

# TRANSNEWS

Management Edition

Volume 50



W.F. CLAYTON



W.F. Clayton /Hilb Group of New Jersey offers unsurpassed resources to assist in your commitment to safety and loss control. If there are any questions please contact us.

## Fighting the Flu

Having your office prepared during flu season is essential in maintaining a healthy workforce throughout the winter. It's estimated that 5 – 20% of the population gets the flu every year, leading to 111 million workdays lost to influenza. Take a stand and take back your office productivity this fall by being proactive about flu protection.



To help your organization keep employees healthy, you should focus on three main categories to best protect against the flu: Education, Communication, and Activate.

**Educate.** It's been said that knowledge is power. Knowing the dangers of the flu and the details about fighting it can help your employees stay one step ahead. Educate your employees and leadership team alike on key influenza issues this flu season.

- People become infectious 1 day before symptoms develop and up to 5 to 7 days after becoming sick
- People with flu can spread it to others up to 6 feet away
- Peak flu season runs from December through March

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## 5 Ways to Jump Start Safety Meetings

Safety meetings pose a unique challenge in the workplace: How do you talk about the seriousness of avoiding hazards and preventing injuries, but keep workers entertained and involved?

If you find your safety meetings tend to drag, try spicing them up with these five simple tweaks.

### 1. Customize your safety material

Don't use the same old PowerPoint or stock photos. Instead, include pictures of your own workers and site-specific examples to keep them directly involved with each lesson. If your workers see how closely they're connected to on-the-job safety, they'll be more likely to participate.

### 2. Find a comfortable environment

Whether you have meetings in the shop or in a

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### *Flu (continued from Page 1)*

**Communicate.** The flu needs to be talked about. It's important to be just as strategic and prepared to communicate about your employees' health, as you would be about any other business issue. Take the time to prepare your thoughts and spread the word about influenza.

**Activate.** Education and communication are weak without the ability to move your workforce into action. Take steps to ensure your employees are healthy during flu season by improving hygiene practices, cleaning the office, aiding health habits and hosting a flu shot clinic.

### **Myths and facts about colds and the flu**

*MYTH: You can catch the flu from a flu shot.*

*FACT: The flu vaccine is made from an inactive virus, so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. (Some people may be sore in the area where the shot was given and, in a few cases, may develop a fever and muscle aches for a few days, but that is not the flu).*

*MYTH: There is nothing you can do once you get sick with the flu; stay at home in bed.*

*FACT: Antivirals, when started within 2 days after flu symptoms appear, reduce the duration of the illness and severity of the symptoms.*

*MYTH: You can catch a cold or the flu from going outside in cold weather.*

*FACT: While the cold and flu are more common in winter months, it is due to the time of year being the time when the virus is spread; it has nothing to do with being outside in cold weather.*

*MYTH: Starve a cold and feed a fever (flu).*

*FACT: This is definitely NOT a good idea in either case. You need more fluids than usual when suffering with a cold or flu. Drink plenty of water or juice, and eat the necessary food to satisfy your appetite.*

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conference room, make sure your workers feel they're able to talk about safety openly. Safety depends on trust, and it'll help if they're comfortable with one another.

#### **3. Teach through storytelling**

Open up with your own take on applying safety to the job. You can also ask your workers to tell stories about their past experiences with injuries or near-misses. It'll show workers that injuries and accidents don't just happen to "other people."

#### **4. Define your goals**

If you're talking with workers from a certain department (maintenance, drivers, etc.), use objectives that apply to them as opposed to ones that cover the whole company. Stay focused on these goals throughout the meeting to keep people from drifting off.

#### **5. End with an action plan**

Don't keep the meeting going for two hours if you're fighting to fill the time. It will only dilute your message. When you do end, make sure they have a safety takeaway to act on so they feel energized and ready to apply what they learned to the workplace.

# SAFETY TIPS



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## Railroad Crossing Safety for Commercial Vehicles

It may seem easy to avoid a collision with a 200-ton locomotive. Yet the fact is that a vehicle or pedestrian is hit by a train every three hours in the United States. When a bus or other commercial passenger vehicle has a collision with a train the results can be even more catastrophic considering the size and number of passengers on board.



