



# SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

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Supplied by SAFETY AT WORK magazine

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## Two Men Killed in Factory Explosion

December 8 2005

Two men have been killed in an explosion at a waste management factory in Tasmania's north.

The men, named today as Adrian Chugg, 40, and Bruce Beamish, 34, were working on a silo outside the Collex oil-processing plant in the Launceston suburb of Invermay yesterday when the blast happened about 3pm (AEDT).

They died instantly after plunging about 12 metres from the top of the tank as it exploded.

Coroner Zygmunt Szramka opened an inquest today but a spokesman for the coroner said today it could be months before the cause of the blast was known.

Officers from Workplace Standards and independent investigators for Collex were still at the scene.

Residents at Turners Beach, where Mr Beamish lived, were learning of his death this afternoon. One resident, who asked not to be named, said Mr Beamish was new to the northern Tasmanian community but it was believed he had three sons.

Mr Chugg lived at Blessington, east of Launceston.

Employees of businesses near the Collex site were still in shock last night after the force of the explosion.

Forster St Auto Wreckers owner Leigh Flaherty told the Launceston Examiner the blast blew pictures off his office wall. "It was unbelievable, one hell of a bang," he said.

Ross O'Donnell, owner of Murphy St Motors, said he felt a shockwave through his garage. "I remember thinking to myself if anyone had been close by to that explosion then they'd be in serious trouble," he said. AAP

### Man killed by collapsing trench

December 7 2005

A 25-year-old man has been crushed to death by a collapsing trench north of Brisbane.

Police said the worker was buried by the trench at the side of Redondo Street in Ningi, near Bribie Island, at around 11am (AEST) today.

The man's workmates managed to pull him out of the dirt, but he had already died, a police spokeswoman said.

Queensland Ambulance officers also attended the scene but could not revive him.

Workplace Health and Safety officers were told about the accident and would be attending the scene, the spokeswoman said.

Police were still investigating the accident. AAP

### School Kids To Learn Worksafe Message

December 6, 2005

Workcover Minister John Lenders today visited Avoca Primary School to launch a new strategy aimed at educating country children across the state about the dangers that lurk on farms.

The WorkSafe K.I.D.S will be visiting schools, farm safety events and agriculture days across Victoria with a new caravan fitted out with computers and information that teaches children how to avoid accidents both at school and on the farm.

Mr Lenders said the van was a fun way to tackle a serious topic.

"Safer workplaces start at school. Today's students are our future workforce and in regional Victoria today's students are tomorrows farmers, shearers and in this area grape growers," Mr Lenders said.

"We want the whole community to focus on workplace safety. By getting our children to start thinking about safety in the playground can only lead to a future with fewer workplace fatalities and injuries."

The caravan, designed in conjunction with Farmsafe Australia has a WorkSafe designed interactive computer game called 'Attack of the Killer Farm', that helps children to identify common farm hazards such as chainsaws, crushing machines, tractors and snakes.

The caravan was trialled recently at a farm day in Northern Victoria to great success.

Mr Lenders said that farm safety had improved greatly since when he was growing up on a farm in Gippsland.

"This year farm deaths are right down, which is great news but we must make sure the next generation of farmers hear the message of safety."

Source: The Minister For Workcover

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## Adobe Acrobat V7 Information

Some readers have expressed difficulty in upgrading to the latest version of Acrobat Reader with one of the problems being that the download can be over 25 megabytes - a substantial burden to dial-up internet connections.

Safety At Work publishers are now allowed to distribute the latest edition of Acrobat Reader on a CD. If you want a copy of Acrobat Reader 7.00 please email me at [jonesk@sia.org.au](mailto:jonesk@sia.org.au) and include your full postal address. A CD will be mailed to you shortly after.

The CD won't be pretty as it is a burnt copy of the software that Adobe permits us to distribute. It is not allowed to be given to anyone other than the person requesting the CD and all CDs will be checked for viruses before distribution.

