

VIRGINIA WORKS

FALL 2001

SAFETY AND HEALTH CODES BOARD ADOPTS REVISION TO BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS STANDARD

Nearly 10 years after OSHA's original bloodborne pathogens standard was published to protect workers, primarily in health-care jobs, against the risks posed by bloodborne hazards such as HIV, hepatitis B, and hepatitis C, many medical devices have been developed to replace sharps with non-needle devices or incorporate safety features designed to reduce the risk of injury. Nevertheless, needlesticks and other sharps injuries continue to be a concern due to their high frequency and severe health effects.

In response to these concerns, Congress passed the *Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act* on November 6, 2000. The *Needlestick Safety and Prevention Act* mandated OSHA to revise its bloodborne pathogens standard to clarify the need for safer needle devices as they become available and employee involvement in identifying and choosing devices. The updated standard also requires employers to maintain a log of injuries from contaminated sharps. On June 11, 2001 the Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board adopted federal OSHA's revision to the bloodborne pathogens standard, with an effective date of September 15, 2001.

The requirement for employers to use safer medical devices is not new; however, the original standard was not specific about engineering controls, which include all measures that isolate or remove a bloodborne pathogen hazard from the workplace, such as sharps disposal containers and self-sheathing needles. The definition of engineering controls has now been revised to include *sharps with engineered sharps injury protections* and *needleless systems*, specifying what OSHA recognizes as acceptable engineering controls. Sharps with engineered sharps injury protections include non-needle sharps or needle devices that contain built-in safety features used for withdrawing fluids or administering medications or other fluids, or mechanisms that effectively reduce the risk of an exposure incident. Needleless systems are devices that do not use needles for the collection or withdrawal of body fluids, or for the administration of medication or fluids.

The updated standard has also been revised to clarify and emphasize the importance of employers' yearly re-evaluation of their exposure control plan as mandated in the original standard. As part of this review, employers must adopt and require the use of safer needle devices to protect against accidental needlesticks. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimated in March 2000 that selecting safer medical devices could prevent from 62 to 88 percent of sharps injuries in hospital settings. The annual review must describe the devices identified as candidates for use, the method(s) used to evaluate those devices, and justification for the eventual selection. A key element in choosing a safer medical device, other than its appropriateness, is its availability on the market. Employers are not required to use devices that are not readily available. When engineering controls are not available, work practice controls must be used and, if occupational exposure still remains, personal protective equipment must also be used.

Revisions to the standard now call for employers to solicit input from frontline employees (non-managerial employees responsible for direct patient care) to ensure that workers using the equipment have input into purchasing decisions. The revision does not require employers to request input from all employees; however, those selected should represent the range of exposure situations encountered in the workplace. Specific procedures for obtaining employee input are not prescribed, but employers should take reasonable steps to obtain employee input in the identification, evaluation, and selection of controls. Methods for soliciting employee input may include: participation in safety audits, worksite inspections, or exposure incident investigations; participation in analysis of exposure incident data or in job or process hazard analysis; participation in the evaluation of devices through pilot testing; and involvement with a safety and health committee. Input from employees must be documented in the employer's exposure control plan.



Continued on page 3

Contents

Page 1 ••• Bloodborne Pathogens
Page 2 ••• Commissioner's Column
Page 2 ••• The Heat is On
Page 2 ••• Sixth Annual VOSH Conference

Page 3 ••• Virginia Fatalities
Page 3 ••• Upcoming Training
Page 4 ••• Governor's Message

Commissioner's Corner



This is the first electronic edition of our newsletter. I hope you enjoy it and that it is helpful to you.

Our Virginia Occupational Safety and Health (VOSH) program is responsible for protecting more than 2.5 million Virginia employees in 160,000 establishments as they perform their jobs each day. My staff and I take this responsibility seriously and use a broad range of methods to protect and promote the safety and health of Virginia workers. These include standard compliance inspections, complaint investigations, voluntary consultation, Voluntary Protection Programs, our Annual Safety and Health Conference, and communications such as this newsletter.

