

This month's theme:

## **Addressing Potential Serious Injuries – A Key to Injury Prevention.**

In this month's safety bulletin, we will discuss some important information regarding what member organizations and specifically what organizational leaders can do to impact injury prevention by focusing on potential serious injuries.



### **Injury reporting and severity:**

In previous bulletins (December 2022, February 2023) discussion centered around a review of injury reporting by our ten participating companies as well as a closer focus on serious injuries. As a point of review, the now eleven companies who report their monthly injury information to PPI utilize a numerical severity rating system with the following definitions.

Severity Rating Chart	
1	First Aid
2	Recordable Case
3	Life Altering
4	Fatality/Potential Fatality

Based on 2022 submitted injuries there were a total of 53 injuries out of a total of 146 injuries reported that were identified as either a severity of 3 (48) or 4 (5) representing 36% of the total. None of the severity rated 4 injuries were fatalities, but the potential existed.

During the March PPI Safety Committee Meeting, the committee undertook a review of the 40 reported injuries for January 2023 (this included First Aids). The committee was drawn to two important items as part of the data review. First, with respect to body part, a number of head injuries were reported. Also, there were several falls from different levels reported. Following are excerpts from the reported data to provide further clarification:

1. Pipe struck employee in head while coiling.
2. Pipe shifted and struck driver in head.
3. Employee stepped off trailer and fell to ground.
4. Employee fell from trailer while loading.
5. Broken band struck employee in the face.

### **Determining potential is important:**

All the cases described above were reported as either recordable cases or a first aid case. But is that the extent of what we really need to know. From a purely regulatory perspective, having a good reporting system and investigative process with corrective actions and closure, a company would pass the regulatory test. From the standpoint of mitigating the most serious risk and bringing to bear the right resources to such events, an organization really needs to go one step further and ask themselves was there a greater potential for a more serious injury based on the accident sequence. All accident sequences are not alike, and because of this it is important for any organization to critically evaluate the sequence of events leading up to the injury, and determine if the potential existed for a more serious outcome.

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This is not to say that every injury has a greater potential. In most cases they do not. The examples listed above, given energy impacts to the head and falls from heights, provide a hint that the potential outcome could have been more serious. The important takeaway here is that having a process to sort out those higher potential injuries can be of great value to the organization.

### **What should leaders do:**

Leaders at all levels of the organization from the CEO to the first line supervisor can take part in the identification and prevention of potential serious injuries. Listed below are some thoughts on what leaders can do (not defined by level):

1. Define a process to evaluate the potential of injuries and near misses. Assign responsibilities across the organization.
2. Apply more resources (team investigation) for the purpose of accomplishing more thorough investigations of serious potential injuries and the implementation of corrective actions.
3. Investigations should focus on management systems that are ineffective. Work from the premise that employees take risk for a reason and often that reason is due to a management system failure.
4. Engage employees to participate in the potential evaluations. Employees who do the tasks understand what risk they are taking and why.
5. Develop a communication plan so all employees know about the new focus on potential and the reason for such a focus. Share outcomes on a periodic basis, especially outcomes that mitigate risks associated with potential serious injuries. This is a great opportunity for leaders to express their value for the safety of all employees.
6. JSAs need to be modified based on outcomes and retraining accomplished.
7. Consider pre-job planning as an additive measure for tasks that have been identified through the potential serious injury process.
8. Utilize observation processes, GEMBA walks, etc. to focus on tasks that have experienced potential serious injuries and talk to employees during these activities.
9. Make resources available to limit or remove the risk entirely (equipment guarding, different equipment that removes the employee from the process, staircase to get on and off trailers, etc.)

### **Reminder - Recordable Tracking and Sharing of Corrective Actions:**

PPI is encouraging your company to participate in this monthly report. The Injury Reporting Process and Template are available in the PPI Member's Only section or simply email David Fink at [dfink@plasticpipe.org](mailto:dfink@plasticpipe.org). We look forward to your company's participation so that together we can support each other in continuous improvement of our safety performance.

### **Additional PPI Safety Resources:**

As a reminder, PPI has the following videos on our Members' Only site from previous Safety Symposium webinars:

- Accident Causation & Prevention
- Incident Investigation & Analysis
- Hazard Recognition

And the previous Safety Bulletins may be found at following the path PPI-Home/About/Safety.