It's important to note that railway crossing rules for commercial vehicles differ in many ways from those for cars and trucks. The suggestions below include regulatory requirements for commercial motor vehicles, though they are good practice for any vehicle. And remember, just because a CDL is not required doesn't mean a vehicle is not considered a commercial vehicle – many states and the Federal government consider any vehicle carrying nine or more persons or having a GVWR more than 10,000 pounds a commercial vehicle.

### Suggested procedures for crossing railroad tracks:

1. When approaching a crossing, begin slowing the vehicle well ahead of time.
2. Come to a stop between 15 and 50 feet from the tracks. If you are in a vehicle with a long wheelbase, insure there are not signs indicating "low clearance" – these signs indicate that longer vehicles may get stuck or "high centered" when crossing the tracks.
3. Turn off devices in the vehicle that may create noise. Open the driver's window and the passenger door, if possible, and look and listen for the train.
4. Look both ways then look again for a train. This is known as "doing a double take."

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## ***Railroad (continued from Page 1)***

5. Look for clearance on the other side of the crossing. If there is traffic or other obstacles that would prevent your entire vehicle from clearing the tracks by at least 10 feet, do not attempt to cross until clearance is available.
6. Be especially alert when the railway crossing encompasses multiple sets of tracks. Make sure all sets of tracks are clear before proceeding.
7. If there is no sign of an approaching train, proceed forward carefully over the tracks and do not stop. Do so in the lowest gear possible and under no circumstances should gear shifting occur at a railway grade. This can cause the engine to stall at the worst possible moment.

### **What to do if the vehicle stalls or is stuck on the tracks:**

1. Get out! Evacuating the vehicle as quickly as possible is the highest priority when a vehicle is stranded on tracks don't stop to retrieve belongings. The driver should direct passengers to gather in a safe location - away from the tracks and other roadway traffic.

2. All rail crossings have an emergency phone number posted somewhere nearby. Find the number as quickly as possible and contact the railroad to report the warning to any approaching trains. Remember trains require a mile or more to stop, so giving as much notice as possible is crucial.
3. Contact local law enforcement to advise them of the incident. Drivers should also contact their supervisors as well, to apprise them of the situation. Under no circumstances should passengers be allowed to return to the vehicle.
4. If a train is in sight, immediately move the group toward the oncoming train, staying as far from the tracks as possible. This will minimize the risk of being struck by debris when the crash occurs.

### **Railroad crossing signs and signals**

Below is a list of additional information you should be aware of that relates to crossing signs and signals:

1. The crossbuck sign consists of two white boards intersecting each other in an "X" shape. It, along with the round crossing sign, is a sure sign that tracks are close by.

2. Sometimes the crossbuck sign is combined with a smaller one underneath that tells how many sets of tracks lie ahead. For example, a site with three sets with have the crossbuck sign and the message "three tracks" below.
3. The high center/high profile sign alerts drivers that the crossing isn't safe for low-clearance vehicles to use.
4. *Quiet zone signs* usually say, "no train horn." They indicate that the surrounding community has met the requirements to ban whistles from being sounded within its limits. In place of the whistles are enhanced crossing notices, including audible alerts that can only be heard from a short distance away.



# SAFETY TIPS



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## Ladder Safety

Ladders have existed for thousands of years. The earliest depiction of a ladder is a 10,000 year old Mesolithic painting in Valencia, Spain. Ladders remain a fixture in most walks of life, and we must find ways to prevent ladder injuries. Consider these 10 steps to ladder safety.

**Step 1: Select the right ladder for the job.** Using the wrong ladder for the job leads to many ladder-related injuries. Four factors come into play when selecting a ladder for a job.

- 1) Determine the correct style of ladder (e.g., stepladder, extension, staircase). Never lead a stepladder against a wall and climb it like an extension ladder. Do not use a stepladder to access the rooves of buildings.
- 2) Make sure the combined weight of the worker and his/her tools and materials do not exceed a ladders ANSI weight rating.
- 3) Use the right material for the job. For example, always use a fiberglass ladder when working around live electrical circuits.
- 4) Use the right size ladder for the task. The ladder must be long enough to safely reach the task – a worker should never stand on the top rung or top cap of a stepladder, or the top three rungs of an extension ladder. Breaking this rule is a common cause of ladder injuries every year.