I am pleased to announce that Glenn Cox joined DOLI this summer as our new VOSH Programs Director. Glenn, who has more than 20 years of safety experience, recently retired from the Navy, where his latest assignment was serving as Safety Manager in Norfolk. He is a graduate of Virginia Military Institute, the Naval Safety School, and Naval Legal Officer's School. I hope many of you have had or soon will have an opportunity to meet and work with Glenn and the other members of our VOSH staff as we strive, together, to work as safely and healthily as possible. If you have comments or suggestions about how we can be of better service to you, please let us know.

Jeffrey D. Brown
Commissioner

6th ANNUAL VOSH CONFERENCE

It could have been a vacation with a view of the water, good food and activities, except that those gathered had a purpose—to learn more about safety in the workplace.

More than 400 people attended the Sixth Annual Virginia Occupational Safety and Health Conference June 27-29 in Portsmouth. The conference kicked off with a sit down lunch and keynote speaker. Throughout the week, a total of 22 concurrent sessions gave participants a chance to enhance their knowledge or to acquire new information on safety and health that they could take away from the conference. In addition, participants had the opportunity to interact with over 30 vendors who specialize in safety and health equipment.

“Safety in the workplace is such a crucial issue for businesses to be aware of. This conference not only brings this issue to the forefront but educates employers and employees on how to become or maintain a safe workplace,” said Department of Labor and Industry Commissioner Jeffrey Brown.

The 7th Annual Virginia Occupational Safety and Health Conference will be held at the Hotel Roanoke June 19-21, 2002.

THE HEAT IS ON

As summer winds down and we slip into fall and eventually winter, it is now the time to look ahead at heating equipment maintenance. Having the burner adjusted and controls checked early will not only assure economical operation, but can also make you look wise compared to those who are frantically trying to get one of the few repair men available on those first cold mornings.

State law mandates that heating boilers be inspected every two years and maintained in a safe working condition. The following list is published by the National Board as an aid to boiler owners and operators.

Recommendations For A Safe Boiler Room

- 1) Keep the boiler room clean and clear of unnecessary items. The boiler room should *not* be considered an all-purpose storage area. The burner requires proper air circulation in order to prevent incomplete fuel combustion and the production of carbon monoxide. *The boiler room is for the boiler!*
- 2) Ensure that all personnel who operate or maintain the boiler room are properly trained on all equipment, controls, safety devices, and up-to-date operating procedures.
- 3) Before start-up, ensure that the boiler room is free of all potentially dangerous situations, like flammable materials, mechanical or physical damage to the boiler or related equipment. Clear intakes and exhaust vents: check for deterioration and possible leaks.
- 4) Ensure a thorough inspection by a properly qualified inspector, such as one who holds a National Board commission.
- 5) After any extensive repair or new installation of equipment make sure a qualified boiler inspector re-inspects the entire system.
- 6) Monitor all new equipment closely until safety and efficiency are demonstrated.
- 7) Use boiler operating log sheets, maintenance records, and manufacturer's recommendations to establish a preventive maintenance schedule based on operating conditions, past maintenance, repair, and replacement that were performed on the equipment.
- 8) Establish a checklist for proper startup and shutdown of boilers and all related equipment according to manufacturer's recommendations.
- 9) Observe equipment extensively before allowing an automated operation system to be used with minimal supervision.
- 10) Establish a periodic preventive maintenance and safety testing program that follows CSD-1-1995 Part CM and the manufacturer's recommendations.

Contributed by Ed Hilton, Boiler Inspector

VIRGINIA FATALITIES

Virginia Workplace Fatalities					
As of 10-9-01	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Falls	9	15	13	12	17
Struck by Vehicle	3	3	7	6	7
Struck by Tree	6	2	2	4	3
Struck by other	5	4	2	7	3
Crushed	8	4	6	5	11
Electrocution	6	11	6	5	5
Explosion	2	11	2	0	3
Other	6	9	7	1	7
TOTALS	45	59	45	40	56

The above are the fatalities that DOLI is responsible to investigate. There are others, the majority of which are vehicular. Additional fatalities are reported by the Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (CFOI) program.

