weeks. ▲

Register!

Additional information is available on the TDI website at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/events/index.html.

Registration is required due to limited space. To register or request more information on class availability, call (512) 804-4610.

Upcoming Safety Observances

December 1-31
"3D Month" – Drunk and Drugged Driving Prevention Month

January 1-31, 2016
National Radon Action Month

February 1-28
American Heart Disease Awareness Month

February 1-7
National Burn Awareness Week

March 1-31
Workplace Eye Wellness Month

Safety DVDs Featuring Accident Investigation and Near Misses

The DWC Resource Center contains approximately 4,000 DVDs in its library, including more than 24 DVDs related to accident investigation and near misses. Some titles are available in both English and Spanish. DVD titles and descriptions are found under the "Accident Reporting/Investigation" and "Close Calls/Near Misses" subject headings.

Accident Investigation: The Big Picture DVD1277ES

Discusses unsafe working conditions and helps employees explore creative solutions to prevent future accidents; covers gathering facts and information, evaluating accidents, and writing accident reports. 19 min.

Close Calls and Near Misses DVD1761, DVD1761S

Shows that studying close calls and near misses can provide critical information for improving safety programs. Stresses the importance of reporting close calls, correcting unsafe conditions, and taking action to improve work conditions and prevent injuries. 19 min.

How To Investigate an Accident DVD2527, DVD2527S

Teaches supervisors the basics of accident investigation and includes important points to consider when developing facts for an accident report. Presents a scenario of an accident investigation. 13 min. ▲

Book Your DVDs!

The DWC Resource Center catalog and information on how any Texas employer or employee can check out safety DVDs for free are available at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html.

DWC, OSHCON, and OSHA Recognize Texas Company with Exemplary Safety Program

The DWC's OSHCON Program and OSHA recently recognized the following Texas company for its outstanding safety program with the Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) award.

Baker Tank Company employs 100 people at its Arp location and specializes in petroleum storage tanks, floating roofs, custom vessels, and oil field production equipment. As a SHARP recipient, the company has been granted a one-year exemption from OSHA for planned inspections.



The SHARP award recognizes small, private sector Texas employers participating in the DWC OSHCON program for exemplary safety management programs and low incidence rates of work-related injuries and illnesses.

OSHCON is a free service to help employers understand and comply with OSHA standards through safety consultations by DWC's professional consultants. Employers may be eligible for SHARP status if they have fewer than 250 employees at a worksite and less than 500 employees total; operations that are limited to a fixed worksite; undergo a full-service OSHCON consultation; involve employees in the consultation process; correct all hazards identified by the consultation; and have days away, restricted, or transfer (DART), and total case rate (TCR) injury and illness incidence rates below the national average for their industries. ▲

Find Out More About SHARP and OSHCON!

For more information about the OSHCON program and SHARP, call (800) 252-7031 Option 2, visit the OSHCON website at www.txoshcon.com, or email OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov.

OSHA Update

Guide Available on New Standard for Confined Spaces in Construction

A new guide, Protecting Construction Workers in Confined Spaces: Small Entity Compliance Guide, is now available to help small businesses comply with OSHA's new Confined Spaces in Construction Standard. Chapters in the guide correspond to sections of the standard to help employers understand what they must to protect their employees.

The new guide is available on the Confined Spaces index page, located on the agency website at www.osha.gov/confinedspaces/index.html. The index page also links to the standard, compliance assistance materials, case studies, and other information.

Updated Trenching and Excavation Safety Guide Now Available

Trenching and excavation work are among the most hazardous operations in construction. An unprotected trench can be an early grave because one cubic yard of soil can weigh as much as a car. OSHA's updated guide, Trenching and Excavation Safety, highlights key elements of the applicable workplace standards and describes safe practices employers can follow to protect employees from cave-ins and other hazards. A new section in the updated guide addresses safety factors that an employer should consider when bidding on a job. Expanded sections describe how to maintain materials and equipment used for employee protection systems and additional hazards associated with excavations. The updated guide is available on the Trenching and Excavation Safety and Health Topics page on the OSHA website at www.osha.gov/SLTC/trenchingexcavation/index.html.

Updated Voluntary Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines

OSHA recently released an updated draft version of its voluntary Safety and Health Program Management Guidelines. The guidelines represent recommendations from both OSHA and employers with successful safety and health management systems that focus on identifying, assessing, preventing, and controlling workplace hazards. The guidelines will help small and medium-sized employers find and fix hazards before employees are injured, ill, or killed.

First published in 1989, the updated guidelines reflect modern technology and practices by :

- introducing new and more effective approaches to workplace safety and health
- encouraging employee participation so all employees have a voice in workplace safety and health
- showing how multiple employers at the same worksite can coordinate efforts to make sure all employees are equally protected from hazards

The guidelines are advisory only and do not create any new legal obligations or alter existing obligations under OSHA standards or regulations.

OSHA is accepting public comment on these guidelines until February 15, 2016. For more information on the draft guidelines and the public comment process, visit OSHA's website at www.osha.gov/shpmguidelines/

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OSHA Update (cont.)

