



Market Square
by Leavitt2me Photography

San Antonio

CONSTRUCTIONTM

NEWS

The Industry's Newspaper

www.constructionnews.net ★ (210) 308-5800 ★ Volume 18 ★ Number 2 ★ FEBRUARY 2016

F

O

C

U

S

**This
Month**

Construction Safety



Effective safety training strategies

Anna Pelletier, CSM
National Association of Safety,
Board member, Shelby, NC
Liberty Construction,
Boston, MA

Within the construction industry, shout-outs like “be safe,” “safety first,” “zero tolerance” and so on are ever plentiful. Marketing endeavors to share the message include catchy phrases, slogans, stickers, and gifts to reward, promote and highlight any and all safety-success moments. While there is merit to spreading the news, it is equally important to ensure that, along with a campaign, education is a key component in promoting safe practices. Such education can stem from in-house training programs and on-site refresher courses conducted by safety managers, or by outsourcing with consultants for observation, analysis, and recommendations. Recent statistics reveal a disturbing fact – over half of all construction injuries and fatalities are due to lack of or improper training. Therefore, an effective training program must be your top priority.

There are a variety of training programs that range from an introduction and overview of a topic (i.e. tool box meetings) to more in-depth content where one receives a certification. Training programs are available in electronic form, for those who are working and find it challenging to attend classes in person. For example, project administrators can take on-line courses in construction terminology and

HR personnel might be interested in current behavior-based safety studies. It’s common for construction companies to require that employees complete their OSHA 10 Outreach training; this hazard awareness training is available on-site by safety trainers, on-line and offered through many schools of higher education. A company must ensure that the instructors are certified to teach and that the methodology used is appropriate and adheres to current standards.

When considering the options of safety training programs, you must know your audience. Will the training be for craft workers at a large hospital-remodeling project that involves working near sterile environments or catered to office personnel with the focus on active shooter and hostile situations? Upon completion of the training will participants earn CEU’s, or will refresher courses be led by in-house safety trainers and attendance entered into a company database? Specialized training can include First Aid and CPR, Confined Space Entry, Material Handling Equipment, Rigging and Signaling, Scaffolding, HAZCOM, OSHA Recordkeeping, Silica Safety, Emergency Response, PPE and ANSI standards to name a few. Be certain that the training is specific to the hazard, the process, and equipment. For

example, if a sub-contractor brings a scissor lift onto your site, individuals must be trained on that particular scissor lift. Training must include the practical operation of the lift by someone who is familiar with the equipment along with the proper documentation.

Take into consideration the following:

- Which type of training would be most beneficial, in-house, on-line or outsourced to professionals with experience in the subject matter?
- Is the training affordable and does the investment make economic sense for yourself and your company?
- If the decision is to use in-house safety trainers, are they familiar with the content and will they present in a way that captures the attention of attendees?
- Is the subject matter relevant?
- Is the material current and viewer friendly, (it can be extremely disappointing to pay for thrown together binders, copied pages laden with typos and boring power point presentations)?
- Are the tools and equipment being used clean and in good condition?

Social media can prove valuable when opting for networking opportunities to learn about safety training programs. However, be cautious of selecting offers that sound too good to be true and take the time to vet the program or the instructor. Endorsements from safety professionals within your network are significant, read reviews and ask questions. Inquire about associations that are recognized and in good standing. Membership with them can work in your favor as one can take advantage of webinars, conferences, and continuing education programs.

Assistant Department of Labor Secretary David Michaels recently said, “We

are seeing untrained workers – many of them temporary workers – killed very soon after starting a new job. This must stop. Employers must train all employees, including temporary workers, on the hazards specific to that workplace – before they start working.

The bottom line is this: training is arguably the most important element of an effective safety program. It’s not an area to cut corners or take lightly. Take the time to qualify yourself to provide the training in-house or choose an outside vendor whose training is quality, reputable and cost-effective.”

Anna Pelletier, a native of Prescott, AZ holds the position of National Corporate Environmental Health and Safety Coordinator at Liberty Construction (a division of Suffolk Construction). Anna graduated Summa Cum Laude at Sacred Heart University in Fairfield, CT and is furthering her studies in Occupational Safety and Health at Columbia Southern University. She currently sits as a member on the National Association of Safety Professionals (NASP) Board of Advisors.

NASP is a non-profit membership organization providing training, consultative services, and third-party certifications that validate knowledge, skills and abilities in the area of workplace safety. The primary mission of NASP is to provide safety professionals with innovative training opportunities and professional certification to assist them in carrying out their safety related functions with confidence and proven competence. NASP offers workplace safety and environmental safety courses and certifications for general industry, the construction industry, and the petroleum industry. For more information, visit them at www.naspweb.com.