

Best-In-Class Thoughts

"Words are a form of action, capable of influencing change"
— Ingrid Bengis

"You may be disappointed if you fail, but you are doomed if you don't try."
— Beverly Sills

"Whoever is happy will make others happy too."
— Anne Frank



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Note from Leanne

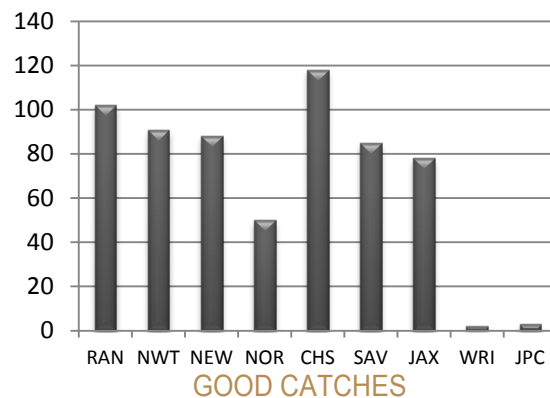
The holiday season is upon us; it's the time of year when many of us start reflecting on the last eleven months or so, and start thinking about all of the new beginnings ahead of us with the New Year. With all of that thinking about our past and our future, it's sometimes easy to forget just how important it is to think about the present, and focus on what you're doing right here, right now. As we celebrate this holiday season, please take the time to think about safety: your safety, your co-workers' safety and the safety of your family. Though not typically a gift found under the tree, coming home safely from work each day is the best present you can ever give.



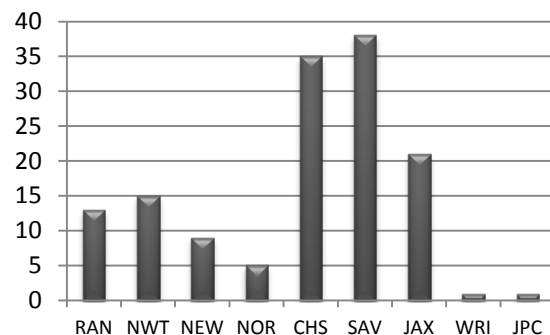
2012 Safety Activity - YTD

In 2012, our goal has been to focus on the quality of our Site Assessments and Good Catches and to ensure that the action of completing those documents adds value throughout the organization. Below is some basic data on our Site Assessments and Good Catches through 11/30/2012:

SITE ASSESSMENTS



GOOD CATCHES



Ropes, Rigging, and Rescue!

As you all know, MER is always looking to improve its Employee Development Program as well as enhance the services we offer to our clients. Among the top of the Health and Safety team's most recent initiatives for program enrichment, is our Confined Space Rescue (CSR) program. And what better way to improve our programs and services than by encouraging employees to take ownership and helping to develop their knowledge? Advanced training is the first step, which is why Garrett Clark from Newtown, CT was selected to attend an Industrial Confined Space Rescue Class in Baton Rouge, LA. Those with a fear of heights should stay away from this class! It's a virtually all hands-on class where students perform technical rescue scenarios from a 5-story high structure complete with



multiple hatches, edges, and confined spaces. No dummies either (literally); anchorage techniques, lowering and hauling systems, fall protection rescues, and patient packaging are just a few of the practices executed in this class all with real lives hanging at the end of the rope. But Garrett won't be the last to attend; we are looking to build an Advanced Confined Space



Rescue team consisting of a select few MER employees throughout our resource centers. This team will be assist with our internal CSR training program as well as help to develop and lead technical rescue plans locally and for specialty projects. Joining the Advanced CSR team will require personal dedication and ambition, but the experience will be equally rewarding. MER is proud to invest in our employees' future, and we hope more employees show desire to assist in the evolution of MER's programs and procedures.



Hitch or Knot?

