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MER Family of Companies Monthly

Safety Brief

MER Moran Environmental Recovery

Best-In-Class Thoughts

"For safety is not a gadget but a state of mind."
~Eleanor Everet

"As soon as you see a mistake and don't fix it, it becomes your mistake."
~Author Unknown

"We now have unshakable conviction that accident causes are man-made and that a manmade problem can be solved by men and women."
~W.H. Cameron


Seattle, WA

this issue

Note from Leanne

The National Safety Council recognizes June as National Safety Month, a month dedicated to heightened safety awareness, risk assessment and injury/illness prevention. This designation means that across the country, organizations in all different industries are going to place an extra amount of attention on the safety of their employees through campaigns, special training and safety-focused events.

I fully support this celebration and am grateful that there is an organization out there driving not only occupational safety but also safety at home. With that said, I am also tremendously proud of our organization as we choose to drive this value everyday at the highest level without need for a special campaign or celebration. Our Best-in-Class safety culture is substantial and thriving in every aspect of our organization and it's especially evident in the quality of employees we have across our Family of Companies.

On behalf of the Safety Team, thank you for making safety an ordinary, uncelebrated part of your everyday lives.

Site Supervision (Hierarchy of Employee Safety continued)

In May's Safety Brief, we explained the first level of safety responsibility in The Hierarchy of Employee Safety; this month, we will review the second level of the hierarchy: Site Supervision.

This diagram illustrates the hierarchy of employee safety, with the most effective and efficient party at the top.

In our day-to-day operations, there are situations where the average field employee cannot effectively address complex safety concerns; when this happens, it's important that we enlist the help of our Site Supervisors to implement advanced solutions. Having to escalate an issue to the next level in the hierarchy is a less direct path to resolution; however, because one of the benefits that Supervisors have is the means and authority to make things happen, addressing a more complicated safety concern by way of a Supervisor might actually end up being the more efficient approach.

Heat Stress

Temp.	Relative Humidity
100°F	70%
95°F	60%
90°F	50%
85°F	40%
80°F	30%

High Temperature + High Humidity + Physical Activity = Heat Illness

When the body gains heat faster than it can get rid of it, serious and potentially fatal illness may occur.

Heat Cramps

Description: Sweating depletes the body's salt and moisture levels causing painful cramps.

Symptoms: Muscle pain or spasms usually in the abdomen, arms, or legs.

First Aid:

- Stop & sit in a cool place
- Drink clear juice or a sports beverage
- Wait a few hours after cramps stop to return to strenuous work
- Seek medical attention if worker has heart problems, is on a low-sodium diet or cramps don't subside within 1 hour

Heat Exhaustion

Description: Body's response to an excessive loss of the water and salt, usually through excessive sweating.

Symptoms: Heavy sweating ~ Extreme weakness or fatigue ~ Dizziness, confusion ~ Nausea ~ Clammy, moist skin ~ Pale or flushed complexion ~ Muscle cramps ~ Slightly elevated body temperature ~ Fast and shallow breathing

First Aid:

- Rest in a cool, shaded or air-conditioned area
- Drink plenty of water or other cool beverages
- Take a cool shower, bath or sponge bath

Heat Stroke

Description: A life-threatening condition in which the body is unable to control its temperature. Body temp can rise to 106°F or higher within 10 to 15 minutes.

Symptoms: Hot, dry skin or profuse sweating ~ Hallucinations ~ Chills ~ Throbbing headache ~ High body temp ~ Confusion/ dizziness ~ Slurred speech

First Aid

- Call 911 & notify supervisor
- Move to a cool shaded area
- Use cooling methods such as:
  - Soaking clothes with water
  - Spraying, sponging or showering them with water
  - Fanning their body

Protect Yourself

What to do:

