

## Best-In-Class Thoughts

*"Any idea is only as valuable as its ability to solve a problem."*

– Sally Hogshead

*"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."*

– Nelson Mandela

*"Education is a progressive discovery of our own ignorance."*

– Will Durant



## this issue

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## Note from Leanne

Here at MER, we have a tremendously successful Best-in-Class Employee Development program. With features such as smaller classes (6-8 students) to help increase student involvement and knowledge retention, an elevated focus on hands-on, high-energy training (as opposed to lectures or PowerPoint presentations) and a high number of training hours (the average employee completes 80 hours worth of training annually), I believe our program is one of the best in our industry. In addition to those in-house features that tend to be safety-related, our employee development program includes external education opportunities such as classes for public speaking, leadership training and training on various Microsoft Office programs (Excel, PowerPoint etc.), just to name a few. MER is committed to our employees' development, both safety-related and otherwise; if you're interested in furthering your development, or have ideas on how to improve our program, contact any one of our team members.

## Pre-Work Hazard Analysis

April marks the roll out of MER's new Pre-Work Hazard Analysis (PWHA) form, which was created based on MER employee suggestions! As you know, the Health and Safety team is always looking for ways to improve our policies, procedures, and, yes, even our paperwork, and who better to guide those changes than the people that are actually using them? The document combines a Job Hazard Analysis, Confined Space Entry Permit, Excavation Permit, Equipment Inspection Form, Post-Job Review, and Stop Work Criteria. As requested, it is designed to ensure that the most common forms and permits are always on hand, as well as to reduce redundancy throughout the documents. Translation: it's easier, faster, and more efficient to complete. Look for the new Pre-Work Hazard Analysis form later this month.



Did you know...?

## MER Frequently Asked Questions

According to USCG regulations, fuel transfer hose should be marked with:

- Maximum allowable working pressure
- Date of manufacture
- Date of the latest test required by §156.170

Do NOT mark:

- Hose burst pressure
- Hose test pressure

However, these pressure must still be documented.

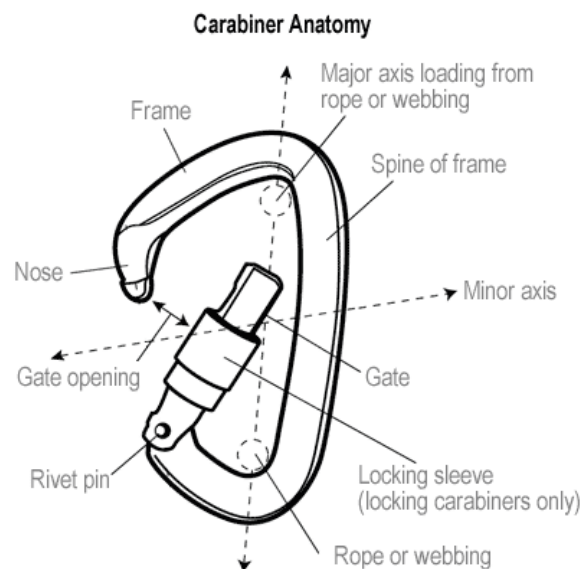
33CFR 154.500(g) Reads:

"The hose burst pressure and the pressure used for the test required by §156.170 of this chapter must not be marked on the hose and must be recorded elsewhere at the facility as described in paragraph (f) of this section."

### What specific ratings are marked on Carabiners?

Carabiners' capacities are marked or engraved on their spines. There are three different weights that may be listed depending on where the load is located on the carabiner. Most ratings are listed in kilonewtons (1 kN = approx. 225 lbs.).

1. The first rating is for Major Axis Loading – this is the use for which carabiners were designed to be used and can bear the most weight.
2. The second rating is for Cross Loading (minor axis) – carabiners are not designed to be loaded this way (due to the pressure it puts on the hinge pin at the base of the gate) and so the cross loading rating is always significantly lower than the major axis loading rating.
3. The third rating is for Open Gate Loading – this is the load rating of the gate when it is opened while under load. Once again, this is going to be significantly less than the major axis load rating.



