

Reading an old company newsletter extolling the importance of conducting frequent accident-preventing inspections leads the author to wonder what we've learned about the importance of workplace safety.

I recently was going through some old paperwork I've accumulated over the years and found a newsletter published in May 1974 by my old employer, the Barber Colman Co. The article that interested me was titled "Constant Lookout for Unsafe Conditions Needed," and it made a number of points that I would like to share with you here.

It started by saying that "Anyone who is really serious about wanting to prevent accidents knows that there must be constant inspections to discover unsafe conditions." It went on to cover "Who Should Make Such Inspections?" This article discussed the employee's and the supervisor's separate responsibilities. The last paragraph stated "Not only must the supervisor take prompt action to correct unsafe conditions reported by his workers, but he must be constantly inspecting on his own as he goes about the department every day. He inspects for points overlooked by employees

our lifetimes, we simply don't care? Or does it just indicate that we all need reminders to keep us on track in providing a safe environment for our employees? I like to think that now, even as it was so many years ago, we all need constant reminders to keep our minds on the safety aspects of our jobs. After all, each of us is very busy with the production aspects of our jobs, and these are the priorities that occupy our thoughts as we go about our normal workday. It is only by way of these continuous reminders that we remain vigilant when it comes to these safety concerns. Remember that it's easy to correct a dangerous situation after an accident has occurred, but our goal is—and always should be—to prevent an accident from occurring in the first place.


How common are machine-related injuries or fatalities? This is a very hard number to determine, because the statistics relate to all machines used in the private sector, which

time injuries were caused by machinery. These injuries average seven days of downtime, with 24 percent resulting in 31 or more days. This represents a lot of lost production that could easily have been prevented.

These numbers just floor me. I have been involved in the field of safety for many years, and even though I've heard statistics like this in the past, I had hoped that these numbers were getting lower due to our diligence and ongoing efforts to create a safer workplace. That doesn't seem to be the case after all. I'm hoping that you will visit the following Web sites to learn about guarding your machines:

- www.osha.gov/sltc/machineguarding/standards.html
- www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/machine
- list.nsc.org/videolibrary/listings.php

Hopefully these sites will help you to properly safeguard your machines, in turn helping lower these truly awful numbers.

There's one more thing I would like to mention. Even though it's only July, it's certainly not too early to mention that IMTS is coming up in September. Be sure when you are planning your itinerary for IMTS to include time for checking out the many booths representing safety advancements, including items that will be available for the first time. Remember that there is no better time than a show—whether it be IMTS or GEAR EXPO—to talk to the suppliers and manufacturers of your equipment about the best operating, guarding, and maintenance practices. 

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and for all safety factors throughout the shop." I found it interesting that, 34 years ago, the same practices that I—and every-safety minded individual—promotes today were being published for reading by every employee of a large, 3,300-employee company.

What does this tell us? Does it indicate that, even after 34 years we have not learned this simple lesson? Does it mean that even after this message has been out there for most of

includes agriculture, mining, and construction, among others, as well as manufacturing. I recently read in *Industrial Hygiene News* that NIOSH NTOF states that occupational injury from machinery was ranked third after motor vehicle and homicide as a cause of death, and fatalities from machine-related incidents accounted for about 13 percent of the total. The publication stated that, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, 92,560 private sector lost-

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