

OSHA's 2012 Fall Prevention Campaign

HOW PLANNING, EQUIPMENT AND PROPER TRAINING CAN REDUCE FALLS

Falls continue to be one of the top causes of on-the-job fatalities in the U.S. today. Carl Heinlein, CSP, CRIS, OHST, and R. Ronald Sokol, CSP, helped develop and roll out OSHA's 2012 Fall Prevention Campaign. In this interview, Heinlein and Sokol provide background on the campaign and explain how SH&E professionals can best utilize its resources.

BP: Please provide a brief description of your professional backgrounds.

CH: I have worked for American Contractors Insurance Group since 2002 and have been in the SH&E field for 20 years. I am currently a member of the NIOSH National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Construction Sector and serve as president of the Board of Certified Safety Professionals.

RS: I have been practicing in the occupational SH&E field for 33 years. My background is concentrated in construction from my experience with the Bechtel Group of Companies. For the past 23 years, I have been president and CEO of Safety Council Texas City.

(excluding vehicle-related deaths). Everyone involved embraced the partnership to develop the first of many campaigns to help reduce and/or eliminate death and injuries on and off the job.

RS: I believe when Congress created the OSHA Act in 1970, it envisioned partnerships between NIOSH and OSHA to be a natural progression of how both agencies would operate. The culture and work processes of OSHA and NIOSH took each organization in different directions. When NORA was created in the 1990s, NIOSH researchers became engaged with SH&E practitioners to outline the U.S.'s SH&E agenda for the next 10 years. In the development of NORA's different sectors, the Construction Sector was assembled with NIOSH researchers, SH&E practitioners and OSHA representatives. Through the collaboration of the Construction Sector Councils, ideas began to germinate on ways to advance SH&E activities involving Research to Practice (R2P) and Prevention through Design (PtD) applications. The fall campaign's foundation was built on the success of the OSHA/NIOSH/NORA Construction Sector nail gun research project, which turned R2P research into usable documents for construction contractors and their workers. This success inspired the partnership to take on a great project with a far-reaching impact designed to stop worker fall fatalities in construction.

BP: How does this campaign work to raise awareness among English-speaking and Spanish-speaking construction workers nationwide?

CH: Much of the material is offered for both English- and Spanish-speaking workers. The information is also offered in many formats, including photographs, video clips and graphics, to increase retention and understanding. Most importantly, the information offered is easy to use.

RS: The campaign originally focused on reaching predominantly English-speaking and Spanish-speaking residential contractors and their employees. Focus groups used in the campaign development phase represented this cross-section of employees. OSHA representatives expressed their desire to increase the breadth of the campaign to cover all employees working at height and at risk to falls. OSHA took the initiative to ensure that campaign materials were provided in English and Spanish and plans to translate campaign material into six more languages. OSHA provided space on its website to allow for campaign literature to be accessible to contractors and their employees. The success of OSHA's heat stress campaign last year served as a model for the fall prevention campaign. The campaign's message is simple and direct—Plan, Provide and Train. This was similar to OSHA's heat stress campaign, which focused on Water, Rest and Shade.

Even though the target audience began with small residential contractors, OSHA's involvement expanded



CARL HEINLEIN

BP: Why did OSHA, NIOSH and NORA's Construction Sector decide to partner together on this campaign?

CH: OSHA, NIOSH and NORA Construction Sector have been working together on many items, including the nail gun research project, but the fall campaign has been the biggest collaborative effort thus far. Falls are still the leading cause of deaths in the construction industry

the scope to all employers who have workers at risk from fall hazards. Construction employers and small-, medium- and large-sized corporations can all benefit from the materials provided in the campaign.

BP: *How is OSHA coordinating the campaign's outreach?*

CH: OSHA, NIOSH and the NORA Construction Sector Partners are working together on a regular basis to discuss how they are sharing campaign information to avoid duplication or gaps in spreading the word. Specifically, we hold a monthly conference call to coordinate current campaign efforts and to develop future opportunities to enhance and share the campaign information.

OSHA and NIOSH are sharing campaign information on their websites, as well as in printed campaign materials at meetings and conferences. OSHA has shared the campaign information with all of its regional and area offices and with the OSHA Training Institute for distribution. Both NIOSH and OSHA leadership continue to discuss the campaign's importance while working with both public and private organizations.

BP: *The three tenets of the fall prevention campaign are:*

- 1) *Plan ahead to get the job done safely.*
- 2) *Provide the right equipment.*
- 3) *Train everyone to use the equipment safely.*

What steps should employers and workers take to execute each step effectively?

CH: It is critical that any end user use any or all of the various campaign information to best fit their operations and employees. Many free resources are also available that can help individuals develop the best approach, but for those who use the information for the first time, it never hurts to see what the employees understand and retain. Provide the right equipment and train everyone on the three tenets—Plan, Provide and Train.