Free Help with OSHA Compliance

DWC provides free help with compliance for small and medium-sized businesses, with priority given to high-hazard industries, through its OSHCON Program. OSHCON is a non-regulatory program, and its professional safety and health consultants are available to help identify and eliminate occupational hazards in your workplace, whether or not your company carries workers' compensation insurance. Benefits for employers participating in the OSHCON program include: prevention of work-related injuries and illnesses; confirmation to employees and customers of their commitment to safety; public acknowledgement of their safety efforts; monetary savings by reducing workers' compensation costs and other costs associated with work-related injuries and illnesses; and protection of company assets such as employees, equipment, supplies, products, and facilities. ▲

Find Out More About OSHCON!

For information about the OSHCON program and help with OSHA standards, contact the DWC at (800) 252-7031, Option 2, or by email at OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov; or visit the OSHCON website at <http://txoshcon.com/>.

NIOSH Update

New National Center for Productive Aging and Work

According to BLS, by 2020, one in four American workers will be over the age of 55, many of them with no plans for retirement in the near future. The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) announced the launch of the National Center for Productive Aging and Work (NCPAW), which is hosted by the NIOSH Office for Total Worker Health®. The NCPAW focuses on the safety of workers at all ages, promotes lifelong well-being for workers, and advances the concept of productive aging.

The NCPAW index page provides access to news, research, tools and resources, and data and statistics. The index page is available on the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/productiveaging/default.html. ▲

DWC Workplace Safety Job Postings

There are many benefits to working for the State of Texas and DWC, as detailed on the agency website at www.tdi.texas.gov/jobs/index.html.

A complete listing of positions currently available can be viewed at www.tdi.texas.gov/jobs/jobs.html.

Report Unsafe Working Conditions

The DWC Safety Violations Hotline is a bilingual, 24-hour, toll-free telephone line that allows Texas employees to confidentially report unsafe working conditions. By law, employers are responsible for providing a safe work environment.

While working, you may encounter safety and health hazards that could cause injury, illness, or death. The Safety Violations Hotline allows you, the employee, to take an active role in preventing workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. When DWC receives a report of a work-related safety or health issue, its safety inspectors work with the employer and insurance carrier to help eliminate hazards.

Employers are prohibited by law from retaliation and may not suspend, terminate, or otherwise discriminate against an employee for using the Safety Violations Hotline service to report in good faith an alleged violation of an occupational safety or health law. ▲

Upcoming Free Traffic Safety Workshops for Employers

NSC's *Our Driving Concern*: Texas Employer Traffic Safety Program will offer the following free employer train-the-trainer traffic safety workshops:

- Houston – Thursday, January 14, 2016
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
TxDOT Houston Office
7600 Washington Ave., Houston, TX 77007
- Fort Worth – Monday, January 18, 2016
8:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.
Texas Health Harris Methodist Hospital
Heart Center
1240 W. Cannon St., Fort Worth, TX 76104
- Austin – Monday, February 1, 2016
8:30 a.m. – 1 p.m.
DWC Central Office
7551 Metro Center Dr., Suite 100 Austin, TX 78744

Space is limited. Register online at www.txdrivingconcern.org.

For more information, call Lisa Robinson at 512-466-7383 or email at lisa.robinson@nsc.org.

Report a Safety Violation

Report workplace safety or health hazards to the Safety Violations Hotline by calling (800) 452-9595 or use the online form at www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html. Reports of violations may be made anonymously.

For questions about workers' compensation claims, call DWC at (800) 252-7031. To report other non-safety related workplace issues, contact 2-1-1 Texas by dialing 211 on your telephone for information about how to get in touch with the appropriate agency.

CONTACT US!

FREE HELP WITH OSHA COMPLIANCE

- Occupational Safety and Health Consultation (OSHCON) Program
www.txoshcon.com
(800) 252-7031 Option 2
OSHCON@tdi.texas.gov

SAFETY AND HEALTH RESOURCES

- Free Safety and Health Publications
www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/index.html
- Free Audiovisual Loans
www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/avcatalog.html
(512) 804-4620
- Safety Training Courses and Seminars
(512) 804-4610
safetytraining@tdi.texas.gov
- Helpful Safety and Health Resource Links
www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/videoresources/govunivlinks.html

OCCUPATIONAL INJURY AND ILLNESS DATA

- Survey of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses (SOII)
www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/nonfatalhomepage.html
(512) 804-5020
InjuryAnalysis@tdi.texas.gov
- Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI)
www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/sis/fathomepage.html
(512) 804-5020
CFOI@tdi.texas.gov

REPORT A SAFETY VIOLATION OR HAZARD

- Safety Violations Hotline
Reports are taken in both English and Spanish and may be made anonymously.
www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/safety/hotline.html
(800) 452-9595

RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAM ASSISTANCE

- www.tdi.texas.gov/wc/rtw/index.html
(512) 804-5000

Subscribe to email alerts when the Safety & Health Update newsletter is published online at www.tdi.texas.gov/alert/dwcsafetyhealth.html. You will also receive information on occupational safety and health matters, safety tips and publications, upcoming training events, training DVD loans, and OSHA updates.

Please forward this newsletter to friends and colleagues interested in preventing workplace injuries and illnesses. Have a safe day!

DWC Resource Center

(512) 804-4620

ResourceCenter@tdi.texas.gov