

Best-In-Class Thoughts

"The achievements of an organization are the results of the combined effort of each individual."

– Vince Lombardi

"Don't lower your expectations to meet your performance. Raise your level of performance to meet your expectations. Expect the best of yourself, and then do what is necessary to make it a reality."

– Ralph Marston



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Note from Leanne

As we roll into our month of CSR Proficiency Evaluations, I think it's important to step back for a moment and reflect on the importance of these skill assessments. The CSR Proficiency Evaluations allow us to ensure that anyone designated as a CSR, either for internal activity or CSR standby for clients, has a knowledge base that will allow them to safely perform a rescue in the event of an emergency. It's a way for MER to check the effectiveness of our CSR training program and identify any areas of our training that might need to be improved upon. It's also a way for us to distinguish ourselves in the eyes of our CSR clients. Instead of our employees simply completing an annual CSR training and then being issued a cert, regardless of whether they can perform those skills or not, we legitimately measure the competency of each employee on an individual basis to determine their capabilities to work in an environment that does not allow for an inadequate knowledge base or decision making skills. The effort is substantial and it is essential to the protection of our employees, our company and our clients; without it, we compromise the integrity of our company and we jeopardize the safety of all those involved in confined space activity.

CSR Proficiency Evaluations – A Key to Understanding the Process

Below, you'll find some basic info in regards to our CSR Proficiency Evaluations; if you have any questions about the process, please see your local CSR Specialist or a member of the Safety Team.

- Local CSR Specialists and the H&S Team act as proctors for each evaluation
- Evaluations are done one-on-one, and in a quiet setting
- Proctors utilize a grading matrix to determine each individual's proficiency
 - Ensures standardized testing and grading across the organization, regardless of who is acting as proctor
- Retests (for employees who do not test proficient) cannot occur until two weeks after the unsuccessful evaluation
- Initial and refresher proficiency evaluations are completed throughout the year
- Anyone who does not score "proficient" during their most recent evaluation cannot be used as CSR on ANY project, internal or external, until they test proficient
- As updates are made, the list of proficient CSR employees is distributed to MER managers across the organization
- Employees who test proficient are issued a hard hat sticker indicating they are Rescue so employees can easily be identified as CSR
- Proficiency Evaluations don't take the place of training – they help us identify strengths and opportunities for improvement where additional training may be needed



Did you know...?

NOAA issues extreme heat advisories to indicate when excessive, extended heat will occur.

Excessive Heat Outlook:

heat index of 105-110°F over next 3-7 days

Excessive Heat Watch:

excessive heat could occur within next 24 -72 hours

Excessive Heat Warning:

heat index could be life threatening in next 24 hours

Excessive Heat Advisory:

heat index could be uncomfortable or inconvenient, but not life threatening if precautions are taken.

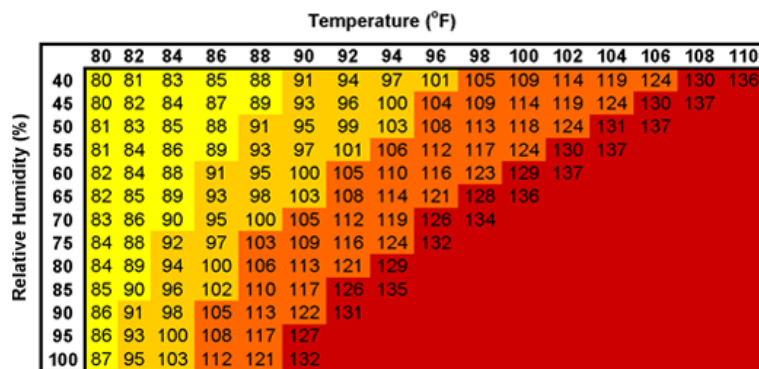
Beat the Heat

The National Weather Service reports that excessive heat is the number one weather-related killer, causing more fatalities per year than floods, lightning, tornadoes, and hurricanes combined. Heat-related illness is preventable. The Red Cross offers the following tips for staying cool and safe:

- **Dress for the heat.** Wear lightweight, light-colored, loose-fitting clothing.
- **Drink water** every 15 minutes, even if you do not feel thirsty. Avoid alcohol and caffeine. Avoid using salt tablets unless directed to do so by a physician.
- **Eat small meals and eat more often.** Avoid high-protein foods, which increase metabolic heat.
- **Schedule appropriately.** Try to schedule strenuous activity during the coolest part of the day, which is usually in the morning between 4 a.m. and 7 a.m. Schedule frequent rest periods with water breaks in shaded or air-conditioned areas.

