CSI Country Wide Case Study Safety Strategy Discussion

Construction Safety Investigator

Instructions

The objective of this tool is to provide field supervisors with information to proactively engage workers and discuss safety related concerns that they may encounter. Safety discussions should not be limited to the subject above and should pertain to the activities that workers will be involved in that may have the potential for safety related exposures.

Case Day:

CHUBB

July 2007

Accident Type:

Confined Space Accident - Industrial Welding

Relevant laws, rules and codes may include:

29CFR 1926.21(b)(6)(i) and (ii), 29CFR 1910.146

Case:

A 40 year-old welder was killed when he was asphyxiated inside a 24" pipe.

Accident Detail:

The welder was employed by a mechanical contractor, working on new construction at a petrochemical facility. He was assigned to a two-man crew, tasked with welding the joints on a 24" pipe.

Both men decided to split up and work separately, rather then work together as was directed by the foreman. The welder (deceased) completed his welds and called to the helper to come up from where he was working to assist him as he was planning to enter the 24" pipe.

When the helper arrived to assist, the welder was already in the pipe. Upon arrival, the helper called to the welder but received no response. He then called for assistance and fortunately did not attempt to enter the pipe to initiate a rescue.

Reconstructive Safety Evaluation:

- What are some of the possible causes of the accident being discussed?
- What actions could have been taken that might have prevented this accident from occurring?

Accident Scene Conclusion:

The investigation revealed the welding crew had conducted their daily toolbox talk and review of the Job Safety Task Analysis (JSTA) in the morning before work began. After the morning review was completed, but without the knowledge of the foreman, the two welders decided to alter the work plan and split up, each working on separate pipe joints. It was determined that the welder entered the pipe on his own to inspect his weld before the helper had arrived.

There was no record of specific confined space training. The atmosphere was checked after the welder was extricated and found to contain only 10.2% oxygen (19.5 to 23.5% is the standard). Other welders interviewed on that project indicated that they would, on occasion, enter a section of pipe to inspect welds they performed.

Preventive Safety Measures Include:

- All operations involving confined space entry must be fully evaluated and a confined space entry program and plan implemented.
- To ensure confined space operations are conducted safely they should be determined, authorized, overseen and terminated by an Entry Supervisor.
- Workers are trained in the hazards of confined spaces, the work they are to perform in them, personal protective and life saving equipment needed for the task and safe work procedures necessary to perform them.
- Confined space permitting and entry procedures are followed to include an entry attendant with no other duties, pre-entry and routine air monitoring (as determined by the Entry Supervisor) and pre-planned rescue service/team.

Attendance Roster		

Reference: This case is fictitious, and any resemblance to any persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental. However, the type of accident described in this case summary happens all too often on construction sites.

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