

Busy Forum Covers Six Questions

Required Online Training Classes, Non-English Speaking Employees And Rigging Training Discussed At May 15th's Safety Gathering



Paul Howard of Frank H. Stowell makes a point during May 15's Safety Forum at the Chicagoland Construction Safety Council in Hillside. The next Safety Forum will take place Thursday, August 14.

BY ASHLEIGH JOHNSON

Nineteen safety professionals talked about the finer points of their profession at a Builders Association Contractor Safety Forum May 15 at the Chicagoland Construction Safety Council in Hillside, Ill.

Safety Committee Chair Bob Smith of The Levy Company led the discussion, and those present also welcomed the attendance of OSHA Compliance Assistant Specialist Nancy Hauter.

The group openly traded ideas, beginning with Paul Flentge of Pepper Construction Company suggesting the institution of a prequalification check for all bidding contractors. Peter Cole of DLZ Industrial, Inc. expressed that standardizing safety programs would be a great way to level the playing field for all contractors, and Kevin Kozlowski of Pepper Construction added that prequalification would create

competition between companies to be the safest and most efficient. He added that these standards could be implemented in the public sector first, thus persuading the private sector to follow suit.

There was also a consensus, however, that it would be hard to create a standardized program because all contractors do not have the same resources. Luke Lukowicz of W.B. Olson, Inc. noted that there was an issue with small subcontractors because some do not realize the importance of safety measures until something happens.

Regarding Web site training, Smith recommended that safety professionals try Web sites such as www.oshapro.com and www.puresafety.com if they are interested in this type of learning, commenting that "you can't reduce accidents if you can't recognize a hazardous situation."

He spoke about how he gave OSHA 10-hour and 30-hour courses for informational purposes to those that

are on restrictive duty. His company then sent them into the field with safety representatives. Hauter mentioned that online training needed to be supplemented with on-site requirements, which the safety professionals agreed with.

Cole posed the question of whether prime contractors prefer their subcontractors have their supervisors and foremen attend a 30-hour OSHA class. Smith said his supervisors and foremen must attend the class, and the idea was also brought forth to possibly put a requirement in the contract that supervisors and foremen have 30-hour OSHA training.

On the subject of how companies deal with safety in regards to non-English speaking subcontractors, Dan Torres of Pepper Construction stated that he places a bilingual tradesman on each job site and uses photos to show proper safety practices. Smith stated that Hispanics are the most injured ethnicity in the construction industry; therefore it is imperative for them to know the right safety procedures.

Valenti Builders raised the issue of fall protection and the differences between Leading Edge work and Restricted Access Zones. Smith defined Restricted Access Zones as areas that are restricted to a select group of people with usually only one or two workers allowed in at a time. He added that Restricted Access Zones are usually mislabeled on-site. He defined Leading Edge work as an edge that is constantly changing as the structure is being built. In this instance, zones are set up to follow change, such as building a deck.

Doug Schultz of Herlihy Mid-Continent Company posed the topic of what types of training other contractors were doing in regards to rigging.

Flentge revealed that Pepper Construction uses The Crosby Group, Inc. to prepare their tradesmen. The group concluded that credentials were not always asked for when it came to rigging.