## Safety Alert for Nail Techs

December 5 2005

This essential OHS guide for nail technicians can be downloaded at <http://www.safetyline.wa.gov.au/pagebin/workhazd0019.htm>

## Statistical Review Released

December 5 2005

South Australia's WorkCover Corporation has released its latest annual statistical review. It is available for download at <http://www.workcover.com/AboutUs/AboutWorkCoverSA/CorporateDocuments/corpStatReview.htm>

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## Department of Justice convicted on health and safety count

December 6, 2005

The Victorian Department of Justice has been convicted and fined \$42,500 on a workplace health and safety count after a prisoner had three fingers amputated in a prison workshop power press at the Barwon jail.

Costs of \$4870 were also ordered.

The Department pleaded guilty to one charge laid under s 22 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (1985). The charge relates to the duty of employers to ensure the safety of non-employees affected by their operations.

Geelong Magistrate Max Beck was told a prisoner lost three fingers when the unguarded press came down on them in February 2004.

He was taken to St Vincent's Hospital where he had surgery. His middle finger was sewn onto his index finger. The middle finger was amputated from the middle knuckle and his ring finger was rejoined, however he has not regained movement.

WorkSafe's investigation found a metal lug to which the machine's guard was bolted was damaged allowing it to swing like a door. This made the interlock mechanism inoperative and allowed virtually unrestricted access to the pressing area and allowed the press to operate.

Interlock devices are supposed to stop a machine operating if the guard is out of position, for example when metal is being inserted or removed during processing.

Grill-type guarding was incorrectly set and had been broken for some time. This meant all danger areas of the machine could be accessed.

Investigators also found:

- a machine guard was held on with string;
- two Industry Officers on duty in Factory 2 were not trained in the operation or supervision of the presses;
- factory 2 had no requirement for the documentation of daily safety checks although others on the site did;
- there was no preventative maintenance regime for the machines, it was mainly breakdown maintenance.
- there was no list of prisoners who were trained on plant or equipment, nor were there any task procedures for the operation of the presses.

Source: WorkSafe

## Window cleaner rescued

December 8 2005

A window cleaner has been rescued from the side of Brisbane's tallest building tonight after a severe storm left him perilously perched on the 27th storey.

Firefighters had to wait until the storm, bringing torrential rain and severe lightning, had passed before they were able to remove a panel of glass from the building and haul Peter Kellett inside.

Mr Kellett and a co-worker were cleaning windows outside the waterfront Riparian Plaza, in Brisbane's CBD, when gail-force winds forced them to abandon the task.

They managed to make their way from the 31st to the 27th storey before the severe winds made it too dangerous to continue.

Firefighters worked frantically trying to get the pair to safety before a fellow window cleaner abseiled his way down the side of the building and rescued Mr Kellett's co-worker.

Mr Kellett, however, had to sit through the storm that blanketed the city.

He told Channel Seven before the storm struck that he was getting "nervous" as claps of thunder provided a deafening backdrop.

"I'm definitely getting a bit nervous because of the storm and the wind's picking up," Mr Kellett said.

AAP

## Three hospitalised after suspected gas leak

December 8 2005

Three people have been hospitalised after a suspected gas leak at a Melbourne supermarket.

The Safeway supermarket, on Smith Street in Fitzroy, was evacuated about 4.45pm (AEDT) after staff and customers noticed a gas smell.

But firefighters called to the building have so far been unable to find any trace of odour.

Paramedic Alan Eade said ambulance officers assessed six people at their request, and had taken three to hospital for observation.

"None of them were significantly unwell, he said.

Firefighters have used detection devices inside the store, but have been unable to find any natural gas leaks.

"We can't find anything," Metropolitan Fire Brigade communications controller Norm Henderson said.

"As yet no leak or odour has been detected on our air monitoring unit."

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"At this stage we don't think it is natural gas involved. It's very strange."

