

Tap available resources when creating a company safety program

BY KENT H. JORGENSEN

LET'S SAY YOU HAVE BEEN ASKED to come up with a safety plan. The company you work for has decided to upgrade or initiate a safety program for the workplaces they are responsible for. Companies don't want to see anyone get hurt, and if they have done the research, they know the cost savings of long-term accident prevention. They have read reports that show by having a program they can save tens of thousands of dollars through the prevention of recordable accidents.

So, it is up to you. You are going to create this safety program. Where do you go to get started? Where do you find the information needed for a safety program?

The good thing is we are living in the information age, and there is so much information available to us by simply putting a few words in a search line. The bad thing is we are living in the information age, and by just putting a few words in a search line you can be crushed by information. The avalanche of information can be difficult to sift through. You will need to develop a filter

for finding useful resources. And, it is a good to have a few human resources to bounce ideas off of as well.

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"Best practices" — a must read

Before you start gathering information, read the *Protocol*, Summer 2015, article by Steven A. Adelman, Esq; "Best Practices: A

The poster features the OSHA logo and title at the top. It lists rights for workers and duties for employers. On the right, there is an illustration of three workers in safety gear. At the bottom, contact information for OSHA is provided.

All workers have the right to:

- A safe workplace.
- Raise a safety or health concern with your employer or OSHA, or report a work-related injury or illness, without being retaliated against.
- Receive information and training on job hazards, including all hazardous substances in your workplace.
- Request an OSHA inspection of your workplace if you believe there are unsafe or unhealthy conditions. OSHA will keep your name confidential. You have the right to have a representative contact OSHA on your behalf.
- Participate (or have your representative participate) in an OSHA inspection and speak in private to the inspector.
- File a complaint with OSHA within 30 days (by phone, online or by mail) if you have been retaliated against for using your rights.
- See any OSHA citations issued to your employer.
- Request copies of your medical records, tests that measure hazards in the workplace, and the workplace injury and illness log.

This poster is available free from OSHA.

Employers must:

- Provide employees a workplace free from recognized hazards. It is illegal to retaliate against an employee for using any of their rights under the law, including raising a health and safety concern with you or with OSHA, or reporting a work-related injury or illness.
- Comply with all applicable OSHA standards.
- Report to OSHA all work-related fatalities within 8 hours, and all inpatient hospitalizations, amputations and losses of an eye within 24 hours.
- Provide required training to all workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand.
- Prominently display this poster in the workplace.
- Post OSHA citations at or near the place of the alleged violations.

FREE ASSISTANCE to identify and correct hazards is available to small and medium-sized employers, without citation or penalty, through OSHA-supported consultation programs in every state.

Contact OSHA. We can help.

1-800-321-OSHA (6742) • TTY 1-877-889-5627 • www.osha.gov

The OSHA Job Safety and Health: It's the Law poster, available for free from OSHA, informs workers of their rights under the Occupational Safety and Health Act. All covered employers are required to display the poster in their workplace.

Legal Disclaimer.” Many of the resources that are useful in writing a safety and health program will be labeled with “Best Practices.” Adelman’s article points out that using the term “Best Practices” can be problematic. There is rarely a single best practice, and even more rarely an authoritative group that creates the best way to do something. The good news is the article suggests that making a reasonable effort and using qualified people, plus using reasonable practices for the given situation, can allow you to reach a reasonable solution.

State and federal OSHA resources

The first great place to find resources is the OSHA website (OSHA.gov). While many companies want to stay as far away from OSHA as possible, OSHA does have great resources to assist companies with creating a safe and healthful workplace and to be in compliance with OSHA regulations. There are all manner of publications that

are available to companies putting together a program. And, if you don't like the fed's offering, there are 22 state occupational safety and health plans.

These state plans are very worthwhile to search through. Like the fed publications, they have great content. The great thing about using these documents is, for the most part, they are public documents and have no copyright restriction. Another benefit of using the materials is because part of a safety program is to assist a company with complying with OSHA regulations—using the materials from your home state OSHA will help with being in compliance with regulations.