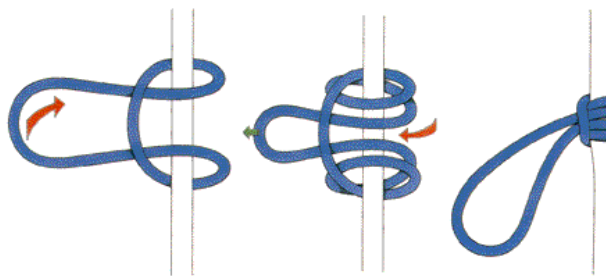
A *hitch* is a type of knot used to attach rope to an object. A hitch is designed to bind on the object such as another rope or an anchorage point.

The Prusik Knot or Triple Sliding Hitch

Use a piece of cord formed into a loop. Pass the knot around the rope three times inside the loop. Make sure the turns lie neatly beside each other and pull the knot tight.

Uses: In rescue work, if a rescuer or patient has to be pulled up using a block and tackle system, a Prusik loop can be used to catch the load during the event of an accidental release or when the system is being reset.

<http://www.animatedknots.com/prusik/index.php>



Did you know...?

More than 60% of confined space fatalities occur among would-be rescuers

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/86-110/>

Between 2005-2009, there was an average of 96 fatalities per year, which equates to **1 fatality about every 4 days**

<http://rocorescue.wordpress.com/>

The Great American Smokeout

Tobacco use remains the single largest preventable cause of disease and premature death in the US, yet about 43.8 million Americans still smoke cigarettes — nearly 1 in every 5 adults. As of 2010, there were also 13.2 million cigar smokers in the US, and 2.2 million who smoke tobacco in pipes — other dangerous and addictive forms of tobacco. The American Cancer Society marketed the 37th Great American Smokeout on November 15 to encourage smokers to make a plan to quit.

When smokers quit — what are the benefits over time?

20 minutes after quitting - Your heart rate and blood pressure drop.

12 hours after quitting - The carbon monoxide level in your blood drops to normal.

2 weeks to 3 months after quitting - Your circulation improves and your lung function increases.

1 to 9 months after quitting - Coughing and shortness of breath decrease; cilia (tiny hair-like structures that move mucus out of the lungs) start to regain normal function in the lungs, increasing the ability to handle mucus, clean the lungs, and reduce the risk of infection.

1 year after quitting - The excess risk of coronary heart disease is half of a continuing smoker's.

5 years after quitting - Risk of cancer of the mouth, throat, esophagus, and bladder are cut in half. Cervical cancer risk falls to that of a non-smoker. Stroke risk can fall to that of a non-smoker after 2-5 years.

10 years after quitting - The risk of dying from lung cancer is about half that of a person who is still smoking. The risk of cancer of the larynx (voice box) and pancreas decreases.

15 years after quitting - The risk of coronary heart disease is that of a non-smoker's.

These are just a few of the benefits of quitting smoking for good. Quitting smoking lowers the risk of diabetes, lets blood vessels work better, and helps the heart and lungs. Quitting while you are younger will reduce your health risks more, but quitting at any age can give back years of life that would be lost by continuing to smoke.

<http://www.cancer.org/healthy/stayawayfromtobacco/greatamericansmokeout/index>

Healthy Skin Month

Perhaps in preparation for the harsh winter months ahead, November is officially designated as National Healthy Skin Month in the US. All month long, people are encouraged to learn about the functions of skin and how to keep it healthy. There are many things people can do during National Skin Health Month and all year long, to prevent skin damage, reduce signs of aging and protect one of the most vital organs of the body:

- **Wear sunscreen:** While the sun's rays are more powerful in summer, they can still be damaging even in the cloudy, cool conditions of winter. Try applying a moisturizer with SPF.
- **Eat a healthy diet:** Food is just as influential to our skin's health as what we apply externally. Eating a diet that's rich in Omega 3s, whole grains and B Vitamins is essential to maintaining skin's youthful glow. Since skin is made of protein, incorporate plenty of fruits, vegetables and lean proteins in your diet too.
- **Don't forget your lips:** Your lips need just as much protection as the rest of your skin. Apply lip balm with SPF generously, particularly in the dry winter months.
- **Keep you cool:** Stress is a huge contributor to skin problems like acne and wrinkles. Making time to relax can greatly improve skin condition.
- **Moisturize:** Your skin needs to stay hydrated to stay healthy. Apply moisturizer to your whole body every morning and at night before going to bed.

