



SAFETY AT WORK BULLETIN

Proudly Sponsored by the Safety Institute of Australia (Victoria Division)
 National Office: PO Box 2078, GLADSTONE PARK Victoria 3043
 Website: www.sia.org.au Email: natadmin@vic.sia.org.au

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Workplace Program Helping Separated Dads at Home and Work

5 October 2006

Employers who are serious about doing something about the ill-effects of personal separation in a workplace setting have an opportunity to do something.

Staying Connected, a workplace program developed by the Child Support Agency specifically to support fathers going through separation, is now available nationally.

Minister for Human Services, the Hon Joe Hockey, MP, said staff turnover, absenteeism, lost productivity and workplace accidents have all been linked to the trauma of separation.

"Every workplace in Australia feels the effect of relationship breakdowns," Minister Hockey said. "On average, one person in every 15 employees goes through a separation each year."

"Separated dads from the Melbourne Fire Brigade, Victoria Police, Australia Post, Urban Services ACT, Department of Defence, and the mining community in Kalgoorlie have already taken part in the program."

"The three-hour workshops help men stay positively involved in their children's lives and reduce the impact of separation on them and the children."

Staying Connected was evaluated by Macquarie University's Dr Graeme Russell, an international expert on men, work and fathering and is delivered by community-based organisations trained by the CSA.

Before-and-after workshop research conducted by Dr Russell showed more than half of the dads who attended subsequently felt better able to form a practical relationship with their ex-partner – for the sake of the children.

Deputy Chief Fire Officer from the Metropolitan Fire Brigade in Melbourne, Keith Adamson believes Staying Connected has made a huge difference through less family-related time off work and healthier relationships with colleagues.

Brisbane divorcee Brendan Spann - who works for Australia Post and has a 12 year-old son with his ex-wife - credits Staying Connected with improving his career and his personal life. He now has a new partner and is engaged to be married to her later this year.

"Staying Connected came along when I was going through my divorce, and depression was causing me to take time off work," said Brendan.

"The program helped me see things from a different perspective, communicate better with my ex and showed me ways on building a business-like relationship with her," he said.

For many of these men, it is the first opportunity they've had to share their story with other dads. "It's good for the whole workplace that employers are recognising how separation affects employees and are doing something to help," Minister Hockey said.

The program won gold in the prestigious Prime Minister's Award for Excellence in Public Sector Management – the highest accolade in the government sector.

Employers interested in Staying Connected should e-mail stayingconnected@csa.gov.au

Source: Federal Minister for Human Services

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ADVERTISING

A limited amount of advertising has been approved by the Safety Institute of Australia.

If you want to advertise to over 3,000 safety professionals in Australia, please contact Joanne at the SIA Secretariat through natadmin@sia.org.au



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Spotless Pleads Guilty To OHS Charges

5 October 2006

Spotless P&F Pty Ltd has pleaded guilty in the Darwin Court of Summary Jurisdiction to criminal charges referred to the DPP by Comcare following an incident involving a bridge crane at Darwin Naval Base in 2003.

Spotless P&F Pty Ltd was convicted under the Occupational Health and Safety (Commonwealth Employment) Act 1991 and was discharged after agreeing to a \$1,000 good behaviour bond for 12 months.

The plea follows the conviction of Kone Cranes Pty Ltd on a breach of the Act for the same incident. The charges stemmed from a Comcare investigation of the incident, which involved a 30kg end stop falling from a crane serviced by Spotless P&F Pty Ltd. The crane had been incorrectly modified by an unqualified representative of Kone Cranes Pty Ltd, who had been subcontracted to carry out the work. No injuries resulted from the incident.

In making the ruling the Magistrate noted that, while Spotless P&F Pty Ltd was ultimately responsible for the equipment, there was nothing in a practical sense that the defendant could have done to avert the incident.

Source: Comcare

Man injured after falling through scaffolding

SYDNEY, October 9 2006

A man has been seriously injured after scaffolding collapsed at a Sydney home.

The 52-year-old fell about five metres from scaffolding at a property on Trentbridge Road in Belrose, on Sydney's northside, about 12.45pm (AEST) today.

He suffered suspected spinal injuries and fractured both legs, the NSW Ambulance Service said.

It is not known whether the man was a worker or lived at the property.

He was taken to Royal North Shore Hospital in a serious but stable condition.

AAP

Man injured in workplace explosion

9 October 2006

A worker at a Brisbane bayside boat shed has been hospitalised .. after being injured in an explosion.