- Learn to recognize the symptoms of heat stress & how to treat them.
- Wear light-colored, loose-fitting, breathable clothing such as cotton. Avoid non-breathing synthetic clothing.
- Gradually build up to heavy work.
- Schedule heavy work during the coolest parts of day.
- Take more breaks in extreme heat and humidity. Breaks in the shade or a cool area when possible.
- Drink water frequently and enough so that you never become thirsty. Approximately 1 cup every 15-20 minutes. Avoid alcohol and drinks with large amounts of caffeine or sugar.
- PPE may increase the risk of heat stress.
- Monitor your physical condition and that of your coworkers.
- High-risk conditions: overweight, out of shape, over 40 years of age, pre-existing medical conditions, use medications that block sweating, abuse drugs/alcohol, or have had heat stress before.

Danger

Caution

Less Hazardous

www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/heatstress

There's an App for that!

OSHA Heat Safety Tool

US Department of Labor

The App calculates the heat index for the worksite and displays a risk level to outdoor workers based on the calculation. It also has reminders about drinking enough fluids, scheduling rest breaks, planning for and knowing what to do in an emergency, adjusting work operations and training information.

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Unintentional Drug Overdose

More and more Americans are turning to prescription and over-the-counter medications for pain relief. These medications are easily accessible, can make recovery from surgery less painful and ease many ailments from a chronic sore back to a cough and cold.

However, overdoses of prescription medicine are on the rise. Most fatal unintentional overdoses result from pain relief medications also known as opioid analgesics. Opioids include: oxycodone, methadone, hydrocodone, fentanyl and buprenorphine. Mixing prescription pain medication with alcohol and/or over-the-counter pain medications can also result in a fatal unintentional overdose.

- Among people 35 to 54 years old, unintentional drug overdoses cause more deaths than motor vehicle crashes and is the leading cause of death in seven states.
- More than 70 percent of people who abused prescription pain relievers report getting them from friends or relatives.

In addition to the risk of overdose, over-the-counter, prescription medications and illicit drugs can affect a person's ability to safely drive a motor vehicle or operate machinery

What puts someone at risk?

Higher daily dosage: Researchers found that high doses of prescribed opioids increase a person's risk of an unintentional overdose. Never take more than is prescribed. If you still have pain, call your physician to discuss your options.

Early refills of prescriptions: Patients should wait until their pain medication prescription is almost empty before refilling – and only if it is really needed.

Taking medication with alcohol or sedatives: Mixing opioids with alcohol or benzodiazepines (helps with sleep, relieves anxiety) increases a person's risk of an unintentional overdose.

Drug interactions: Mixing drugs, including prescription, over-the-counter and supplements, may cause mild to severe reactions including death. Keep a record of the medications and supplements you are currently taking, including over-the-counter products.

Prevention

- Use medications only as directed by your physician.
- Always follow the recommended dosage prescribed by your physician.
- Keep medications in their original container.
- Don't share prescribed medications.
- Properly dispose of any unused or expired medications. Find out how you can safely dispose of medications.
- Talk with your physician or pharmacist for possible drug interactions. Check for interactions on the drugs you are taking at DrugDigest.org, Drugstore.com or at the Mayo Clinic.

www.nsc.org

Wellness Tips

Swimming – Prevent Illness

Swimming is one of the most popular sports activities in the U.S. Although swimming is a physical activity that offers many health benefits, pools and other recreational water venues are also places where germs can be spread.

~ Don't swallow the water

***~ Shower** with soap before and after swimming*

***~ Take children on bathroom breaks** every 60 minutes or check diapers every 30–60 minutes*

***~ Check the PH** to maximize germ-killing power:*

Pools – Chlorine: 1–3 mg/L or parts per million [ppm] and pH: 7.2–7.8

Hot tubs/spas – Chlorine: 2–4 ppm or Bromine: 4–6 ppm and pH: 7.2–7.8

www.cdc.gov

Fitness Challenge

Everyone has different fitness goals—running a marathon, performing 10,000 kettlebell swings, benching 1.5 times your body weight. But before you race toward your big goal, assess your starting point first.

