Conveying A Safety Message Meeting Kit

Conveyors are a wonderful invention. They move large amounts of materials quickly and safely. They allow workers to reduce the number of materials handled manually thereby increasing work capacity and production output. Decreasing manual material handling also lessens the chance of injury to a worker's back and hands. Conveyors are safe when used correctly, but they can be dangerous—and even deadly—if workers fail to follow safety procedures when working on or around them.

MOST COMMON CONVEYOR HAZARDS

- Spills and falling materials.
- Power transmission interfaces, such as drives or shafts.
- Rotating parts or pinch points can drag in, crush or entangle.
- Confinement or assembly areas (the area between a fixed object and a moving one) can shear or crush.
- Parts that slide or reciprocate (press down) can crush or shear.
- Items can break or be ejected (thrown from) the conveyor system.
- Items can fall off the conveyor.
- Electrical, fire or explosion hazards.

CONVEYOR SAFETY – WHAT TO DO AND NOT TO DO

1. **DO keep clothing, body parts, and hair away from the conveyor:** This is one of the most common conveyor related injuries, and the consequences can be devastating. Trained personnel should keep their hands off conveyors and visitors to your plant should be briefed on conveyor safety and inspected for loose clothes or long hair that could be caught before being allowed near the conveyor line. Don't wear watches, bracelets, or rings either.
2. **DON'T climb, step, sit, or stand the conveyor at any time:** It may seem like common sense, but people frequently do it, and it can lead to serious injury. It's imperative that workers never climb, sit, stand, walk, ride, or even touch the conveyor line. People ride conveyors because it looks fun, and because it doesn't seem as dangerous as it is. They've even seen it done in action movies. But conveyors are not built with people in mind. Pinch points can exist that can catch clothing or people, and cause serious injuries. Capacities are not designed for a human's weight. There are many ways for conveyors to cause injuries to anyone who sits on them. Aside from

the safety factor, people riding on conveyors can cause belts to un-track or damage the system.

3. **DO ensure all personnel are clear of equipment before starting** OSHA conveyor standards state that conveyor systems should be equipped with a warning signal to be sounded prior to start-up. But companies should not stop there; training should also be included about what the warning horn means and how injuries can occur if it's ignored.
4. **DON'T remove or alter conveyor guards or safety divides:** Guards may be removed by plant employees or service contractors for maintenance, which can expose machinery, gears, chains, and moving parts that can be dangerous if left unguarded. To help ensure worker safety, lock out conveyors when in service, and operate equipment only when all approved covers and guards have been reinstalled.
5. **DO know location and function of stop/start controls:** It's imperative that anyone who works in a conveyor area be familiar with the location and function of emergency stop and start controls. Employers should train workers about the controls, where they are, when to use them, and how to access them, and the controls should also be marked to avoid confusion and allow workers to make fast decisions about using them.
6. **DON'T perform service on a conveyor until motor disconnect is locked out:** Avoid performing any maintenance until electrical, air, or hydraulic power sources are disconnected or blocked out. Lockout/Tagout systems can prevent equipment from being powered up while maintenance or repairs are being done.
7. **Conveyor maintenance technician DO allow authorized personnel to operate/maintain material handling equipment:** Only those employees who have been trained to operate and perform maintenance on conveyors should do so. This ensures both technician safety and optimal conveyor performance.
8. **DON'T modify or misuse conveyor controls:** Conveyor controls should never be modified by unqualified personnel. Be sure to monitor your controls to ensure no employee has misused, modified, or disconnected them. At times employees can make modifications that work for a specific area or function, but can contribute to a less safe working environment. Be sure that they understand that conveyor controls are typically part of a larger system, and that any changes must be approved by management.
9. **DO make conveyor safety training a priority:** Any facility that utilizes conveyors should train employees in safe operations. Regular, frequent updates and refresher courses should be included in the training program and preventing unsafe acts should be a part of company culture.
10. **DON'T fail to report all unsafe conditions to your supervisor:** Your company culture of safety should encourage workers to report unsafe conditions like loose guards, people working too closely with the conveyors with unrestrained clothes or hair, etc. Training about safety issues and when to report them should be made to all employees and repeated often. Allow anonymous or "no consequences" information submissions when it comes to safe situations and behavior; the main thing is to be sure unsafe practices, equipment, or people are reported and dealt with in a way that helps make the conveying equipment safer for everyone.

EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITY

- Never climb or stand on a conveyor frame to load, unload a blockage, unless it is stopped and locked out.

- Never remove heavy or bulky articles by hand from a moving conveyor unless at a designated station.
- Never ride or sit on a conveyor.
- Not do maintenance or complete repairs on a conveyor without following lock-out procedures.
- Wear close-fitting clothing and ensure head and facial hair is cut or confined when working near a machine where clothing may come into contact with moving parts.

FINAL WORD

Conveyors are hazardous if proper training is not metered out to employees in the operation and safe use of conveyors. On-going training and refresher protocols must be conducted on a regular basis.