RS: We have often heard the old adage, "Plan your work and work your plan." This statement is the foundation of the risk management philosophy to eliminate falls from heights. Without proper planning, workers are placed in a reactive mode based on their limited knowledge plus experience and expertise. Proper planning is used to greatly limit fall exposure. Concepts like PtD are aimed at limiting worker exposure to heights.

One great success story involves a contractor who was tasked with steel erection for the new Miami Marlins baseball stadium. By using PtD techniques, the amount of steel connections that needed to be completed at elevation was greatly reduced. Needed connections were performed by workers in aerial lifts, which greatly reduced fall exposure to all ironworkers on the project. This example illustrates how important the Plan component is for the program to succeed.

As for providing the right equipment, this could be aerial lifts as discussed or proper PPE for worker exposure to fall hazards that cannot be eliminated by design means and methods. Understanding the need to use the right equipment for the job and providing proper training in the equipment are keys to success for the second step.

The last step focuses on training. This step is last because PPE and the training of its use should be the last resort to eliminate fall hazards. The problem with using training as a preferred method of limiting fall exposure is that it introduces the human element into the equation. People do not always do what they were trained to do. Other factors like time, knowledge, cost and retention can greatly limit training. Remember, a mis-step while working at elevation can result in a fatal mistake in seconds. Many times, you do not get a second chance.

BP: *What resources does OSHA provide as part of the campaign*

to help safety trainers improve or enhance their fall prevention training?

CH: OSHA offers a variety of free information, including videos, CDs, pamphlets, quick information cards and an excellent website to help anyone develop and enhance their fall protection training and education programs. OSHA also has a great network of local and regional offices that offer assistance. You can contact the **OSHA Training Institute** or any of the OSHA outreach training centers located throughout the U.S. with any questions.

RS: Our focus group research found that more workers and employers visit the OSHA website than any other resource. Workers place a tremendous amount of credibility on information provided by OSHA. Workers understand that OSHA was created to protect them from dangerous SH&E hazards in the workplace, and for 40 years, OSHA has earned their trust. That is one main reason why it was so important to launch the campaign with OSHA's buy-in. As stated, OSHA has taken the lead in translating campaign materials and launched the campaign during Worker Memorial Day this past April headed by Labor Secretary Hilda Solis. OSHA has been a great partner on the campaign, as has ASSE and its members.



R. RONALD SOKOL

Our focus group research found that more workers and employers visit the OSHA website than any other resource. Workers place a tremendous amount of credibility on information provided by OSHA.



It is still early in the campaign, but feedback has been extremely positive. Interviews like this will help keep the information out in front of not only SH&E professionals in the construction industry, but also SH&E professionals in all industries.

BP: *Do the A10 standards for construction and demolition operations or any other national voluntary consensus standards play a role in the campaign?*

CH: At this point in the campaign, they are reference material. In most cases, these standards cost money and are not always easy to understand. We are trying to offer resources that are free and easy to use and understand.

RS: Contractors, owners, architects and engineering firms who look for guidance by using ANSI/ASSE A10 standards are moving the ball well beyond the baseline issues addressed in this campaign. That does not mean the principles on which the campaign is built—Plan, Provide, Train—are not beyond the scope of these organizations, but these groups are using these principles in ways never thought of before (see previous example on Miami Marlins Stadium project). One thing to remember is we can always Plan, Provide and Train better and smarter on each project so the campaign theme is relevant to those groups that use A10 standards.

BP: *How can SH&E professionals best make use of the fall prevention campaign's resources, or what can they do to promote the campaign within their organizations?*

CH: Most contractors are looking for good training and education material, and now they have it! The campaign information can be used to enhance your current programs. Contractors can share the campaign information with their employees as well as with fellow contractors.

RS: As a member of the NORA Construction Sector and a member of ASSE's Government Affairs Committee, I have taken it upon myself to expose ASSE leadership

to the campaign. ASSE has taken up the charge by providing every attendee at Safety 2012 in Denver, CO, with a handout about the campaign, and information was included in all Safety 2012 media kits. As a past Construction Practice Specialty (CPS) administrator, I have submitted campaign literature to current CPS leadership to be included in Blueprints. I have also worked to distribute campaign literature to the 750 contractors who are members of Safety Council Texas City.

Every ASSE member and SH&E practitioner should promote and educate contractors, workers, owners, engineers and architects about the campaign. It is part of our mission to protect people, property and the environment. In this mission, people come first, and this campaign is about educating people. Each ASSE chapter should communicate campaign information to its members and should hold at least one meeting per chapter year to discuss the campaign. The NORA Construction Sector is working on a PowerPoint presentation that will supply a consistent message about the campaign to any audience. This should be available for download shortly. Companies can reprint and rebrand campaign information with their logo on materials. These are just a few ways to get involved.