Test 1 of 3:

Height-to-Waist Ratio

Measure your waist circumference, and then determine if it's less than half your height in inches.

How'd you fare? Keeping your height-to-waist ratio to at least 2:1 can increase your life expectancy, according to former science director of the British Nutrition Foundation Margaret Ashwell, Ph.D. If you don't, you put yourself at risk for inflammation issues, diabetes, heart disease or stroke.

www.menshealth.com/fitness/3-simple-fitness-tests

MER

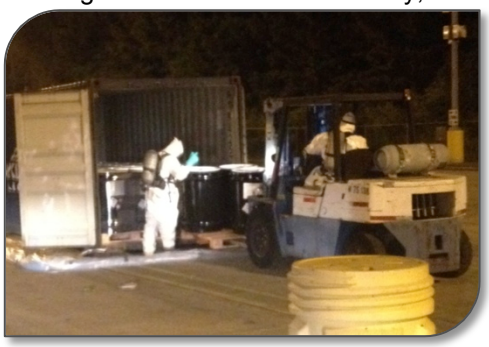
Values

- Professionalism
- Integrity
- Mutual Respect
- Discipline

Arsenic Acid Response

At approximately 4:30pm on Friday, May 2nd, the Charleston Resource Center received an Emergency Response (ER) call to respond to leaking drums containing arsenic acid. The Charleston team promptly held a conference call with the Client and MER's Health and Safety team to complete a preliminary hazard assessment of the project. The team quickly evaluated the hazards associated with the product and put together a safety plan; immediately after, MER's Charleston team put that plan into action.

With an OSHA permissible exposure limit (PEL) of 0.01mg/m3 and a pH of less than 1, arsenic acid has the potential to be extremely hazardous if inhaled, ingested, or if eye or skin contact is made. Because of this, the team selected Level B personal protective equipment (PPE), which included self contained breathing apparatuses (SCBAs) to ensure the highest level of respiratory protection. However, arsenic acid wasn't the only concern. The leaking drums were located inside a shipping container and needed to be removed to be placed into overpacks, which meant the employees would be required to operate a forklift while wearing SCBAs. Needless to say, this created additional hazards for the forklift operator and surrounding employees; as such, the team put additional controls into place such as extensive barricading and the use of a spotter during movement. Additional hazards included traffic, caustic cleaning chemicals, heavy lifting, etc., all of which the Charleston team effectively mitigated and documented in their Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) Package.



All-in-all, the response effort was another excellent demonstration of teamwork and professionalism by MER employees. On behalf of the MER Family of Companies and Brennan Wallace (Charleston Ops Manager), we would like to thank the Charleston team for exemplifying our Best-in-Class safety culture.

Employee Development Corner

Asbestos Training

When it comes to Asbestos training, there are three main types that typically apply to MER employees: Asbestos Awareness, Asbestos Worker Training and Asbestos Supervisor Training. The table below contains an overview of each training, specific employees the training applies to and required renewals for each type of training. Note that there are additional state-specific training and licensing requirements for Asbestos Workers and Asbestos Supervisors that are not listed in this table.

Training	Applies to	Frequency
Asbestos Awareness	Employees performing non-abatement operations in an area that contains Asbestos Containing Materials (ACM).	- Annual
Asbestos Worker	Individuals that remove, encapsulate, enclose, repair or disturb friable or non-friable asbestos and that handle asbestos material in any manner that may result in the release of asbestos fiber on an asbestos abatement project.	- Initial (32 hrs.) - Annual Refresher (8 hrs.)
Asbestos Supervisor	Individuals that supervise persons permitted to enter the restricted and regulated asbestos abatement work area. The supervisor is also responsible for performing duties of the OSHA Competent Person for the asbestos project, consistent with current EPA & OSHA regulations.	- Initial (40 hrs.) - Annual Refresher (8 hrs.)

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Safety Brief

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