### Can a Fisherman's bend or Square knot be used to join two different sized ropes?

**DOUBLE FISHERMAN'S BEND:** Used to join two ropes of equal (or slightly unequal) diameter together for load-bearing applications. (Efficiency loss: approximately 21%)

**SQUARE KNOT:** Used to "bind" two ropes of the same diameter together. **WARNING: Square knots should not be used in load-bearing applications or to support a human load! Always safety the loose ends.** (Note: The square knot below does not contain safety knots.)



Fisherman's Bend



Square Knot



### Auxiliary Filters



**What are auxiliary filters for gas detectors and why should we use them?**

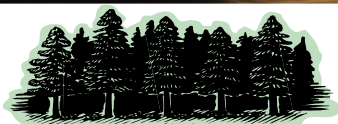
The Auxiliary Filters are used to filter out particulates that can decrease the life span of the pump or sensors. See the pictures to the left for the different types of auxiliary filters used on BW gas detectors.

There's an App for that!

Wiser



WISER (Wireless Information System for Emergency Responders) is a mobile application designed to assist first responders in hazardous material incidents.



## Fitness Challenge

### Touch the Rim

*Touch the rim? You bet. In addition to the fact that a fit man just ought to be able to show off once in a while, a good vertical leap is the ultimate sign of lower-body power. It means you can combine lower-body speed and strength into one quick movement. And that'll help you anytime you need to move explosively—stealing a base, grabbing a rebound, diving for cover.*

**The Test:** You'll need a small bag of chalk to do this test. Chalk your fingers and stand flat-footed next to a wall. Place your chalked hand as high as possible on the wall and mark it with your fingertips. Then, without taking a step, dip your knees, swing your arms up, and jump as high as you can, again marking the wall with your fingertips. The distance between the two marks is your vertical-jump height.

### The Scorecard:

20" or less: Grounded

Between 20" and 26":

Ordinary

Higher than 26": High flyer

[http://www.menshealth.com/mhlists/be\\_fit/Touch\\_the\\_Rim.php](http://www.menshealth.com/mhlists/be_fit/Touch_the_Rim.php)

## Vegetated Areas

Occasionally, MER's employees work in densely vegetated areas. It's important for employees to be protected from the hazards of this environment, including ticks & poisonous plants.

### Protect yourself from Tick Bites

- Wear a hat and light-colored clothing, including long-sleeved shirts and long pants tucked into boots or socks.
- Use appropriate insect repellents
- Check your skin and clothes for ticks every day. The immature forms of these ticks are very small and may be hard to see.
- Shower or bathe as soon as possible after working outdoors to wash off and check for ticks, especially in your hair, underarms, and groin.
- Wash and dry work clothes in a hot dryer.

Immediately remove ticks from your body using fine-tipped tweezers. Grasp the tick firmly, as close to your skin as possible, and pull it away from your skin with a steady motion. Clean the area with soap and water. Removing infected ticks within 24 hours reduces your risk of being infected with the Lyme disease bacterium.

### Protection from Poisonous Plants

- Wear long sleeves, long pants, boots, and gloves.
- Wash exposed clothing separately in hot water.
- Barrier creams, such as a lotion containing bentoquatam, may offer some protection before contact. Barrier creams should be washed off and reapplied twice a day.
- After use, wear disposable gloves and clean tools with rubbing alcohol or soap and lots of water. Urushiol can remain active on the surface of objects for up to 5 years.
- Do not burn plants that may be poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac. Inhaling smoke from burning plants can cause severe allergic respiratory problems.

