

Think!

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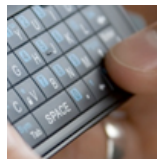
The Sean P. George Safety Newsletter

Welcome!

Welcome aboard the THINK! quarterly newsletter provided by Sean George, Nikole Jones, and Francis Pitt the seanpgeorge.com team. The purpose of THINK! is to provide useful safety and health website links, timely compositions, the latest news from OSHA, guest spots from safety professionals, and helpful suggestions that come from 34 years experience in the Building Trades. We will help you to “keep your finger on the pulse” of safety in America and we welcome your thoughts and ideas that might be of help to others. So, without further adieu let’s get started.

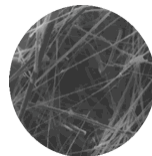


Dying to Text



Texting has become as much a part of our society as video games, computer dating, and blogging and can be a very convenient and useful tool when used with a little common sense. Unfortunately having common sense and exercising it do not always go hand in hand...

Asbestos: Still Deadly!



...Though many of the folks had not met until earlier that day, they all had one thing in common...loss. They had all lost a family member, a dad, a mother, a brother, an uncle, to the same killer, asbestos. It was Mesothelioma, a cancer caused by asbestos exposure that had stolen that which they loved and brought them here today...Their eyes all asked the same question...why?

Just One Opinion...



How in this day and age of OSHA could 12 fatalities be tolerated, be considered an acceptable cost of doing business? The answer is polemic but I am of the opinion that everyone was responsible.

*Safety As A Value...With
Every Task...Every Day!*



Dying to Text

While driving into downtown Pittsburgh last week it was obvious to me that the person in the vehicle in front of me was preoccupied with something other than driving. Their car drifted in and out of the adjoining lane and continuously slowed to about 5mph under the speed limit then sped up to 10mph over it. If you posed this scenario to drivers today most, if not all of them would already know the cause of this erratic and dangerous driving. TEXTING!

I looked into the left side rear view mirror our busy friend and was not at all surprised to see that her eyes appeared closed. This of course was due to the fact that she was looking down while sending that message that was apparently worth the risk of an accident. I was not at all surprised. What did surprise me that it was not a young adult as I would have suspected, but a middle aged woman. Sound like anyone you know?

Texting has become as much a part of our society as video games, computer dating, and blogging and can be a very convenient and useful tool when used with a little common sense. Unfortunately having common sense and exercising it do not always go hand in hand and in this case the result can be deadly! According to a University of Utah study using a driver simulator, people who text while driving are 8 times more likely to crash. The Virginia Tech Transportation Institute found that truckers sending text messages are 23 times more likely to cause an accident than a nontexting trucker. It was found that a texting motorist can travel up to 100 yards without sight of the road and its possible hazards.

The need for help to make our highways safe for everyone is once again an issue and while uniformed officers do their best to remove drunk drivers from our roads, in many states there is little that they can do to stop the texting madmen and women who are sure that they will not be the one to hurt anyone. Help may arrive in the form of the Alert Drivers Act of 2009, a Senate bill proposed originally by Senator Charles Schumer of New York. The effectiveness of this bill comes in its requirement that states that do not adopt federally set minimum penalties for texting while driving will forfeit 25% of federal highway financing.

THINK!

Asbestos: Still Deadly

the deafening silence to know that this was no picnic. Though many of the folks had not met until earlier that day, they all had one thing in common...loss. They had all lost a family member, a dad, a mother, a brother, an uncle, to the same killer, asbestos. It was Mesothelioma, a cancer caused by asbestos exposure that had stolen that which they loved and brought them here today. The sad expressions that seemed to be permanently carved on their faces demonstrated the legacy of asbestos in a way that no written word could. Their eyes all asked the same question...why?

Asbestos is a naturally occurring mineral made up of microscopic fibers that are long, thin, hollow, and nearly indestructible. Asbestos is strong, flexible, and resistant to chemicals and it was because of this that a love affair with the stuff started in the late 1800's. It became a common ingredient in many building materials and remained so for almost 100 years. It was used in insulation on pipes and boilers, in fire proofing, as a surfacing material, in floor tiles, in pipe, in ceiling tiles, in mastic, and in roofing material. Asbestos had such widespread use that if you are working in a building constructed before 1980, there is a good chance that there is asbestos in it.