BP: *How have construction workers and employers responded to the campaign thus far?*

CH: It is still early in the campaign, but feedback has been extremely positive. We still have a long way to go, but interviews like this will help keep the information out in front of not only SH&E professionals in the construction industry, but also SH&E professionals in all industries.

RS: It has been greeted with great enthusiasm. The NORA Construction Council is working to supply new materials each month to keep the campaign fresh and alive.

BP: *Do OSHA, NIOSH and NORA's Construction Sector plan to collaborate on similar campaigns in the future? If so, what safety topics are under consideration?*

CH: The fall prevention campaign is certainly laying the groundwork for future campaigns, but we still have plenty of work to do and lessons to learn. The Construction Sector developed the fall prevention campaign based on discussions to ensure the highest impact in reducing injuries and fatalities in the construction industry. Other potential campaign areas include struck-by, caught-in and/or electrocution hazards, three of the remaining leading killers of construction workers and part of the OSHA Focus Four in Construction.

RS: The fall prevention campaign was chosen from a larger discussion about the Focus Four Hazards involved in construction fatalities (falls, struck-by, caught-in and electrocution). I can envision a campaign focused on the other three main killers in construction-related fatalities (struck-by, electrocution and caught-in). We can use the lessons learned in creating this campaign to be more effective and efficient in launching future campaigns. The lessons learned will serve us well in the future.

BP: *In what ways will you both continue to support the campaign throughout the remainder of 2012?*

CH: My colleagues continue to share campaign material with our contractors, and we have posted campaign information on our company website. Ron and I recently presented on the campaign at ASSE's Professional Development Conference (PDC). We also had a chance to discuss the campaign at the PDC practice specialty, branch and common interest group meetings, and we are including campaign information in many of ASSE's practice specialty publications.

RS: Carl and I have committed ourselves to be spokespeople to any and all groups with which we interact. We believe this campaign will save lives, and the NORA Construction Sector has built a research component into the campaign strategic plan to evaluate the campaign's success over time. I look forward to having an impact on many other future campaigns, both short- and long-term. ☺

Carl Heinlein, CSP, CRIS, OHST, joined American Contractors Insurance Group (ACIG) in February 2002. Prior to this position, Heinlein was director of construction services for FDR & Associates in Nashville, TN. He is also a past safety and health director for The Associated General Contractors of America (AGC). Heinlein holds a master's degree in Safety and Environmental Management from West Virginia University. He is a member of the NIOSH National Occupational Research Agenda (NORA) Construction Sector and also sits on the editorial advisory board for Environmental Health and Safety magazine. Heinlein is chair of West Virginia University's Safety and Environmental Management Graduate Program Visiting Committee. He is also president of the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and is an active member of ASSE, AIHA, AGC and the National Safety Council.

R. Ronald Sokol, CSP, has been president and CEO of Safety Council of Texas City since 1990. He has approximately 10 years' experience with Bechtel Group of Companies in the U.S. and abroad. He is a member of the Houston Business Roundtable Safety and Health Resource Committee and a frequent presenter at national safety conferences. A Professional Member of ASSE, Sokol is a past administrator of ASSE's Construction Practice Specialty (CPS) and a past recipient of the Charles V. Culbertson and CPS Safety Professional of the Year awards. Sokol holds a B.S. in Safety Science from Indiana University of Pennsylvania.

Practice Specialties Scholarship

The practice specialties sponsor a Professional Development Conference (PDC) Scholarship. This scholarship provides a full PDC experience, including airfare, hotel, meals and registration. Currently, two \$1,200 awards are given each year.

Please consider making a personal tax-deductible donation to the scholarship fund. If your company has a matching donation program, you could double your contribution. To contribute, click "donate now" below and note "PDC Scholarship" in the "Other" field.

Checks can also be made payable to the ASSE Foundation marked "PDC Scholarship" in the memo section and mailed to:

ASSE Foundation, Attn: Mary Goranson
1800 E. Oakton St.
Des Plaines, IL 60018

[Donate Now](#)

2013 Poster Contest

Children ages 5-14 will have the opportunity to illustrate the importance of safety by entering the 11th annual ASSE kids' Safety on the Job poster contest. The contest aims to teach children about the importance of being safe at work and what occupational SH&E professionals do to protect people, property and the environment.

The contest is open to all children sponsored by an ASSE member. ASSE members can sponsor family members, schools and the children of their coworkers. Those seeking an ASSE member to request sponsorship can check with their local ASSE chapter by clicking [here](#) or by sending an e-mail to customerservice@asse.org.

The winning poster from each of the five age groups is featured on the annual North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week poster distributed worldwide, at NAOSH Week events and at Safety 2013. The five grand-prize winners and 15 runners-up each receive prizes and are recognized at NAOSH kickoff events in May 2013 and worldwide through ASSE communications and publications. The posters that best illustrate safety on the job will win the contest. Click [here](#) for contest rules and information. Entries are due by February 14, 2013. ☺



Last year's first place winner, Abigail Helsler