A Queensland Fire and Rescue spokesman says the man had been welding .. when the explosion occurred around 1.30pm (AEST) at Cleveland.

The man was taken to Royal Brisbane Hospital .. where he's being treated for burns to his face and upper body.

Workplace Health and Safety officers are investigating the explosion .. which is not being treated as suspicious.

AP

Worker injured on Albury Wodonga Freeway project

SYDNEY, October 10 2006

A construction worker has been seriously injured while working on the Albury Wodonga Hume Freeway project, WorkCover says.

The 40-year-old worker was crushed between a paving machine and a truck on the construction site on the NSW-Victorian border late this afternoon.

A WorkCover spokesman said the man suffered serious injuries and was taken to a nearby hospital.

AAP

Scaffolding Safety Alert

The NSW Minerals Council has issued a safety alert on the following incident:

"A worker sustained two dislocated shoulders and a fracture to the shoulder when the decking of scaffolding collapsed causing him to fall 3.5m onto a moving conveyor."

The alert can be downloaded at http://www.minerals.nsw.gov.au/___data/page/6059/SA06-17_Failure_of_Scaffolding.pdf

Updated legal resources from VWA

October 10, 2006

Details of prosecutions for breaches of Victoria's Occupational Health and Safety and workers compensation laws can now be found online.

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Letter to the Editor

Kevin

I was very pleased to find out that Gavin Waugh has offered his time, energy and experience submitting his candidature for the SIA National President role.

If elected, Gavin can repeat at the National level the achievements enjoyed recently in W.A. SIA activities under Gavin's leadership.

Gavin, thanks to his work arrangements, has been, is and will be in a position to give at least three full days of his time to the Institute-most unlikely that any other SIA office bearer (incl. me) would be in a similar position (most of us cannot afford such luxury because of work commitments).

So, best wishes to Gavin and best wishes to our Institute.

Milos Nedved FSIA



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The Victorian WorkCover Authority's prosecutions database can now be searched and details of cases are available as soon as possible after the case is heard.

Similar databases with details of court judgements can be found at the County and Supreme Court websites.

Printed copies of the "Prosecutions" handbook covering 2004 and 2005 are also available. Online versions of these publications, dating back to 1991, are also on the VWA website, www.workcover.vic.gov.au.

Publishing the details of VWA prosecutions helps the community understand the consequences of health and safety violations and the need to ensure an efficient and equitable workers compensation scheme.

Many of the cases described are unreported in the legal literature and have been detailed to provide a snapshot of the issues handled by the VWA each year.

"Despite our efforts to provide proactive and constructive advice, some people and companies still neglect their legal and moral obligations, WorkSafe's Executive Director John Merritt said.

"This puts the lives of their workers or workmates at risk or undermines Victoria's workers compensation scheme through dishonest practices.

"While advice and guidance are always considered the best way to improve safety, the community relies on us to use compliance powers constructively.

"This strengthens the 'deterrent value of our regulatory approach by demonstrating what are not appropriate means of running a business, working or dealing with workers compensation matters," Mr Merritt said.

Among last year's WorkSafe cases:-

- 27 involved fatalities
- two involved offences by employees
- four involved offences by company officers
- involved breaches of inspector's notices
- one involved obstruction of an inspector
- one case involved a supplier of unsafe plant.
- Cases involving workers compensation cases included-
- 14 cases involving employers
- 15 cases involving workers
- 1 case involving a service provider

Source: WorkSafe

Building firm and director fined over worker's fall

SYDNEY, October 11 2006

A Sydney construction firm and its director have been fined a total of \$154,000 after a 19-year-old worker was seriously injured in a fall on a Sydney building site.

Skyrise Installations and its director Domenico Vullo had earlier pleaded guilty in the NSW Industrial Court to failing to ensure the employee's health and safety.

The worker spent four days on life support in March 2003 after plunging 15m from a building under construction at Rhodes Corporate Park in west Sydney.

The court fined Skyrise Installations, based in Minto, in Sydney's south-west, \$140,000 and Mr Vullo \$14,000.

Skyrise Installations also was ordered to pay the prosecutor's costs at the hearing on October 4.

"Incidents like this highlight the need to have systems in place to prevent injury in NSW workplaces," WorkCover chief executive Jon Blackwell said.