### First Aid for Contact with Poisonous Plants

- Immediately rinse skin with rubbing alcohol, specialized poison plant washes, or degreasing soap (such as dishwashing soap), and lots of water. Rinse frequently so solutions don't dry on the skin and further spread the urushiol. Scrub under nails with a brush.
- Apply wet compresses, calamine lotion, or hydrocortisone cream to the skin to reduce itching and blistering (follow directions). Don't apply to broken skin, such as open blisters.
- An antihistamine such as Benadryl can be taken to help relieve itching.
- In severe cases or if the rash is on the face or genitals, seek professional medical attention.
- If the worker is suffering a severe allergic reaction get emergency medical care.

## Wellness Tip:

### Smokeless doesn't mean harmless

#### Smokeless Tobacco Facts

- An average-size dip in the mouth for just 30 minutes can deliver as much nicotine as smoking three cigarettes
- Chewing tobacco and snuff contain 28 cancer-causing agents
- Users have an increased risk of developing cancer of the oral cavity

#### Early Warning Signs

- Check your mouth often. See your doctor or dentist right away if you have:
  - White patches or red sores - usually bleeds easily and doesn't heal
  - A lump or thickening in your mouth or neck
  - Pulling away of the gums from the teeth
  - Soreness or swelling
  - Trouble chewing, swallowing, or moving your tongue or jaw

Regardless, have your mouth checked every three months.

NIH: National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research.





### Values

Professionalism  
Integrity  
Mutual Respect  
Discipline

## New H&S Coordinator

I wanted to take this opportunity to introduce a new member of MER's Health and Safety Team: Kim Oliver, stationed in the Newtown, CT Resource Center. Though positioned in the northeast, Kim will be a resource available to the whole organization (MER proper and our subsidiaries), just as the rest of the H&S Team currently is. Kim joins the team with both a Bachelors and a Masters degree in Environmental Science and over twelve years of experience in the Environmental and Safety industries, specializing in hazardous waste and lab packing activities. Additionally, Kim has worked as a college professor, teaching Environmental Science and English to students at Le Cordon Bleu College of Culinary Arts; we plan on using Kim's education background to help further develop our already successful Employee Development program. Please join me in welcoming Kim to the organization; we're very excited to add another qualified member to our team. Welcome to MER, Kim!

## MER's Biggest Losers

In January, members of the MER team agreed to start the year out living a healthier lifestyle by entering MER's Biggest Loser Challenge. The last weigh-in was in March, determining our winners below. In addition to their personal success, MER also made monetary donations on behalf of the winners to the charities of their choice. Great job team!

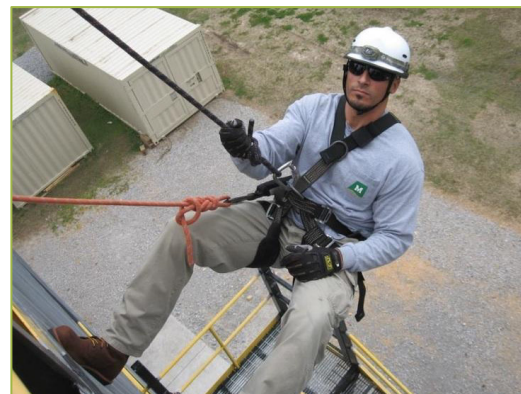
1<sup>st</sup> – Mike Barden (20%)    2<sup>nd</sup> – Nick LaFLamme (18%)    3<sup>rd</sup> – Doug Salvias (13%)



## Employee Development Corner

### Confined Space Specialist Additions

Welcome Tim Jackson, Ian MacKenzie, and Chris Echavarria to the team!



### Get the Safety Brief through RSS feeds!

The Safety Briefs are now available on MER's new website. You can follow the briefs via RSS feed in lieu of printed copies! RSS stands for Really Simple Syndication; it's essentially a computer-readable summary of the content of a Web page. If you subscribe to a RSS feed, new posts are automatically uploaded to the RSS Feed Reader you designate. The Safety Briefs and RSS feed subscribe link can be found on MER website under the News and Events tab. Check it out at: <http://www.moranenvironmental.com/Blog/>.

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