Percentage of fatalities from lack of Fall Protection by year

2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
18%	25%	28%	30%	30%

Fatalities by age group from the years 1997 to 2001 YTD

- 19 years to 24 years - 12 fatalities
- 25 years to 34 years - 9 fatalities
- 35 years to 45 years - 16 fatalities
- 45 years and older - 40 fatalities

It is the desire of this agency to play an integral part in reducing workplace injuries and illnesses in Virginia, and particularly to reduce the incidence of fatalities. The death of a Virginia worker is a tragedy, a tragedy that is far reaching. The loss, of course, severely effects the victim's family and friends. It also has enormous impact upon fellow workers, the business and the community. Someone loses a parent, a child, a brother or sister, a spouse or loved one. The business loses a valued employee, a friend, a mentor, a leader. The community loses a coach, a volunteer, a school board member. The costs are financially and emotionally immeasurable.

These events are preventable. Educate: tell employees what the applicable standards are, what the company rules and policies are. Train: show employees what to do and what not to do. Have them demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Check these skills frequently and reeducate and retrain whenever necessary. Make safety a part of everyone's performance evaluation. Have a disciplinary policy that applies to safety issues, and use it. Safety professionals must role model safety at all times, believe it, and exemplify it in daily actions so that others will follow the lead. Take it home and into the community.

UPCOMING TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

The National Resource Center for OSHA Training, a Consortium of Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO/The Center to Protect Workers' Rights, George Meany Center for Labor Studies, Inc., and West Virginia University Safety and Health Extension, 111 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20001, provided the following schedule of classes for the remainder of calendar year 2001. Call (800) 367-6724 or (202) 962-8930 for additional information.

Date(s)	Course	Location
Nov 3 - 6	Construction Industry Safety & Health Standards Trainer Course	Silver Spring, MD
Nov 5 - 8	Safety & Health Standards for the Construction Industry	Silver Spring, MD
Nov 27 - 29	Update for Construction Industry Outreach Trainers	Morgantown, WV
Dec 10 - 12	Update for Construction Industry Outreach Trainers	Silver Spring, MD
Dec 17 - 19	Update for General Industry Outreach Trainers	Silver Spring, MD

DISCLAIMER: DOLI does not verify professional qualifications or recommend any individuals, firms or their products. The mention of individual or company names does not constitute endorsement by the agency.

Contributed by Ronald Dick, VOSH Training Supervisor

BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS STANDARD

Continued from page 1

Another new provision of the standard requires employers to establish a log to track all needlestick injuries from contaminated sharps, rather than only record cuts or sticks that actually lead to illness. The sharps injury log is required only of employers who must maintain a log of occupational injuries and illnesses under existing recordkeeping rules. The sharps log must ensure employee privacy and should contain, at a minimum: the type and brand of device involved in an exposure incident; the department or work area where the exposure incident occurred; and an explanation of how the incident occurred. OSHA anticipates that this new requirement will help both employers and employees identify problem areas or operations and determine effectiveness of the devices used in their workplaces.

Contributed by Ronald Graham, Occupational Safety & Health Compliance Officer



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

James S. Gilmore, III
Governor

Message from Governor Gilmore:

Virginia continues to be one of the finest places to live and work in the nation. Despite stagnant national and global economies, Virginia's economy has continued to grow, and our overall economic outlook remains strong and optimistic.

A wealth of skilled and industrious citizens, a favorable business and tax climate, good financial management, and technological advancements sustain us during challenging times and ensure the Commonwealth's standing as a preeminent economic powerhouse during robust times.

I remain committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and properly paid workforce. If Commissioner Brown, his staff, or my office can assist you with your workplace concerns, please let us know. Working together, we can make Virginia an even better – and safer – place to live and work.

James S. Gilmore, III
Governor of Virginia

Recordkeeping Training

The Virginia Department of Labor and Industry will be holding training on the new Record Keeping Standard after October 18, 2001. For a schedule of training sessions contact (804) 786-5873.

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