AAP

Letter from the SIA National President

Dear Members,

I have decided to defer the AGM scheduled for Tuesday 17th October and to extend the voting deadline for the election of office bearers. These decisions have not been made without considerable thought and discussion with members of the National Executive and the Public Officer, David Segrott, and have been taken for the following reasons:

1. Some members have still not received their ballot papers for the election of National office bearers for 2006/2007. This is despite all ballot papers being delivered to Australia Post on Monday 29th September for mailing to our 2000+ members.
2. No proxy forms have been provided to members.
3. No notice of motion(s) have been provided to members.
4. Some Members have complained of not being notified of the date and time of the AGM whereas notification of the AGM was actually sent by email on 28 August 2006.

The Secretariat will notify Members of a new AGM date [early to mid November], provide proxy forms and notices of motions giving a minimum of 21 days notice. I also ask Members who have not received their ballot papers to contact the Secretariat on P: 03 8336 1995, F: 03 8336 1179 or Email at natadmin@sia.org.au and they will be dispatched on the same day. The new deadline for receipt of ballot papers is cob Friday 27th October 2006.

Please accept my sincere regret having to take this action and my apologies for any inconvenience caused.

Regards

Phil Lovelock, President, Safety Institute of Australia [SIA]

Lodgement of Ballot Papers extended to 27th October 2006

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World Standards Day

October 13, 2006

Mr John Tucker, CEO of Standards Australia, has congratulated the more than 9,000 experts involved in developing Australian Standards as the world celebrates "World Standards Day".

Standards Australia is the nation's peak developer of Standards for safe, reliable, quality products and services.

"World Standards Day, celebrated on the 14th of October each year, is the day we stop and acknowledge their work," Mr Tucker said. "They are men and women who receive little public recognition and no payment but whose work protects millions of Australian families, generates jobs and creates national wealth."

Mr Tucker's comments follow the recent release of a major study into the impact of Standards on the Australian economy undertaken by the respected Canberra based economic forecasters, Centre for International Economics. The report found water and electrical Standards generate economic benefits of around \$1.9 billion a year while mineral sampling Standards generate benefits of up to \$100 million a year. The study, which also looked at the economy-wide impact of Standards, found that over the 40 years to 2002 a 1 percent increase in the number of Australian Standards is associated with a 0.17 percent increase in productivity across the economy.

Mr Tucker said the report makes a clear case for the benefits of Standards to the Australian economy. "And it demonstrates clearly the value of the work undertaken by the thousands of experts who give their time to develop Australian Standards.

"This report, for the first time, puts a dollar value on the impact of their work across some of our most important industries," Mr Tucker said.

Of the estimated \$100 million needed annually to fund the production of Australian Standards, around 10 percent comes from Standards Australia, 2-3 percent from the Federal Government with the remainder being "in kind" contribution from committee members.

Source: Standards Australia

SafeWorkSA To Audit Auto Gas Fitters

13 October 2006

South Australia's occupational health, safety and welfare agency, SafeWork SA is to audit the state's LPG vehicle conversion industry.

Today, several hundred auto gas installation permit holders and businesses across the state are receiving letters advising them of the project. The audit has been prompted by a recent operation in Adelaide, in which sub-standard work was found on several vehicles converted to run on LPG.

So far, no serious incidents have been attributed to these installations, however given the apparent expansion in this industry, the agency has decided to lead on this matter and accurately gauge the

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Or you can contact Leo Ruschena, Senior Lecturer OHS,
on 03 9925 1982 or leo.ruschena@rmit.edu.au.

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situation for itself.

Following a complaint from a member of the public some months ago about a sub-standard LPG installation, inspectors from SafeWork SA's Retail and Transport Team and officials from the Department of Transport and the Office for Consumer and Business Affairs conducted a joint operation to examine the issues raised.

SafeWork SA is continuing to investigate this matter, and remedial action has been undertaken to ensure installations are up to standard.

Over the next two months, the agency will conduct random audits of gasfitters to ensure that LPG installations meet the legislative requirements. In particular inspectors will look for the following problems:

- Poor mounting of the LPG cylinder using undersized bolts and backing plates,
- Proximity of the cylinder to exhaust pipes,
- Poor electrical wiring, and...
- Inadequate protection of the liquid fuel service line.

During the audit, SafeWork SA will also seek details on any unlicensed gasfitters, whose activities may pose a concern.

The agency would like to reiterate that LPG is as safe to use as any other fuel source when managed properly. To ensure this, auto gas installations and repairs must only be carried out by or in the supervision of a current permit holder of the appropriate class.