Mr Henderson said suspected gas leak at a supermarket in Kensington, in Melbourne's inner west, earlier today had also proved to be a false alarm.

A police spokeswoman said traffic and trams along busy Smith Street were temporarily disrupted while the store was being closed down. AAP

## Personal breathalysers - not worth buying

December 13 2005

A CHOICE test of six personal breathalysers found them to be pretty unsatisfactory, with some overcautious to the point of losing their usefulness, and others less accurate than they appear to be.

CHOICE spokeswoman Lisa Tait said while the trial was small, based on its results, CHOICE wouldn't recommend buying any of the six models tested.

Ms Tait explained there are two types of personal breathalyser: disposable 'blow and throw' products that indicate only whether someone is over or under 0.05, and reusable digital models with a readout that implies it will give a more accurate reading to two or three decimal places.

"The good news is that for about 85% of the readings we took, all the tested breathalysers correctly showed whether our trialists were over or under 0.05," Ms Tait said.

"In the cases where they were wrong, all but one reading from one breathalyser said the trialists were over the limit when they were under.

"The bad news is the lack of any better accuracy than that, for both types of breathalyser."

CHOICE said the two disposable models only showed 'under the limit' when the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) was in fact below 0.02.

"While they won't have you thinking you can drive when you can't," said Ms Tait, "you might just as well stick to one drink as pay for a device that doesn't discriminate any better than that."

Of the four models tested that give results to two or three decimal places, none was accurate to within 0.01 for the majority of CHOICE's readings.

In summary, said Ms Tait, "If all you want to know is whether you're over or under the limit, the two disposable models err so far on the side of caution that they'll tell you you're over after about one drink, whether you really are or not.

"If you want a more precise result, you won't get it accurately from any of the four electronic models CHOICE tested. While they tend to give a more precise 'over or under' reading than the disposable ones, you'd need to use one fairly often to make it worth the money (\$50-\$120 for the tested models) — otherwise a cab might be cheaper.

"There might be more accurate personal breathalysers out there, but finding one you can trust could be pretty hit and miss," concluded Ms Tait.

Three male and three female volunteers, of varying ages and weights, trialed the breathalysers for CHOICE. After having lunch they could drink as much as they wanted; after about three hours each trialist stopped drinking for 20 minutes and then took a BAC reading from each breathalyser. Blood samples were taken at the same time.

After another hour of drinking, a second round of readings and blood samples were taken. The blood samples were analysed for BAC at a professional pathology lab, and CHOICE used the results as a benchmark for the breathalysers.

Source: Australian Consumers' Association

## Business Pandemic Checklist

The US Government has released a checklist to help business planning for a pandemic influenza outbreak. It can be downloaded at <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/pdf/businesschecklist.pdf>

## WorkSafe tells retailers, prevention is better than cure

9 December 2005

WorkSafe is sending a pre-Christmas warning to retailers to control manual handling risks.

The warning follows a Sale Magistrate this week convicting and fining The Warehouse Group (Aust.) Pty Ltd (trading as 'Clint's Crazy Bargains'), \$50,000 after safety breaches were observed by WorkSafe inspectors in May last year.

WorkSafe's Executive Director John Merritt said the cost of treating 1285 reported musculo-skeletal injuries in the retail sector last financial year were likely to cost the community more than \$55-million.

WorkSafe prosecuted The Warehouse Group (Aust.) Pty Ltd after it pleaded guilty to one charge contrary to sections 21(1)&(2)(a) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act 1985.

WorkSafe told Sale Magistrate John Dugdale stock handling procedures were inadequate.

The court was told that at the time of the May 2004 visit to the firm's Sale store by a WorkSafe inspector there was no adequate means of lowering a pallet to access cartons stacked above head and shoulder height as stock was checked in.