<http://www.healthyskinportal.com/articles/november-national-healthy-skin-month/264/>

December Health Observances



World Aids Day

December 1

<http://www.worldaidsday.org/>

National Handwashing Awareness Week

December 2-8

<http://www.henrythehand.com/>

Safe Toys and Gifts Month

December 1-31

Most dangerous toys to children's eyesight

http://www.preventblindness.org/sites/default/files/national/documents/fact_sheets/MK06_DangerousToys.pdf





Breathing is Fundamental

It's important to inspect your Self-Contained Breath Apparatus (SCBA), and escape packs used with the Supplied Air Respirator (SAR) system. See how to inspect MSA equipment below:

Values

Professionalism

Integrity

Mutual Respect

Discipline

COMPONENT INSPECTION (AFTER EACH USE AND MONTHLY) - Cylinder & Valve Assembly

- A) Breathing apparatus cylinders should be recharged as soon as possible after use. Cylinders should not be stored partially charged for two reasons:
 - If used without recharge, the service life of the respirator is reduced.
 - Cylinder must be full for the burst disc to properly release pressure if exposed to fire/heat
- B) If the cylinder is less than FULL, recharge it before storing it.
- C) Inspect the cylinder body for cracks, dents, weakened areas, corrosive agent, causing the fibers to break or peel, or signs of heat-related damage.
- D) Check the hydrostatic test date on the cylinder approval sticker located
 - Aluminum and carbon fiber cylinder must be tested every five years.



- E) Be sure that the gauge needle and face are clearly visible through the lens.
- F) Inspect the high pressure relief device. Verify that the relief holes are clear and free of debris or other contamination.
- G) Inspect the intermediate pressure relief valve to verify holes are free of debris or other contamination.
- H) Inspect the valve assembly seal ring to verify that it is present and properly seated. Inspect the seal ring for rubber deterioration, dirt, cracks, tears, holes, or tackiness.
- I) Inspect the hose connections. Verify that the hoses are properly secured.
- J) Inspect the fill port. Verify that the fill port dust cap is present and properly secured.



FUNCTIONAL CHECKS (AFTER EACH USE AND MONTHLY)

1. Check that the regulator and face piece can hold a negative pressure.
2. Check second stage regulator operation.
 - a. Push the regulator release buttons.
 - b. Verify that the regulator bypass knob is fully closed (clockwise).
 - c. Slowly open the cylinder valve to pressurize the respirator. Verify that the cylinder valve is completely opened.
 - d. Verify that the cylinder is full. Regulator functional checks must be conducted with a full cylinder.
 - e. Open the regulator bypass knob (counter-clockwise). Verify that air flows from the regulator. Close the bypass knob.
 - f. Attach the regulator to the face piece. Verify proper regulator attachment by pulling on the regulator.
 - g. Hold the face piece against the face to create an effective seal.
 - h. Inhale sharply to start air flow. Breathe normally. Verify proper regulator response. The regulator should not make any unusual sounds including: whistling, chattering, or popping.
 - i. Remove the face piece from the face. Verify that air flows freely. Push the regulator release buttons. Verify that air flow stops.
 - j. If the regulator fails to meet any of the above checks, remove the apparatus from service. Return the regulator to a certified repairperson.
3. Check the attachment hose quick-disconnect plug.
 - a. Verify that no air flows through the plug when the cylinder valve knob is open.
4. After completing the functional checks, recharge the cylinder and valve assembly before storing it.

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