

## ARE YOUR FORKLIFTS

## DELIVERING

## A SILENT KILLER?



“Closing shipping dock doors may keep workers warmer this winter, but it could expose those workers to higher levels of carbon monoxide (CO),” warns EMC Industrial Hygienist Krista Scott. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, forklifts used in industrial settings are prone to emit this “silent killer” that can poison workers in poorly ventilated workspaces and adjoining offices.

“Because you can’t see or smell CO, you may not realize it’s a problem until workers start to develop symptoms of CO poisoning, which include headache, fatigue, dizziness, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, loss of consciousness and coma,” notes Scott. “Severe poisoning can result in permanent damage to the brain, nerves and heart, or even death.”

### Protecting Workers From Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Scott recommends these tips from the State Compensation Fund of California to reduce the likelihood of excessive CO emissions from forklifts in your work environment:

- Use electric forklifts in enclosed spaces
- Set up a regular maintenance program for your propane forklifts
- Check CO emissions when tuning your engine
- Install a three-way catalytic converter in conjunction with an air-to-fuel ratio controller
- Allow your engine to warm up outside
- Ensure the work area is adequately ventilated
- Train employees to recognize the signs and symptoms of CO poisoning

### Forklifts Are Just Part Of The Problem

Although forklifts are a common cause of increased CO emissions in industrial settings, Scott says other sources of CO can also impact air quality. These include fuel-burning portable saws, generators, heaters and furnaces, power washers, scissor lifts, compressors, floor buffers and fuel-burning space heaters.

Whatever the source of CO is, Scott reminds policyholders that the potential for CO poisoning in the workplace tends to rise when the temperature begins to drop. EMC loss control professionals like Scott are available to monitor air quality and recommend actions to reduce your workers’ exposure to this silent killer.

For more information on carbon monoxide and forklifts, go to [www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/communications/CO/Coforklift.html](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/Pages/communications/CO/Coforklift.html).

## NEED TO KNOW

### OSHA'S NEW WHISTLEBLOWER RULES

OSHA published three interim final rules in the Aug. 31 *Federal Register* that establish procedures for handling worker retaliation complaints. The regulations cover workers filing complaints in the railroad, public transit, commercial motor carrier and consumer product industries. For additional information on these proposed rules, visit [www.whistleblowers.gov](http://www.whistleblowers.gov).

### ANTIBACTERIAL GEL CAN HELP REDUCE SICK DAYS

Workers using antibacterial hand gel can help reduce illnesses in the workplace, according to a new study by the Institute of Hygiene and Environmental Medicine in Germany. In the study group that regularly used the hand gel, sick days for colds were reduced by 65%. Although hand gel should not be a substitute for hand washing, it may help prevent the spread of workplace infection.

### OSHA CRANES AND DERRICKS RULE

Approximately 89 people are killed each year in crane-related construction incidents, according to OSHA. “The goal of a new standard for cranes and derricks is to prevent worker fatalities and injuries by keeping the crane’s loads and workers in the places they are intended to be,” noted OSHA Chief Dr. David Michaels. The standard contains common-sense processes and mechanisms that reflect a considerable technological change in equipment that has occurred since the publication of the old rule. You can download the new rule at [www.osha.gov/doc/cranesreg.pdf](http://www.osha.gov/doc/cranesreg.pdf).



# Stay Warm During Cold Weather Work

Workers who are exposed to a combination of freezing or near-freezing temperatures, brisk winds and wet clothing can succumb to hypothermia, which can result in death.

OSHA recommends a number of precautions for employees working in cold weather conditions:

- Recognize the environmental and workplace conditions that lead to potential cold-induced illnesses and injuries.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of cold-induced illnesses and injuries and what to do to prevent them.
- Select proper clothing for cold, wet and windy conditions.
- Take frequent short breaks in warm, dry shelters to allow the body to warm up.
- Perform work during the warmest part of the day.
- Avoid exhaustion or fatigue because energy is needed to keep muscles warm.
- Use the buddy system; work in pairs.
- Drink warm, sweet beverages (sugar water, sports drinks). Avoid drinks with caffeine or alcohol.
- Eat warm, high-calorie foods like hot pasta dishes.

Your workers should also be aware that they are at increased risk in a cold work environment if:

- They have pre-existing health conditions such as cardiovascular disease, diabetes or hypertension.
- They take certain medications. Workers should check with their doctor, nurse or pharmacist to find out if any medicines they are taking can be affected by the cold.
- They are in poor physical condition, have a poor diet or are older.

For more information about protecting workers in cold weather, visit <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/emergencypreparedness/guides/cold.html>.



## YOUR WINTER WORK WARDROBE

The Office of Emergency Management recommends the following:

- Wear loose, lightweight, warm clothing in several layers. Trapped air between layers acts as an insulator. Layers can be removed to avoid perspiration and subsequent chill.
- Outer garments should be tightly woven, water repellent and hooded.
- Always wear a hat or cap on your head.
- Cover your mouth with a scarf to protect your lungs from extreme cold.



## SCHOOLS

### Reducing Injuries Among Young Athletes

The American Orthopaedic Society for Sports Medicine launched "STOP Sports Injuries," a public service campaign to encourage athletes, parents, coaches and health providers to support measures that reduce sports injuries. Learn how you can get involved.

### Playground Supervision Training

More than 200,000 playground injuries are treated each year. Effective supervision can help your facility minimize these injuries. EMC's new online training module offers information about playground monitors, common injuries and how to respond to hazardous situations.



## MUNICIPALITIES

### Roadside Assistance Guidelines For Emergency Responders

Emergency vehicle response and roadside scenes are two of the most dangerous work situations for firefighters and law enforcement officers. New guidelines from the U.S. Fire Administration offer ways to safely manage roadway incidents.

### Increasing Safety On Sledding Hills

More than 20,000 children are injured every year in sledding accidents. As winter approaches, find out what you can do to help reduce sledding collisions.

INSIGHTS ONLINE



**DON'T SLIP, SLIDE AWAY!**

Read important tips to prevent wintertime slips and falls.

INSIGHTS ONLINE

# Approach Jump-Starting A Car Like It's Your First Time

Remember the first time you had to jump-start a car? You were probably scared to death, double-checking every step along the way and standing back when all the cables were connected. As "dead battery" weather approaches, EMC encourages you to approach this common task much like you did the first time—with extreme caution. People are unaware that thousands of battery-related accidents happen every year, resulting in bodily injury, blindness and death.



The following tips from [consumeraffairs.com](http://www.consumeraffairs.com) can help increase your safety:

- Make sure both cars are in park and not touching each other.
- Identify the positive (red) end of one of the jumper cables. Attach the clamp to the positive (+) terminal of the dead battery.
- Attach the other positive cable clamp on the other end of the jumper cable to the good battery's positive terminal.
- Now, attach the negative (black) jumper cable clamp to the good battery's negative (-) post or terminal.
- Finally, attach the remaining negative jumper cable clamp to a good engine ground point on the dead battery's vehicle. Do this as far as possible from the dead battery to lessen the likelihood that a spark will cause an explosion.
- When the connection is made, start the healthy car's engine and let it run for a few minutes, then start the disabled car.
- Once the disabled car is running, remove the cables, reversing the order in which they were applied.

For more details, visit [http://www.consumeraffairs.com/automotive/dead\\_battery.html](http://www.consumeraffairs.com/automotive/dead_battery.html).

## On The Job With Krista Scott



When EMC Industrial Hygienist Krista Scott monitors air quality in industrial settings, she is quick to realize that in addition to forklifts, small gasoline-

powered engines and tools present serious health hazards. She advises policyholders to take the following precautions suggested by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to reduce the likelihood of CO poisoning in the workplace:

- Do not allow the use of gasoline-powered engines or tools inside buildings or in partially enclosed areas unless the gasoline engine can be located outside.
- Always place the pump and power unit of high-pressure washers outdoors and away from air intakes. Run only the high-pressure wash line inside.
- Consider the use of tools powered by electricity or compressed air if they are available and can be used safely.
- If compressed air is used, place the gasoline-powered compressor outdoors and away from air intakes.
- Use personal CO monitors where potential sources of CO exist. These monitors should be equipped with audible alarms to warn workers when CO concentrations are too high.



### Health Problems Lead to Early Retirement For Roofers

Chronic pain, work-related musculoskeletal disorders and poor health are responsible for a growing number of roofers taking early retirement. A recent study addresses a number of factors related to the health and welfare of older roofers.

### Educate Apprentices On Ladder Safety

Residential apprentices believe ladders pose minimal risk. Yet, they were two times more likely to fall than apprentices in commercial construction. Learn how more effective training can change the attitude of your residential apprentices.



### Rollover Protection Video

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration released a new training video that can help make the highway safer for cargo tank drivers and motorists alike. Learn how to incorporate this video into your safety training program.

### Convenience Store Robberies Decrease

Although convenience stores and gas stations showed big drops in robberies during 2009, 7.8% of all robberies still took place at these types of businesses. EMC loss control experts provide valuable tips to help you improve the safety and security at your facilities.

### THE ALUMINUM ADVANTAGE

Because of its low cost and low weight, aluminum and aluminum alloys are now considered acceptable material for conductors in power circuits, provided the correct size of material is used along with appropriate design, installation and connections. The Hartford Steam Boiler Inspection and Insurance Company answers your questions and concerns about the use of aluminum in a two-part article—"Fundamentals of Aluminum Conductors"—available on Insights Online.

For complete industry updates, visit [www.emcins.com](http://www.emcins.com), click **Loss Control** on the homepage and then  **INSIGHTS ONLINE**.



# THE BEST IN LOSS CONTROL:

## Partnership Service Gets Employees Involved In The Safety Process

When tackling a challenging safety issue, employees who deal with the problem on a daily basis often provide the best solutions. That's the principle behind EMC's Partnership Service, during which:

- EMC loss control specialists analyze your loss history and operations to determine areas in need of improvement.
- An employee task force works with an EMC consultant to identify activities and tasks that can prevent injury to workers. During the process, employees receive valuable risk factor training.
- EMC assists in preparing a report for management that outlines the task force's recommendations.

To set up a Partnership Service consultation, contact your insurance agent or EMC loss control representative, or email [losscontrol@emcins.com](mailto:losscontrol@emcins.com).

## LOCKOUT/TAGOUT TRAINING

An effective lockout/tagout program can help keep your employees safe while working on electrical equipment with moving machine parts. EMC's new online training modules explain why lockout/tagout is so important and describe the six-step lockout process. View the modules at [www.emcins.com/LossControl/training/Training\\_Modules.aspx](http://www.emcins.com/LossControl/training/Training_Modules.aspx).

## LOSS CONTROL INSIGHTS

[www.emcins.com](http://www.emcins.com) | WINTER 2010

 EMC Insurance Companies.

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