

TOOLBOX TALK #4

COMMON WORKPLACE SAFETY HAZARDS – PART III

No matter what jobsite you look at, many of the same hazards exist. Knowing what you might encounter will give you a leg up on the issues before they can occur. Here are just some of the common hazards found on all jobsites.

Chemicals

Chemicals can be expensive, and workers sometimes may never know when they might need that chemical again. This kind of thinking tends to result in contractors saving and storing chemicals “just in case” they may need them again. This can lead to serious hazards.

Before you know it, you’ve got literally hundreds of chemicals stored in the shop or warehouse that could become unstable over time. Contractors need some kind of control system to verify what was purchased and for what. A company’s hazard communication program will assist in this control.

Another potential hazard is transferring chemicals from one container to another. Even if employees feel comfortable around the chemicals and have worked with them for years, the containers must be labeled as required under the standard.

Confined Spaces

Confined spaces can present a number of hazards. Many tragedies involving confined spaces have occurred because an employer didn’t issue a permit or failed to carry out a risk assessment. Consider these actual instances:

- A confined space’s hazardous atmosphere wasn’t assessed properly because the equipment being used was out of date. Later, a fire broke out.
- Workers enter a drain pipe without a permit, not knowing it is a confined space.
- Someone goes inside a space to retrieve something and he collapses because the attendant was distracted.



If the risk assessment and permit process are done correctly, and all steps are followed, employers should not have a problem. Everything is planned. If you don’t plan it correctly, you plan for a disaster.