

## Safety News

# Safety First For Temp-Heat Users

Four Contractor Safety Forums during 2007 gave Builders Association safety professionals a better handle on some of the safety issues facing the industry. At the November 15 meeting, those issues included temporary heat on a jobsite and background checks for employees.

Rob Crowe, Plant Operations Manager for Country Gas, conducted a temp-heat safety presentation. He fielded questions about temp-heat practices from attendees, who were trying to prepare their jobsites better for the winter months.

"There's nothing really major that's changed about the way it's applied lately, but we are starting to see more cities and villages increase restrictions on using propane," Crowe said. "I personally don't see any true reason for it, but any kind of hazardous material warrants a greater focus on safety."

Crowe went over the advantages of temp-heat and detailed the safety measures necessary when dealing with propane. With every accident involving propane or temporary heat, scrutiny increases and rules can change.

"Any kind of black eye involving propane makes us look bad," Crowe said. "I've been with Country Gas 18 years and I've seen a lot of strange things on construction sites. The big focus should be on using what we've been taught about safety and avoiding the things that lead to those accidents."

In the wake of the Department of Homeland Security

issuing its No Match Rule and the striking down of that rule by a court in California, the use of background checks and the rules surrounding them became a hot topic again at November's Forum.

The rule, meant to crack down on unauthorized aliens, would have given contractors 90 days to resolve a discrepancy between the name of an employee and the Social Security Number that employee provided. The AGC of America and other business groups fought the implementation of the more stringent guidelines, and a California court's ruling will halt the implementation of the law until a trial occurs.

"There are a lot of things to keep in mind," said Safety Committee Chair Bob Smith of The Levy Company about background checks. "When it comes to background checks, the No Match Rule, which is on hold right now, is something we're going to have to follow and be aware of, along with the credit reporting act. You have to know going in what you can and can't ask.

"A lot of people are concerned about the application of these different laws. It's a lot to keep track of."

Safety Forums allow Builders Association members to pose questions about complicated jobsite issues and hear how their peers at other companies handle those same problems. The next Forum is scheduled for February 7.

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