



December 2020 Newsletter

From the President's Perspective:

Thanksgiving Day, 2020 is a good day to compose the December Newsletter. It's raining this morning, it would be a miserable day to go hunting. What I will be contributing to Thanksgiving dinner is simmering in the Crockpot. Yep, a good day to write a newsletter.

Mike Rubin did an excellent presentation on OSHA violations, why you want to convince your organization to be in compliance, employer rights during an inspection and defense strategies. I was a little disappointed in the numbers who attended this excellent virtual presentation, but the slide deck Mike used is on our website. I suggest to all safety practitioners to check it out.

With most of us in Western New York aware of the changeable nature of COVID regulations issued by the Governor's office, the decision to hold our Chapter technical meetings virtually has proven to be a good one. We will continue the rest of the Chapter Year, until July 2021 with virtual meetings. At least we can stay on a consistent schedule! I'm not against having in-person events, when we can do so safely.

For those of us who facilitate the safety program for our employers; normally, we write about Holiday Safety this time of year; remember that Disaster does not take a Holiday (if you doubt that, there were State Farm ads to remind us), In addition to the usual reminders about fire and electrical safety (for all those awesome Christmas Light displays and the reminder to keep the live Christmas Trees well hydrated to reduce flammability), not to let the pets eat the Holiday flowers (Poinsettias are mildly toxic to cats & dogs.), keeping kitchen traffic to a minimum to avoid trips and burns from hot food, proper Thanksgiving Turkey care (food illness), and warnings about consuming too much alcoholic libations and driving, we should also remind people to consider the mental health of our families, friends and neighbors.

The Holidays are a time of year for families, friends and neighbors to socialize, reminisce, and share food and drink. This year is different. With the media constantly reminding us of the COVID in our midst, and the negative side of gatherings, it's more important than ever to consider how this impacts others.

- Take the time to set up another Zoom meeting or a phone call to others who may be reluctant to get together. Keep the topic positive, happy and supportive.
- If you get together, try an exercise to think of everything you are grateful for this year. Health, a job, good food and drink, a warm house, are all good things to be thankful and happy for. Keep it going until everyone in your group has a positive tone in their voice.
- Do a random act of kindness; donate to a food pantry (easy to do with supermarkets taking donations at the register), give a toy to a toy drive, etc. Think of the good feelings the other person is experiencing and don't feel guilty about your own mood boost.
- In December, you may want to think about a "media free" time. Turn off the radio, TV and stay off the news feeds from your device for a while. Listen to Christmas music, read a book



(quite quaint), meditate, work on a hobby (or try a new one), play a board game, etc. Avoid the negativity and reduce your stress level.

- Encourage others to try these simple tactics to reduce their stress levels. Engage your family in these activities.

In closing off my part of this newsletter, I know that we are entering a time of the year rich in tradition and companionship that will be different in 2020. Some of it will be by government edict, some by prudent caution regarding the current situation. We, as safety professionals, need to be aware of how this affects others; try to practice good mental health habits and promote them to others.

On our website and our LinkedIn group there is a new position posting from Resource Management Inc. It is for a Powered Industrial Truck trainer in the Rochester, NY area. Barb Michel is a great person to work with; she runs a first class organization (full disclosure, I work with her); this position offers a fair amount of work regarding training and recertifying PIT operators in the Rochester and local area. It does require fairly good HANDS-ON knowledge of PIT operations to conduct meaningful classroom training and operator coaching. If you can meet this challenge, check it out. Here's a hint; RMI's clients prefer trainers who can make learning fun.