Also, remember to be a good neighbor. During heat waves, check in on elderly residents in your neighborhood and those who do not have air conditioning.

Heat Index (NOAA)



Likelihood of Heat Disorders with Prolonged Exposure or Strenuous Activity

Caution
Extreme Caution
Danger
Extreme Danger

Illness	Symptoms	First Aid
Sunburn	Redness and pain. In severe cases, swelling of skin, blisters, fever, and headaches.	Ointments for mild cases; if blisters appear and do not break. If breaking occurs, apply dry sterile dressing. Serious, extensive cases should be seen by physician.
Heat Cramps	Painful spasms, usually in muscles of legs and abdomen. Possible heavy sweating.	Get the person to a cooler place and have him or her rest in a comfortable position. If the person is fully awake and alert, give half a glass of cool water every 15 minutes. Do not let him or her drink too quickly. Do not give liquids that contain alcohol or caffeine. Remove or loosen tight clothing and apply cool, wet cloths, such as towels or sheets. Call 9-1-1 or the local emergency number if the person refuses water, vomits or loses consciousness.
Heat Exhaustion	Headache, dizziness, or fainting. Weakness and wet skin. Irritability or confusion. Thirst, nausea, or vomiting.	
Heat Stroke	High body temperature (106° F. or higher). Hot dry skin. Rapid and strong pulse. Possible unconsciousness. May be confused, unable to think clearly, pass out, collapse, or have seizures.	Heat stroke is a life-threatening situation! Call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. Move the person to a cooler place. Quickly cool the body. Immerse victim in a cool bath, or wrap wet sheets around the body and fan it. Watch for signals of breathing problems. Keep the person lying down and continue to cool the body any way you can. If the victim refuses water or is vomiting or there are changes in the level of consciousness, do not give anything to eat or drink.

There's an App for that!

What Knot To Do



What Knot to Do (in the Greater Outdoors) is your pocket guide to 70 must know knots in six categories. It includes illustrated examples of each knot, as well as a full glossary of terms to help make you an expert "knotter" in no time.

Weighing Down Safety

Currently, more than 35 percent of U.S. adults are obese – defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as having a body mass index of 30 or greater. A September 2012 report from Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation stated that, at its current rate, obesity among employees will cost U.S. workplaces up to \$580 billion in lost productivity and nearly \$210 billion in medical costs every year by 2030. Depending on the state, this would result in a 1.9 to 34.5 percent increase in health care costs for obesity-related health problems.

Beyond the increased costs associated with providing health care to obese workers, recent studies have linked obesity and severe obesity – defined as having a BMI of 40 or greater – with more frequent and costly injuries. A study published in the *Archives of Internal Medicine* (Vol. 167, No. 8) determined that the cost of injuries suffered by obese and severely obese workers is nearly

Wellness Tip:

Physical Activity

Tips for Long-term Success

- **Dress for Success!** Comfortable properly fitted clothes & shoes.
- **Make the time!** Start slow & build up to at least 30 minutes most days. Exercise at the same time of day to make it routine.
- **Keep reasonable expectations!**
- **Make it fun!** Choose fun, not exhausting activities.
- **Track & celebrate your success!**

StartWalkingNow.org

Obesity's impact on the body

THROAT

Sleep apnea – Interrupted sleep leading to fatigue
• Obesity has been linked to frequent airflow disruptions during sleep, affecting the fatigue level of workers the next day.²

HEART

Sudden cardiac arrest, heart disease
• Obese individuals have higher incidence of heart disease, a condition that can lead to sudden cardiac arrest.³

UPPER AND LOWER ARMS

Hand-arm vibration syndrome – Constrained blood vessels to the wrists and hands³

WAIST

Large abdomen
• Affects a worker's ability to properly wear required PPE.¹
• Severely obese individuals may be unable to safely operate machinery.