**Step 2: Inspect the ladder.** Check the ladder for loose rungs, rivets, bolts and welds. Do not use a ladder that has broken or defective parts. Clean any foreign materials, grease, paint or dirt from the ladder to ensure safe, stable footing.

**Step 3: Safely handle and transport the ladder.** Shoulder, neck and back injuries caused by carrying heavy traditional ladders are a common and costly occurrence. When carrying a large extension ladder, ensure that it is well balanced and that the front is slightly raised.

**Step 4: Setup the ladder safely.** Place the ladder on solid, level ground that is free of debris. Avoid unsafe leveling techniques and always test the stability of the setup from the lower rungs before climbing higher.

**Step 5: Check for hazards.** Avoid hazards such as overhead wires, light fixtures and power lines. Make sure the setup area is free of hazards such as slick surfaces and debris. Avoid setting up a ladder near blind corners where it is not visible to others. Never setup a ladder in front of a door.

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**Step 6: Remember the 4-to-1 ratio.** Always setup an extension ladder at a 75 degree angle or 4-to-1 ratio (1 horizontal foot from the upper contact point for every 4 feet of height). Workers can confirm this ratio by placing their toes in front of the ladder feet, holding their arms straight out and placing the palms of their hands on the rung.

**Step 7: Recognize that lashing is bad.** Two ladders are not better than one. Lashing is the practice of tying two ladders

together to reach greater heights. This is an unsafe practice. Ladders are not designed to be used in this manner.

**Step 8: Get on the roof the right way.** Accessing an upper landing roof can be tricky. Make sure the ladder extends 3 feet above the roofline. Never climb up over the top rung. Instead, step carefully to the side onto the roof or landing. Take care not to rush.

**Step 9: Remember the belt-buckle rule.** This is a rule many break at some point. Do not overreach. A worker should keep

the center of his/her body (the belt buckle) between the side rails of the ladder. If an object cannot be reached without overreaching, climb down and move the ladder closer.

**Step 10: Remember training.** Many incidents occur because one of the nine previous guidelines was ignored. Remember to stay vigilant and focused while using a ladder.

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## Extension Cord Do's and Don'ts

Electrical extension cords are used in many offices and workplaces, and should be treated with caution. The correct use of extension cords is an important component of on-the-job electrical safety.

The following are do's and don'ts for working safely with extension cords:

### Do:

- Check cords for damage before use
- Ensure all equipment and extension cords have the mark of an independent testing laboratory
- Fully insert the plug of an extension cord into an outlet
- Keep extension cords away from water
- Use ground fault circuit interrupters in damp environments
- Store extension cords indoors
- Unplug extension cords when not in use
- Only use extension cords temporarily; permanent wiring should be installed when use of the cords is no longer temporary

### Don't:

- Use an indoor extension cord in outdoor environments
- Attempt to plug extension cords into one another
- Use an extension cord that has a lower wattage rating than the tool being used with it
- Overload cords
- Force a plug into an outlet
- Use a wet extension cord
- Overheat an extension cord
- Drive over a cord
- Drag an extension cord
- Place cords under rugs or carpets or in busy areas



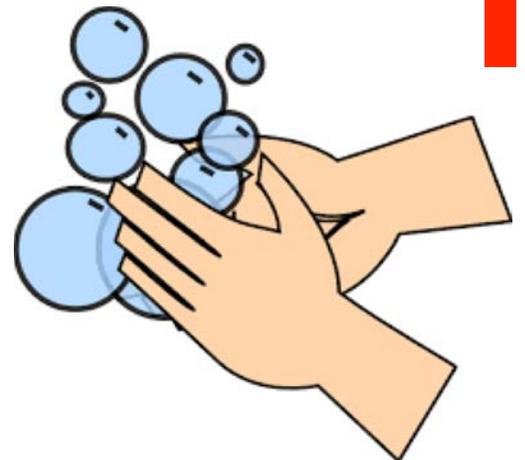
**DECEMBER - MARCH**

**IS PEAK**



**SEASON**

**WASH HANDS  
OFTEN  
DURING FLU  
SEASON**



WASHING FOR AT LEAST 20 SECONDS HELPS  
PREVENT THE SPREAD OF THE FLU.



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