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:

July 2007

Accident Type:

Excavation Accident - Hazardous Atmosphere

Relevant laws, rules and codes may include:

29CFR 1926.20(a)(1), 1926.21(b)(2), 1926.650, 1926.651(g), 1926.651(k)

Case:

After entering an excavation, a construction worker was found dead.

Accident Detail:

The worker was employed by a contractor hired to excavate and replace/re-route a section of storm water drainage pipe and structures as part of a highway project.

The work location was initially excavated the previous afternoon in preparation for the following day's activities. The following morning, a worker who showed up at the site before the others in the crew, allegedly decided to enter the excavation and begin exposing the pipe, prepping it for the day's work, rather then wait for the remainder of the crew to arrive.

When the others arrived, they noticed the worker's (deceased) truck at the location but he was not in it. A coworker walked over and looked into the trench where he saw the worker lying unconscious inside the section of exposed pipe. They called to him but there was no response. The foreman instructed the men to stay out of the excavation as he called 911 for emergency personnel. Upon inspection, the worker was dead at the scene.

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 worker was new to this company and had not received any excavation safety training. The excavation was located in a wetland area along side of the highway. When rescuers arrived, they found that it contained toxic levels of Hydrogen Sulfide gas, a gas commonly found in wetland areas occurring naturally by decaying plant and animal matter. As a result, they had to enter the excavation using air supplied respirators to extract the worker.

Preventive Safety Measures Include:

- All operations are preplanned using a Job Safety Task Analysis (JSTA) to ensure potential safety hazards associated with an operation are identified and appropriate steps are taken to eliminate or control them.
- Workers are trained in the hazards of excavations, the work they are to perform, the personal protective equipment and safe work procedures necessary to perform their assigned tasks.
- Ensure workers do not enter excavations until first inspected by a Competent Person1 and he/she had determined there is no
 evidence of a situation that could result in a cave-in, failure of protective systems, hazardous atmosphere, or other hazardous
 conditions.
- If the Competent Person finds evidence of an unsafe situation, all workers are immediately removed from the excavation until necessary precautions have been taken to ensure their safety.

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.

¹As defined bu OSHA requirements

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