KNEES AND ANKLES

Osteoarthritis – Pain, stiffness and loss of flexibility
• Excess body weight increases strain on joints by wearing out cartilage.⁴

FEET

Inflammation; gout risk – Constrained blood vessels and obesity-related reduced immune system response

FACE AND EYES

Incorrect use of required personal protective equipment
• Required PPE may not be available in larger sizes or may be worn less regularly by obese workers due to lack of comfort.¹
• Respirators may be ineffective unless fitted ergonomically on the worker.²

UPPER AND LOWER BACK

Unavailability of proper fall protection equipment

• When accounting for weight added by required equipment, obese workers may not meet standard fall protection weight limits.²

Strength and musculoskeletal risks

• Studies suggest obese workers have a higher risk of lower-back injury.¹

LUNGS

Asthma; dyspnea – Shortness of breath

• Excess fat tissue reduces a person's ability to take in air and the effectiveness of ventilators, especially for severely obese workers (BMI of 40 or greater).³

WRISTS AND HANDS

Carpal tunnel syndrome – Arthritis of the wrist-hand blood vessels³

SKIN AND SWEAT GLANDS

Heat regulation – Body's ability to cool when exposed to warm air

• Excess fat tissue beneath skin increases risk of heat illness.³

Sources

1. Pollack, K.M. and Cheskin, L.J. (2007) Obesity and workplace traumatic injury: Does the science support the link? *Injury Prevention*, Vol. 13, No. 5, p. 297.

2. American National Standards Institute

3. Schulte, P.A., et al. (2007) Work, obesity, and occupational safety and health. *American Journal of Public Health*, Vol. 97, No. 3, p. 428.

4. National Institutes of Health

double that of normal-weight workers, and severely obese workers have nearly twice as many workers' compensation claims as normal-weight workers. A literature review published in *Injury Prevention* (Vol. 13, No. 1) listed multiple studies linking increased risk of injury to obese workers. An excess of body fat can potentially increase an employee's risk of injury by reducing the availability of properly fitting personal protective equipment, increasing the risk of musculoskeletal injury and limiting workers' cognitive decision-making and judgment abilities.

Needless to say, it is in everyone's best interest to help employees achieve and maintain a healthier body weight.

Read More: <http://www.nsc.org/safetyhealth/Pages/Weighing-down-safety-Small-workplace-changes-can-make-a-big-difference-in-combating-worker-obesity413.aspx>



Values

Professionalism

Integrity

Mutual Respect

Discipline

Best-in-Class safety was demonstrated once again by MER employees during a power plant outage located in Chester, VA. MER was awarded a contract to provide vacuum and hydroblasting services for removal of dry material, such as fly ash, from various areas throughout the plant. Utilizing 30 personnel, five vacuum trucks, and a 10K hydroblaster, MER successfully cleaned all contracted areas, in addition to assisting the client with several other additional requests. Plant personnel complimented the MER team multiple times on their ability



to provide quality service, as well as on their display of outstanding safe work practices. On behalf of all MER management, we would like to thank all of our employees who contributed to this project. Great job team!

Q1 Driver's Awards

We are pleased to announce that the following employees are the recipients of the 2013 1st Quarter driver recognition awards. These employees are being recognized for setting high standards in DOT compliance and vehicle safety:

BEN BAKER

Water Recovery

JAMAR BUTLER

Mid-Atlantic

STEVEN GRINER

Savannah, GA

BOB STEFFENS

Jacksonville Pollution Control

ERIC DENZEL

Newtown, CT

GABE JENNINGS

N. Charleston, SC

TERRELL MARSHALL

Atlantic Beach, FL

RAY FONTAINE

Randolph, MA



Employee Development Corner

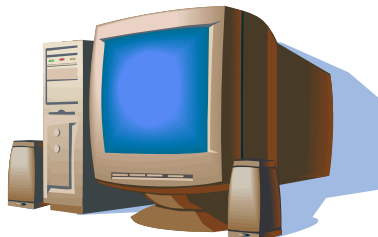
Microsoft Office Training

Microsoft offers free online training. Check out the following sites to help increase your abilities.

15 Minutes Webinar every Tuesday - <http://tinyurl.com/bozz4ft>

Office Training Tutorials - <http://tinyurl.com/3tnz3wp>

- Word 2007 - <http://tinyurl.com/bnvh5fp>
- Excel 2007 - <http://tinyurl.com/2cyv9gb>
- PowerPoint 2007 - <http://tinyurl.com/6j7dytt>



What's a tiny url? A URL (uniform resource locator) is the web address that goes into the address bar in your web browser. Tiny URL's shorten longer URLs for easy posting on website, emails, and safety briefs. It's a free service at <http://tinyurl.com>

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