



American Society of Safety Engineers
Protecting people, property, and the environment since 1911
Greater San Jose Chapter

<http://www.assesj.org> email:gsjc@assesj.org



October 2010 Newsletter

October is National Fire Prevention Month

Fire Prevention Week was established to commemorate the Great Chicago Fire, the tragic 1871 conflagration that killed more than 250 people, left 100,000 homeless, destroyed more than 17,400 structures and burned more than 2,000 acres. The fire began on October 8, but continued into and did most of its damage on October 9, 1871.

According to popular legend, the fire broke out after a cow - belonging to Mrs. Catherine O'Leary - kicked over a lamp, setting first the barn, then the whole city on fire. Chances are you've heard some version of this story yourself; people have been blaming the Great Chicago Fire on the cow and Mrs. O'Leary, for more than 130 years. But recent research by Chicago historian Robert Cromie has helped to debunk this version of events.

The biggest blaze that week

While the Great Chicago Fire was the best-known blaze to start during this fiery two-day stretch, it wasn't the biggest. That distinction goes to the Peshtigo Fire, the most devastating forest fire in American history. The fire, which also occurred on October 8th, 1871, and roared through Northeast Wisconsin, burning down 16 towns, killing 1,152 people, and scorching 1.2 million acres before it ended.

Historical accounts of the fire say that the blaze began when several railroad workers clearing land for tracks unintentionally started a brush fire. Before long, the fast-moving flames were whipping through the area 'like a tornado,' some survivors said. It was the small town of Peshtigo, Wisconsin that suffered the worst damage. Within an hour, the entire town had been destroyed.

Eight decades of fire prevention

Those who survived the Chicago and Peshtigo fires never forgot what they'd been through; both blazes produced countless tales of bravery and heroism. But the fires also changed the way that firefighters and public officials thought about fire safety. On the 40th anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire, the Fire Marshals Association of North America (today known as the [International Fire Marshals Association](#)), decided that the anniversary of the Great Chicago Fire should henceforth be observed not with festivities, but in a way that would keep the public informed about the importance of fire prevention. The commemoration grew incrementally official over the years.

Continued at:

<http://www.nfpa.org/itemDetail.asp?categoryID=1439&itemID=34426&URL=Safety%20Information/Fire%20Prevention%20Week%202010/About%20Fire%20Prevention%20Week>

Upcoming Chapter Meetings

To reserve a seat via e-mail, please send your name, telephone number and email address to:

reservations@assesj.org

Tuesday, October 12, 2010 - 12:00pm - Biltmore Hotel & Suites

Session Title: Effective Strategies for Preventing Slips, Trips and Falls

Presentation by Fred Norton, Technical Director, Loss Control Advisory Services, Liberty Mutual Insurance

Session Overview: This session will present effective strategies for reducing the risks of slips, trips and falls. The presentation will describe a comprehensive approach to identification and control of hazards that contribute to indoor and outdoor fall incidents. This will include:

- Summarize recent research on causes and contributing factors for slip, trip and falls.
- Describe considerations for evaluating and maintaining slip-resistant floor surfaces.
- Identify design considerations to control common trip and fall hazards.
- Summarize elements of a slip and fall prevention process that gets results.

2010 San Jose Chapter PDC in Monterey - Nov. 4-5. Reminder: Early registration deadline is October 8, 2010.

THEME: "What's around the corner?"

DATES: Thursday 11/4 and Friday 11/5, 2010

LOCATION: Portola Hotel & Spa, Monterey, California

Early Registration (before 10/8/10) - ASSE, PASMA, SEMI members: \$195; Non member: \$245

Regular Registration (after 10/8/10) - ASSE, PASMA, SEMI members: \$220; Non member: \$270

Link to register online:

<http://www.assesj.org/pdc/registration.html>



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Governor Signs Bill Reforming "Serious Violation" Definition

In a major victory for advocates of reform of the way serious violations are adjudicated by the Cal/OSHA Appeals Board, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger has signed **AB 2774**, perhaps the most significant occupational safety and health bill to come out of Sacramento in several years. AB 2774, authored by Sandre Swanson (D-Oakland) takes several bold steps in redefining what is a serious violation and enhancing communication between employers and the Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH). (See linked story.)