However the user of any vehicle that has been LPG-converted must also take reasonable steps to ensure the installation and relevant equipment comply with current standards.

Source: SafeWork SA

Launch of Mental Health First Aid CD-ROM

12 October, 2006

The Minister for Workforce Participation, Dr Sharman Stone, today launched a CD-ROM which offers valuable information and advice to employers and co-workers of people with mental illness.

Dr Stone launched the Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace CD-ROM as part of Mental Health Week.

One in every five Australian adults experience some form of mental illness in any given year.

Speaking at the launch in Canberra, Dr Stone said the CD-ROM offers the basic steps that anyone can take to support a work colleague with mental illness.

"The course offers excellent information on creating a working environment that can support employees with mental health problems.

"The course also aims to raise awareness of mental health in the workforce and encourage greater acceptance of people with mental illness," Dr Stone said. "Workplaces around the country provide first-aid training for their staff in case someone has an accident or other physical breakdown. It is equally important that the workplace is also trained to recognise and respond to mental health issues. This new Mental Health First Aid course is to fill the gap in understanding," Dr Stone said.

The Australian Government wants to ensure that all with a capacity to continue to work can stay in their job even if the individual experiences a mental health problem.

"We know that employment dramatically improves an individual's self esteem and outlook on life and helps in the recovery process. Welfare to Work is a \$3.6 billion package to help people on welfare into paid employment. Substantial resources within this package are also being targeted towards specific assistance to help people with mental health re-enter the workforce." Dr Stone said.

For more information or to order a free copy of the CD ROM, call the JobAccess Adviser service on 1800 464 800 or online via the JobAccess website at www.jobaccess.gov.au

Source: Minister for Workforce Participation

Man suffers burns in gas explosion

SYDNEY, October 13 2006

A man is critically ill with burns after a gas cylinder exploded in his face in Sydney's south-west.

Emergency services were called to an industrial steel factory on Rookwood Road, Yagoona at 1.30pm (AEST) today, where a 50-year-old worker suffered head injuries and serious burns to his face.

He was treated by ambulance officers at the scene and taken to Liverpool Hospital where he remains in a critical condition.

WorkCover has been notified of the incident and police investigations are continuing.

A NSW Fire Brigades spokesman said there was no damage to the factory.

AAP

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State and territory leaders meet for inaugural meeting

MELBOURNE, October 13 2006

State and territory leaders will gather in Melbourne today in what is planned to be a regular annual meeting without a commonwealth representative.

The leaders will meet at 10.30am (AEST) for the inaugural Council of Federation meeting to discuss issues that affect their states.

The meeting agenda focuses on issues including drought, water and bushfire procedures as well as WorkCover, daylight saving and education.

Victorian Premier Steve Bracks said this week it was the first time that an organisation of state and territory leaders would meet without a commonwealth representative.

"There is a lot we can do in harmonising laws in making sure it is easier to do business across state borders, in meeting together and making sure we have a concerted position, a unified position," Mr Bracks said. "It is also important that we have clear positions that we can work with the commonwealth on, and it gives us an opportunity to do that."

A state government spokeswoman said South Australian Premier Mike Rann proposed the idea for the regular meeting, which is based on a Canadian model where state leaders meet separately from the federal government to discuss relevant issues.

Leaders of every state and territory will attend today's meeting, except NSW Premier Morris Iemma who is on leave and will be represented by Deputy Premier John Watkins.

AAP

Factory devastated by fire

October 13 2006

A factory in Sydney's outer west has been gutted by a blaze apparently caused when a forklift truck caught fire.

Twenty firefighters battled to contain the blaze, which broke out in a single-storey building on the Dunheved Circuit industrial estate in St Marys tonight.

NSW Fire Brigades received an emergency call just before 9.30pm (AEST) telling them a forklift truck was alight, but when firefighters arrived the whole factory was on fire.

The small building was extensively damaged in the blaze, which also spread to cars.

Gordon Boath, spokesman for NSW Fire Brigades, said the cause of the fire was not known.

AAP

Adobe Acrobat V7.08 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 20 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 7.08 please email me at 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.

For those readers who are unconcerned about download limits, the latest version of Acrobat Reader is available for free from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep2.html>

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Editor Kevin Jones
Editorial Inquiries +61 (0)3 9478 9484
jonesk@sia.org.au

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www.safetyatwork.biz

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