As the load was removed from pallets the store had no way of raising them to a safe work height, nor had manual handling issues within the store been addressed despite an employee previously sustaining an injury and WorkSafe intervention.

During the visit two workers complained that they had lower back pain and that the process of receiving stock lasted between four and six hours a day.

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## SIA Vic Christmas Function

Last week the Victorian Division of the SIA had a Christmas cocktail party that was very successful and afforded an informal atmosphere for SIA members to catch up.

To provide some structure to the evening, several supporters of the SIA were asked to provide a brief speech. David Caple, a leading safety ergonomics professional, spoke about how the human factors and cognitive functions have become an integral part of workplace safety and how we must acknowledge this change and change our thinking accordingly.

Chris Maxwell was appointed as the President of Victoria's Court of Appeal this year but is more famous in safety circles for his review of the Victorian OHS Act 1985. Justice Maxwell spoke about how undertaking the review exposed him to the unknown world of workplace safety and introduced him to a section of society that is dedicated, often fanatically, to OHS.

His new understanding has influenced his perception of his work and the way that he expects others to act. Chris also reminded us that OHS is a Human Right and that we should remind ourselves and our

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governments of this fact.

Barry Sherriff, an Honorary Fellow of the SIA and a leading OHS lawyer in Victoria, reflected on how 2005 saw the introduction of a new OHS Act in Victoria. He noted that all of the concerns of the legislation's critics appear to have come to nothing that, in fact, "the sky has not fallen".

He also mentioned, not only in passing, that the union movement seems quite preoccupied with other, IR, issues.

The evening ended with a short speech by the Victorian and National SIA President, Phil Lovelock.

Throughout the evening there was a large amount of giveaways, principally OHS publications valued at over \$1000. Our thanks go to the following organisations in supporting the evening.

Federation Press  
([www.federationpress.com.au](http://www.federationpress.com.au))

CCH Australia  
([www.cch.com.au](http://www.cch.com.au))

Thomson Legal & Regulatory  
([www.thomson.com.au](http://www.thomson.com.au))



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The company has now implemented safety improvements relating to manual handling.

Source: WorkSafe Victoria

## Inspection Program To Ensure Machines Are Guarded

December 8, 2005

Concerns about the number of workplace injuries involving unguarded machinery have prompted WorkSafe to launch a targeted inspection program to check on machine guarding.

WorkSafe WA Commissioner Nina Lyhne said today that inspectors were still finding examples of inadequate or no guarding of machinery on a regular basis.

"There have been five court cases this year involving the prosecution of employers for failing to ensure machinery was adequately guarded," Ms Lyhne said. "One of these cases resulted in an employee having four fingers amputated, but there have been many far more serious injuries and deaths resulting from employees having clothing or body parts drawn into unguarded moving machinery parts.

"WorkSafe inspectors have investigated a worrying number of amputations and hand injuries, particularly in the metal and woodworking industries and in the food manufacturing sector. The inspectors have also reported growing concern at the number of young workers being seriously injured, often within only hours of starting a new job that required them to operate machinery."

The targeted inspection program began last month, and will continue until the end of the year. Inspectors will be checking on guarding wherever they come across machinery in a workplace, regardless of the reason for their visit to that workplace.

Source: DOCEP

## Woman killed in accident at shopping centre

December 10 2005

A 45-year-old woman was killed when a security gate fell on her head at a shopping centre on Queensland's Sunshine Coast.

The woman suffered the fatal blow about 5.30am (AEST) today as she entered the Big W shopping complex in Nambour, police said.

She was believed to be a cleaner at the complex and was on her way to work when the accident occurred. The double security gate fell off its rims, killing the woman instantly, police said.

Detectives and workplace safety officials are preparing a report for the coroner.

AAP

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

As one of the SIA members who facilitated the visit by Roger Brauer from the Board of Certified Safety Professionals to Australia I see a memorandum of understanding as an adjunct to the services that the SIA provides to our members.

