

Safety Guru - Spring 2017

Time is flying by. Seems like just last week it was 80 degrees and sunny! The changing seasons and overlapping weather conditions make it a challenge to live and work safely in the Land of 10,000 Lakes.



Since we have already done several safe driving tips and reminders about winterizing your facilities – I thought this time I would spend a little time on the mental side of winter safety. There are other concerns that come into play in the shorter days and rapidly changing conditions. At least by the time you are reading this, the daylight will be getting longer and thawing should be occurring in a few weeks. Nonetheless, the lack of daylight does impact safety on the job. The spring thawing also presents issues such as the “black ice” normally referred to on the highways – but probably more dangerous when the melt occurring during the day ponds on walkways and in front of doors. Make sure you also take into consideration the potential for warm boots and shoes accelerating the slip potential exiting vehicles and leaving warm buildings. Since the areas are absent of snow, there is a lessening of our guard in recognizing the slip potential. Keep a little sand available to spread on these areas. Do a little check for conditions when exiting buildings and getting into or out of your vehicular units. This can happen at home and away from the jobsite – so stay alert.

I am going to add one driving issue that was just involved in a serious accident near Otsego in January. A school bus was stopped with red lights and STOP arm extended when a 22 year old driver went around the bus and struck three students. NEVER – EVER- NEVER pass around a school bus with lights flashing. Even better – put your own four way flashers on and if you are facing the bus – stop well ahead of the bus to widen the gap between you and the bus to help other drivers approaching SEE the bus and stop.

The low light also is an issue in not seeing conditions on walkways and prevents the issue of having dark safety glasses for sunny conditions, but maybe not having clear or light enhancing safety glasses for the low light or inside buildings such as a lift station. Then there is the issue of fogging up your safety glasses when entering or exiting those warm and damp buildings we all experience in the wastewater business. Distractions while cleaning the lenses often literally fall into play for the icy spots near those same buildings. Slips/Trips and Falls are one of the highest occurrences of on the job injuries in our line of work – so always be aware of the conditions and just stop for a second or two to assess the issues that may be present.

This is also coming up on the time of year that a lot of repairs to sanitary sewer and water lines due to the forces of nature. These situations also have a potential for wet conditions that can turn into slippery surfaces. Take the extra time to remove the excess moisture from the road surfaces and/or sand/salt to ensure ice won't be a problem for you or the public. As mentioned above, the low light also makes it important to address the traffic control issues with lights and retroreflective barricades, cones and fencing. If you are working on an active roadway – make sure you have something large and heavy to block oncoming traffic from your work zone.

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Make sure the lights are visible from all sides and if you have open excavations – keep them barricaded off so pedestrians don't enter the areas as well.

A few members have indicated that they may be interested in attending a full day of safety training. Some remember that the CSWEA MN Section and MWOA conducted several sessions a while back. If you are interested in this type of session – please send a message to the webmaster on the MWOA Contact link and if there is enough interest, we will try to schedule a workshop in May or June. If you have topics that you would like to have on the agenda – please add those as well.

Keep those questions and comments coming. Keep safety at the top of the list – on and off the job!

Safety Guru

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EMERGENCY NOTIFICATION

All bypasses, spills of five gallons or more of petroleum, or spills of toxic, flammable, corrosive, or any other environmentally damaging material must be reported **within one hour**

**Call Minnesota Duty Officer
(24 hours) 800-422-0798
(651-649-5451 in the Metro
and outside Minnesota)**

TDD 800-627-3529 or 651-297-5353

Be prepared to give as much of the following information as possible:

1. Name
2. