



## Editor's Briefs, [Tyler.Nguyen@esa.sccgov.org](mailto:Tyler.Nguyen@esa.sccgov.org)

The Liberty Mutual Research Institute for Safety recently released the 2007 Workplace Safety Index, an annual report identifying which workplace injuries cost U.S. industry the most in workers' compensation. The index, a tool to evaluate where to focus safety efforts in the workplace, reveals \$48.3 Billion in workers' compensation costs.

According to the 2007 Workplace Safety Index, which includes data from 1998 through 2005 (the most recent year data are available), the top 10 most disabling injuries—work-related injuries and illnesses that result in an employee losing six or more days from work—cost U.S. industry an estimated \$48.3 billion in direct workers' comp costs in 2005. Factor in those indirect costs we are know about, the final tally would be much more substantial, by any account. The top 10 include:

1. Overexertion, which includes injuries caused by excessive lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying, or throwing: \$12.7 billion (26.3 percent)
2. Fall on the same level: \$6.6 billion (13.6 percent)
3. Fall to a lower level: \$5 billion (10.4 percent)
4. Bodily reaction, which includes injuries from slipping or tripping without falling: \$4.8 billion (10 percent)
5. Struck by an object: \$4.4 billion (9 percent)
6. Highway incidents: \$2.3 billion (4.8 percent)
7. Repetitive motion: \$2.1 billion (4.4 percent)
8. Struck against an object (for example, a worker walking into a door): \$2 billion (4.3 percent)
9. Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects: \$1.9 billion (3.9 percent)
10. Assaults and/or violent acts: \$0.4 billion (0.8 percent)

Data reveal that from 1998 to 2005, the inflation-adjusted cost of the top 10 injuries increased by almost 4 percent, although the incidence of these injuries decreased by 21 percent during the same period, as reported by the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). The cost increases were likely a function of both general increases in healthcare costs, which, on average, increased between 7 and 8 percent a year during the same period, and an increase in the number of injuries in certain categories.

## Upcoming Chapter Meetings

To reserve a seat via e-mail, please send your name, telephone number and email address to: [reservations@assesj.org](mailto:reservations@assesj.org). Meeting time- Noon to 1 p.m. Location- Ramada Silicon Valley, 1217 Wildwood Ave., Sunnyvale, CA 94089, (408) 245-5330

### May 13: Treating Your Own Back Injury

Peter Guske PT, in the myth-shattering and highly non-traditional manner that has become his trademark, continues to impress results-oriented safety personnel as well as success-oriented company managers all over the country with these unique, engaging and highly successful techniques. In what is considered a record for the industry, his company out of Orlando, in just the last 4 years has instructed over 14,000 employees nationwide with the only techniques which will actually demonstrate to you how you can put your own back, "back in".

Peter Guske PT is a licensed physical therapist with over 20 years clinical experience treating back injuries. Mr Guske opened his own rehabilitation clinic in Florida in 1988 and has gone on to build "The Back Saver System", a national company which provides employers with cost-effective on-site back injury prevention programs.

## Proposed Dues Increase

ASSE is considering a dues increase across the board for its members. The proposed per membership increase is \$29. Once the dues increase is approved, our membership dues will be \$149.

Below is a summary of dues from other associations:

- AIHA (American Industrial Hygiene Association) – \$178
- NFPA (National Fire Protection Association) - \$150
- NAEM (National Association of Environmental Management)-\$195
- AAOHN (American Association of Occupational Health Nurses) -\$185
- HFES (Human Factors and Ergonomics Society) - \$190



## Seeking Qualified Professional Member Nominees

The following two criteria are required for candidates to qualify: Must be an ASSE Professional Member prior to taking office; Understands the responsibility and obligations of the Executive Committee officers in ASSE with a strong desire to serve the interests of Greater San Jose Chapter members.

Members who want to be considered for nomination are requested to provide a short professional biographical summary and a picture if available as soon as possible. Please include your membership number and years as a Professional member.

Please send your reply via e-mail for consideration as a nominee on the 2009 Executive Committee as an Chapter Officer by **April 30, 2008 to Mira Rubin (e-mail address Rubin\_Mira@yahoo.com), President, Chair of the Nomination Committee.**

## Voting Process for 2008-09 Chapter Leadership

Chapter membership voting must be completed by Friday, May 30, 2008 to install American Society of Safety Engineers, Greater San Jose Chapter Officers for next year. To that end, members are encouraged to vote for the new slate of officers utilizing the e-vote methodology. To do this effectively and efficiently, what we will do is to have Chapter President Mira Rubin send out an e-mail soliciting current chapter's members vote. You may have an option to vote securely using a link with mechanism to register your vote (being developed by our web developer). If this link is not finished on time, do:

Reply positively to Mira's e-mail with your choices listed on the e-ballot.

You will also have an opportunity to vote in person via the paper ballot during the May 12th Chapter Meeting.

As a measure of redundancy, the current chapter's roster will be used to confirm the one vote per member rule. We encourage you to update your membership standing using the national website at <http://www.asse.org/> prior to taking part and participating in the selection process.