Mesothelioma is a cancer of the smooth lining of the chest, lungs, heart, and abdomen. It is a diffuse but solid tumor that begins as a result of insult to the tissues caused by the needle-like asbestos fibers that have penetrated into the pleural cavity of the chest or into the abdomen. Mesothelioma is either called pleural mesothelioma, or peritoneal mesothelioma based on where it appears. The path of introduction for the asbestos particles is through the respiratory system. Fibers released into the air are inhaled by the workers where they are carried into the deepest recesses of the lungs. The latency of mesothelioma is estimated between 15 and 50 years from the date of exposure to asbestos. Unfortunately, a patient presenting with symptoms typical to mesothelioma are often misdiagnosed but survival times vary widely from 4 months to 18 months. Thanks to recent awareness and research, there is some upward movement with these figures.

The symptoms of mesothelioma are cruel and painful. As the tumor grows and expands, it often produces fluid that fills the chest and abdomen, depending on whether it is pleural or peritoneal. This fluid and eventually the tumor itself place pressure on organs and crush the lung causing intense pain, shortness of breath, and

Mesothelioma patients rarely survive long enough for medical science to establish conclusively whether it spreads to other organs or not. As median survival times lengthen, it may be found that mesothelioma is no different from other cancers in this respect. As of this time, there are no medical procedures that are proven to be curative, most of the leading treatments involve experimental procedures, and clinical trials of drugs and novel technologies.

That asbestos can lead to such a horror as mesothelioma is a tragedy. That the companies that mined and sold it had known but hid this fact for years from their employees as well as their customers is criminal. Of course this led to thousands of successful lawsuits, but at what cost? In fact the dangers of asbestos were noted in ancient times by the Roman historian Pliny the Elder when he noted that slaves who worked in the asbestos mines were less healthy than other slaves and should not be purchased since they would die young. He recommended the use of a transparent bladder skin to protect workers from asbestos dust. Workers directly exposed to this killer are not the only victims. There have been documented cases where family members of asbestos workers died as a result of exposure to the clothing that had asbestos dust on them. Because asbestos is still prevalent, causes no immediate ill effects, and requires expensive procedures to abate, there is a propensity to ignore its long-term health risks. Asbestos was and still is a killer. To knowingly expose anyone to this carcinogen is criminal. Are you guilty?

THINK!

Symptoms of pleural mesothelioma include:

- 1) Dyspnea (shortness of breath)
- 2) Chest pain
- 3) Cough
- 4) Hemoptysis (spitting blood or bloody sputum)
- 5) Hoarseness
- 6) Dysphagia (difficulty swallowing)
- 7) Weight loss
- 8) Fever

Peritoneal patients present another set of symptoms:

- 1) Abdominal pain
- 2) Abdominal mass
- 3) Increased abdominal girth
- 4) Ascites (fluid in the abdomen)
- 5) Digestive disturbances
- 6) Fever
- 7) Weight loss
- 8) Thrombocytosis (increased platelets in the blood)
- 9) Leukocytosis (elevated white blood cell count)

Just One Opinion

In the largest commercial construction job in the history of the United States (32 billion dollars) there has been much ballyhoo and even a cable special on the state of the art construction techniques employed in order to meet the deadlines established. The MGM Mirage CityCenter project in Las Vegas stands as testimony to the competitive resort business and the “we will build it bigger” mindset of Casino corporations. It is a fiercely competitive market and bragging rights play into marketing which translates into dollars for the resort and gaming industry. That is all well and good, competition in a free market society has been good for all of us, but we need to look at the big picture before patting ourselves on the back for this crown gem of Las Vegas.

In what can only be described as a total lack of concern for human life, 12 workers died on the CityCenter project in 18 months time. Twelve funerals, twelve holidays with a loved one missing. The question has to be asked” HOW DID THIS HAPPEN? How in this day and age of OSHA could 12 fatalities be tolerated, be considered an acceptable cost of doing business? The answer is polemic but I am of the opinion that everyone was responsible. Government, management, and labor unions alike dropped the ball while workers died. Since the public received notice via a series of Pulitzer Prize winning articles in the Las Vegas Sun, there has not been one fatality on the site, proof that these deaths could have, and should have never happened.

THINK!

The Mesothelioma Applied Research Foundation is the national organization dedicated to eradicating mesothelioma as a life-ending disease by:

- Funding research projects from around the world.
- Helping patients connect with national meso experts
- Offering the most up-to-date treatment options
- Advocating in Washington D.C. for Federal Meso research

Special thanks to executive Director Chris Hahn for his providing access to the MARF website. www.marf.org

USEFUL WEBSITE LINKS

- Bureau of Labor Statisticswww.bls.gov
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration.....www.osha.gov
- Center for Disease Control.....www.cdc.gov
- U.S. Chemical Safety Board.....www.chemsafety.gov
- U.S. Department of Labor.....www.dol.gov
- Mine Safety and Health Administration.....www.msha.gov