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A caution for using all of the resources mentioned in this article: There are few resources that are specific to the entertainment and exhibition industries. Having said that, many safety rules and guidelines are not significantly different from industry to industry. Ladders and hand tools are, for the most part, used the same way on a stage as they are in building a house. The use of the material should be made to fit the circumstances of the company. It is easy to find some materials that can be used for, say, a “tool box talk,” but if the material is aimed at a different industry, they may not fit the specific situation, and the entertainment workers getting the tool box talk may not pay attention.

ANSI Standards

Professional organizations like ESTA often offer guidelines for safety. The American National Standard Institute (ANSI) oversees the creating of industry standards. ESTA is the ANSI secretariat for writing the entertainment industry standards. The ANSI Standards create industry guidelines to follow. Often these standards become OSHA regulations.

ActSafe and the Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee

There are two resources that can provide safety guidelines more specific to the performing arts and the motion picture and television industry. They are ActSafe, from British Columbia, and the Industry-Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee, out of Hollywood. The two entities are made up of committees that research and write recommended practices for dozens of situations encountered during live performances and on television and motion picture sets.

The website for the Industry Wide Labor-Management Safety Committee is: csatf.org/bulletintro.shtml. This committee has been around for many decades. There you will find over 40 safety bulletins and factsheets. These provide a wide variety of information. The first bulletin is a general code of safe practices for productions. It, like all codes of safe practices, is a combination of federal, state, and local laws and regulations. Couple these with the common sense of industry professionals, and you are well on your way to having guidelines to prevent accidents and injuries.

Other guidelines that are covered include a broad range, such as stunts, working with venomous reptiles, PPE (personnel protective equipment), portable power, camera cranes, preventing heat illness, and more. The few subjects listed here are just

scratching the surface. These guidelines are regularly revised as circumstances change and new guidelines are added as the industry evolves. One of the newest bulletins is about hydraulic, gimbal systems that move set pieces in front of the camera.

The ActSafe guidelines can be found at:

- Motion Picture: www.actsafe.ca/category/resources/safety-bulletins/motion-picture/
- Performing Arts: www.actsafe.ca/category/resources/safety-bulletins/performing-arts/

When you visit these sites, the bulletins are very similar to the Industry-Wide Committee bulletins. Many of the committee members sit on more than one committee. Also, because a great deal of safety is based on similar, reasonable solutions, similarities are going to occur.

Other available resources

Other resources to take advantage of are Union websites. Many of the Locals have put materials on their websites that are helpful as part of a safety program. Many times they have developed materials with the companies who employ their members and, working with those employers, they have created industry-specific information.

Manufacturers' websites also provide useful resources. Most of the information on manufacturers' sites is obviously dealing with the equipment and materials they produce. This information is not usually part of a basic safety plan, but they are very helpful for specific information for the use, maintenance, and inspection of the different equipment used at a workplace.

Military field manuals are another beneficial place to find information. The military spends a great deal of effort to train their personnel. They have hundreds and hundreds of manuals that cover many topics that are useful when adapted for specific training in the entertainment industry. One of the advantages of using these documents

is they are usually free of copyright. The Army field manual on rigging has some great information including wonderful graphics on tying knots.

You can also look outside the US for resources. Canada has occupational safety and health departments with available resources. An Internet search will also show many countries have materials that can be useful for setting up a program.

Resources, both information and human, are necessary to maintain an effective program.

Continuous effort and energy required

Maintaining a safety program is a continuous effort requiring time and energy to keep up with the changing issues of the entertainment and exhibition industries. Resources, both information and human, are necessary to maintain an effective program. Industry practices, manufacturers' guidelines, common sense, and reasonable efforts can produce programs capable of preventing accidents at work. ■



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classes. Kent's greatest pride is being Marsha's husband and Shawn and Lauren's dad.