The following positions are to be elected by the Greater San Jose Chapter membership:

**President-Elect** Term of office: July 1 to the following June 30. Qualifications:

- Must have been an ASSE member in good standing for at least one year prior to election and
- Be either a Professional Member or Member of ASSE

**Secretary** Term of office: July 1 to the following June 30. Qualifications:

- Must have been an ASSE member in good standing for at least one year prior to election
- Can be a Professional Member, Member or Associate Member of ASSE

**Treasurer** Term of office: July 1 to the following June 30. Qualifications:

- Must have been an ASSE member in good standing for at least one year prior to election
- Can be a Professional Member, Member or Associate Member of ASSE

**Delegates (2 Positions)**



## *Empowerment, A Progressive Approach to Safety*

By Wayne Pardy, CRSP

To paraphrase Fortune magazine, the flattened network organization has changed the style of command and control. Collaboration is in. Managers and workers have to practice cooperation and collaboration. A direct quote from the magazine: "The environment increasingly encourages this collaboration by the devolution of power and delegation of duties, right down to the empowered, self-managed worker." I'd like to talk a bit more about empowerment from the perspective of health and safety.

**The Essence of Empowerment** That same Fortune magazine article makes the following observations on empowerment: "The essence of the idea is simple. Organize employees into teams that can cut across old boundaries. Train them. Put them into jobs that challenge their abilities. Give them the information they need. Tell them what they need to accomplish. Then turn them loose. Self-directed teams make decisions, set their own goals, and take responsibility."

We should think about these observations and picture them in effect within the context of our health and safety programs. How do they challenge our conventional thinking about safety programs and the role of safety professionals? What are some of the impediments to an empowered workforce from a health and safety point of view?

**What's Holding Back the Empowerment of Safety Professionals?** Many businesses are still struggling to define a clear role for their safety staff. Within the conventional safety program, rules and regulations are the responsibility of a head office safety person. This individual's role includes enforcement of safety policies and procedures.

That sounds like a formidable position. But the safety officer's position is essentially one of perceived power, I believe. The position has no real power. In point of fact, it's actually the most powerless position in the organization. Just as quickly as the safety person takes credit for improved safety performance, he or she is saddled with responsibility when safety performance doesn't improve. It is at this point where most safety officers jump off the bandwagon.

**Changing the Approach** Consider the differences between a traditional and modern safety program:

### *Traditional safety program characteristics:*

A central, head office individual with responsibility for corporate safety;  
A team of safety specialist on staff, or one local staff safety specialist;  
Safety is deemed to be a staff function with a manager responsible for safety and a supporting staff reporting to that manager;  
Rules, standards and regulations developed and prescribed by management; and  
Little line commitment, ownership, responsibility or accountability for safety, and minimal involvement in accident prevention or safety management issues.

### *Characteristics of more progressive approaches to safety:*

Workers and work teams take responsibility for accident prevention initiatives and safety performance improvements;  
Staff safety specialist employed as a safety coordinator and support function;  
Increased emphasis on total communication with all stakeholders;  
Executive and senior management provide strategic leadership for safety strategy. Content and initiatives left to workers and work teams; and  
Total integration of safety performance into all job responsibilities and accountabilities.

### **Conclusion**

My recommendation: Each of us should consider the differences between the conventional and progressive approach and determine which one offers the greatest potential for improving safety performance. Which approach's style best reflects you and your business? Which one would you rather be part of?



## Editor's May Favorite URLs

### ASSE Ergo Project Page

[http://www.asse.org/professionalaffairs/govtaffairs/govt\\_affairs\\_ergo.php](http://www.asse.org/professionalaffairs/govtaffairs/govt_affairs_ergo.php)

### Cal/OSHA Consultation Record Keeping Page

<http://www.californiaosha.info/>

### Occupational Health & Safety Online Magazine

<http://www.ohsonline.com/index.aspx>

### Cal/OSHA Reporter Online Resources Page

<http://www.cal-osha.com/Resources.aspx>

### Department of Health Care Services

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ohb/Default.htm>

### Department of Industrial Relations

<http://www.dir.ca.gov/>

### Department of Labor OSHA

<http://www.osha.gov/>

### Official California Legislative Information

<http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/>

### OSHA e-Tools

<http://www.osha.gov/dts/osta/oshasoft/index.html>

### Work Safe BC

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Topics/AccidentInvestigations/Home.asp>

### Center for Disease Control, National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/>

### Stanford University EH&S Page

<http://www.stanford.edu/dept/EHS/prod/>

### UC Berkeley EH&S Page

<http://www.ehs.berkeley.edu/>

## Chapter Officers 2007-08

### President

Mira Rubin

### Past-President

Lou Cuneo

### President-Elect

Jay Jamali

### Treasurer

Mostafa Pournajat

### Delegate

Jack J. Hahn

### Delegate

Fred Norton

### Membership

Jim Beeby

### Jobs Coordinator

David Krack

### Newsletter Editor

Tyler Nguyen

### Government Affairs

John Steele

## *Professional Development*

SAFETY 2008 -  
*Professional Development Conference & Expo*  
June 9-12, 2008

Las Vegas Convention Center

[www.safety2008.org](http://www.safety2008.org)

