

FARM SAFETY

By Julie Berry

Documentation, training and understanding are key. Train employees so they understand what is expected of them, provide them the ability to ask questions and document that the training was completed.

Safety standards at McLanahan Corporation

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines are the minimum safety standard at McLanahan Corporation.

This six generation family business of over 500 employees is a global provider of custom engineered process solutions for a variety of industries including mineral processing, aggregate processing, pulp and paper and agricultural. Safety is front and center of the corporation's core values, which include: Safety – Safety is The Promise to your family; Family – Our people make it home for soccer games and dance classes; and Integrity – We simply do... what we say.

"When a guy shows up we want to send him home the same way to his family. The corporation owes it to their employees. We're not just hiring an employee, we're hiring a family," said Joseph A. Adams, Director of Safety. This is a full-time position created in November 2006 to focus on safety, environment and workers' compensation.

Having employees embrace safety is a corporate culture that starts at the top and requires buy in from employees or it won't be implemented, Mr. Adams said. McLanahan Corporation has created a culture where management demonstrates the importance of safety and includes employees in safety processes.

"One way to do this is to demonstrate how it's for their well-being," he said. "The key for safety to function properly is that it must be driven from the top down. The owners of McLanahan Corporation don't talk it. They live it. They walk it. There is no such thing as a rush job. When people rush, people get hurt. Employees can stop any process for safety. Safety is nonnegotiable. We do it the safe way or we don't do it. We don't take shortcuts."

The McLanahan executive board receives daily safety reports, employees attend weekly safety meetings and monthly safety luncheons. Weekly safety meeting review safety rules. The luncheons, which are attended by top management, show injuries, how they can be prevented and use near misses as a learning tool. Daily management start-up meetings

review incidents from the day before.

"Employees have to be reminded about safety. Production and quality go hand in hand," Mr. Adams said. "Documentation, training and understanding is the key. Train employees so they understand what is expected of them, provide them the ability to ask questions on the topic and document that the training was completed."

Employees with safety violations are warned. If they don't accept counsel disciplinary actions may include firing.

Eight years ago safety teams were formed that include a group of employees and their supervisor. These teams participate in near miss investigations to evaluate how to improve in jobs and to audit for discrepancies.

"Employees were skeptical at first. Now they welcome it," Mr. Adams said.

Boxes are placed throughout the corporation where employees can place suggestions that go directly to McLanahan president George Sidney and then the respective directors. Employees receive a monetary award for suggestions that are implemented.

"It's an ongoing task," Mr. Adams said.

McLanahan is a member of Affinity, an elite insurance group that audits members for inclusion. Safety measures exceed those recommended by OSHA.

"OSHA is a very good basis for any safety. It should be the minimum standard that you should accept. McLanahan has gone above. One of the biggest things is to make safety non-negotiable," Mr. Adams said. "OSHA regulations are designed to assist in protecting employees in a work environment. This sometimes seems a little absurd but they are for the protection of all. It also demonstrates to

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your employees that you are willing to do what it takes to allow them to work in a safe environment.”

Employees are enrolled in safety educations and trainings. Participation is documented. New employees go through a three hour orientation, and additional job training may be provided. A handbook is available online to employees through SharePoint. Personal protective equipment is provided for all tasks, and employees are welcome to use this equipment at their homes too.

“Some people believe the task will only take a few seconds and don’t need the equipment to perform. But an accident could happen in a millisecond and result in a tragic injury that could last a lifetime,” Mr. Adams said. “This is something no one wants. Please ensure that you take the time to be safe and return to those you care

about at the end of the day.”

While Mr. Adams acknowledges that it can be daunting to implement a new, formal safety program, he says resources are available, and in the long run safety programs benefit employees and businesses.

“You’re not in this alone. Reach out to your insurance carrier, as they may provide audits. OSHA offers outreach programs. Use safety templates. Maintain consistency. Enforce all the rules. Share the bad and the good. Show employees you care,” he said. “Please take the time to attend training to understand the various regulations. OSHA regulations are the mandatory items to keep your employees safe. Don’t be afraid to go beyond their recommendations to provide a safe working environment for your employees.” □

McLanahan safety recommendations

By Joseph Adams, McLanahan Director of Safety

Consider the proper use of Personal Protective Equipment. A hazard assessment must be completed to determine the need and proper type of protective clothing used for various tasks. If there is a chance of being struck on the head by objects, then head protection must be worn. Safety glasses are a key part of personal protective equipment if there is a risk that something can enter the eyes. Facial protection may be required for grinding operations. If you are subjected to constant loud or frequent noises, hearing protection is a must. Hand protection is critical. Your hands are exposed to many different things while in the work environment. Possible exposure could be chemicals, burns, cuts or laceration. Respiratory protection is needed when employees are exposed to conditions that could cause discomforts or distress. Foot protection is needed to protect feet from dangers such as an object striking, dropping or rolling. Each of these should have a risk assessment performed and the proper type of personal protective equipment determined.

Once the proper type of protective equipment is determined then the employee must be trained on proper use and care of the equipment. The availability of emergency eye and/or body wash stations in areas where serious injury could occur is a must.

Inspect all machines to ensure that the proper guards are in place. The guard is designed to protect the user from accidental contact and being caught in the equipment. Have you replaced the guard after completing the repairs?

A confined space needs to be identified at the entry. A confined space is large enough for an employee to enter and fully perform assigned work, yet it is not designed for continuous occupancy by the employee, and has limited or restricted means of exit or entry.

A second category of confined space are areas you could fall into. This is a permit required confined space. The OSHA defini-

tion of a permit required confined space is: contains or has the potential to contain a hazardous atmosphere. An example is an accumulation of gases such as the flammable gas carbon monoxide. Or, the space contains a material with the potential to engulf someone who enters. An example is someone who enters a silo and becomes engulfed if the product comes loose and covers them, has an internal configuration that might cause an entrant to be trapped or asphyxiated by inwardly converging walls, or by a floor that slopes downward and tapers to small cross section, or contains any other recognized hazards. With a permit required confined space, special precaution must be taken, and emergency procedures must be established prior to entry.

When looking at your area, remember that confined spaces are not limited to being in the ground. Examples are entering the side door of a silo, entering a crawl space between floors, performing welding in an area that has limited or no ventilation. All permit required confined spaces must be identified to alert employees of the potential dangers prior to entering. In addition, specific precautions must be taken prior to someone entering the environment. This includes, but are not limited to, testing the space for oxygen concentration, flammable atmosphere and/or carbon monoxide and other gases that could gather. The entrant must wear retrieval gear and have someone stand at the entrance to maintain contact.

Do you have a program that explains how to de-energize your equipment and the ability to secure it in a closed or shut position? It is a critical an employee knows how to shut down equipment, de-energize it and check that it is not functional prior to operating it. This program is referred to as Lock Out/Tag Out and is critical to protect your employees.

Evaluate your area for risks from falls. Are openings in the floor properly guarded to protect someone from inadvertently walking into it? Are the walking surfaces free of hazards that could cause someone to trip and fall? Are ladders properly labeled to identify weight capacity and in good condition for use?

This is the tip of the iceberg regarding OSHA regulations. These are protective measures that the government has deemed necessary to protect our workers. If you have questions regarding the various OSHA regulations, contact the OSHA outreach program in your state or contact OSHA direct. □