AB 2774 rewrites California Labor Code 6432, replacing current language with a rebuttable presumption that a serious violation exists if DOSH demonstrates that there is a "reasonable possibility" that death or serious physical harm could result from the hazard.

Current language states that a serious violation exists if DOSH shows there is a substantial probability that death or serious physical harm could result from a violation. This requirement has made it difficult for DOSH to win before Cal/OSHA Appeals Board, which interprets the requirement to mean that the division has to prove a 51% likelihood of death or serious injury. Administrative law judges routinely dismiss citations for serious violations or reclassify them to "general," even in fatality cases, based on this requirement.

One of the most important aspects for employers and labor groups in AB 2774 is the requirement that inspectors attempt to get specific information from employers before issuing a citation. The intent is to give employers a better idea of what they would be cited for and give them the opportunity to abate the alleged hazard or rebut the alleged violation.

The bill also adds a provision that would require the Appeals Board to accept testimony by DOSH inspectors on serious violations if they demonstrate their Cal/OSHA-mandated training is current. The board has in the past disqualified inspector testimony for failing to have "specific familiarity" about a hazard.

AB 2774 is the culmination of several months of negotiation between employer groups, labor advocates and the Division to craft a piece of legislation that all sides could live with and advance the cause of health and safety. Legislative staffers and stakeholders say the direct involvement of the Department of Industrial Relations and the editorials from Cal-OSHA Reporter also helped drive the consensus.

The California Chamber of Commerce and a coalition of employer groups removed its opposition in August, increasing the odds that the governor would sign it.

[Click here](#) to see Cal-OSHA Reporter's editorial on the subject



Fire Prevention Week Quiz

Do you know how often smoke alarms should be replaced? How about how many feet away a space heater should be from an object that can burn? The National Fire Protection Association has an online quiz to help you assess whether or not your home is the safe haven you think it is. [Click here for the quiz.](#)



True Experiences that Trainers Would Like to Forget

October 5, 2010
 Bill Dickerson, CRSP
[A SafetyXChange Member](#)

Watch Where You Stand

About 20 years ago I organized a joint fire training exercise with several local sawmills and engaged the services of a training group from southern Ontario. The company had lots of experience with oil rig fires in western Canada.

The training went well as we progressed from small hand held extinguishers putting out small pans to the large dry chemical cart mounted extinguishers on larger fires.

The next day we started on water hoses and fire hydrants. We had prepared a shallow pit about 50 feet by 50 feet in the frozen ground with an excavator. The lead instructor had told the teams how a petroleum fire can be put out using water fog. A diesel fuel mixture was put in the pit and ignited. It immediately billowed up a huge loud of black smoke.

Two fire teams were to advance in parallel to the pit with charged water lines and use a fog pattern to push the fire to the far side of the put the fire out. The instructor was standing between the teams to direct them. The first two groups did it perfectly. The third group advanced to the edge of the pit as directed and went to open their nozzles. One hose opened properly but the other had frozen in the minus 20 degree temperature.

The instructor yelled at the nozzle man to get the *\$#@&^ hose open. As the firefighter struggled with the frozen nozzle he swung around and it was pointed directly at the instructor who was standing on the edge of the pit. The force of the water almost blew him into the pit. We were filming the demonstration and as he disappeared into the water fog all we could hear was a string of expletives. Despite his firefighting bunker gear he was soaked in the freezing temperatures.

I still have that video.

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 2010-11**

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Member Service awards:

Please join the Chapter Board in congratulating these three members for their years of dedicated service to ASSE.

William Van Cleve- 40 years

Brian Dehning- 25 years

Joeseph Hill- 25 years