Although I am in the "twilight" of my career in safety and occupational health and at this point in time I will not be looking to become a "Certified Safety Professional" in the USA, I am one of a number of Australian based safety professionals who work in the USA, the UK and Europe and I consider that if we have members who have the ability to show equivalence to the CSP qualification it lifts the respect and profile of an individual when dealing with organisations and peer groups in these countries. A similar memorandum of understanding has been recently established by the Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (IOSH) in the UK and I would consider that once a MOU has been signed we would also have equivalence in the UK.

I must agree to some extent with Doug that some aspects of the application of safety and occupational health in the USA and also to the OSHA legislation leaves a lot to be desired when compared to Australia, the UK and parts of Europe, however I have found that by taking our Australian pro-active approach to safety and occupational health into the USA companies that I am responsible for we have not only raised the HS&E standards of these companies but also we are helping our US HS&E professionals expand within their knowledge base.

Already there are many people within the safety profession in the USA who are now finding that they are having to lift their standards because of their work in Europe requires adherence to the EU legislative standards and directives which are higher than those required in the USA. In most cases I have found that these EU standards have been framed around the UK and German legislation. In fact it was stated by a speaker at the American Society of Safety Engineers Professional Development Conference in New Orleans in June this year that the EU safety standards and directives for many safety related issues are becoming the defacto International Standards.

The equivalence to the CSP qualification will not be for everybody but I believe that for the Safety Institute of Australia to expand and to survive the next decade and beyond we must make this available to our members. Apart from the potential of a great career in Safety and Occupational Health in Australia I have found a wide global safety and occupational health network out there where our members can expand, earn a good salary and enjoy the fruits of their studies, we must facilitate this potential and one way that this can be fulfilled is with an Memorandum of Understanding with the Board of Certified Safety Professionals.

Regards,

Neil W Dine, JP, CstJ, FSIA, Grad Dip OHM, MASSE



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## Taking the Bulldust out of OHS in Farming

Farmers, rural employers and employees struggling with OHS risk management in their workplaces need practical solutions and relevant advice provided by recognized experts in the industry.

One of the best ways to protect your farm from preventable injuries and fatalities is to prominently display accurate, easy to read health and safety information. Pro-Visual Publishing provides this in a series of highly visual safety resource charts – available free of charge for the horticultural, sheep/beef and broadacre industries.

The annually released series consists of the Horticulture Industry Guide to Safety and Beef/Sheep Producers Guide to Safety charts which are released in September, and Broadacre Sector Guide to Farm Safety, which comes out in November.

Displaying the vital safety information provided on these guides not only educates workers, family members and visitors, but also helps to ensure employers are on the right side of OHS legislation. The brightly coloured wall chart format is easy to read and covers known high-risk areas for each specific industry.

According to James Houlahan, an expert in rural safety and SIA member, Pro-Visual Publishing's rural safety charts are amongst the most credible source of health and safety guidance, with practical solutions and simple messages relevant to the agricultural industry and its workforce.

“Working with a broad range of farming commodity groups across Australia, I am increasingly seeing the Pro-Visual rural safety charts prominently displayed in farm workshops, meal rooms and even homesteads. There is no doubt these charts are having a significant positive impact in drawing attention to common sense approaches to managing safety, and just as importantly encouraging good safety communications

between workers and farm management,” says Houlahan.

More than 17,400 charts are updated and distributed each year free of charge to the farming community thanks to sponsorship from responsible supply-chain businesses committed to raising health and safety awareness.

To provide some indication of the distribution spread of this type of chart, Provisual advised that the Broadacre Sector Guide is distributed to the owners of Grain, Grain/Sheep & Grain/Beef farms in NSW, with an annual turnover of \$200K+, amounting to a distribution of 5,400. The beef/Sheep producers guide goes to 5,548, and the Horticulture safety guide to 64% of all vineyards in Australia and to large vegetable and fruit growers - around 6,384.



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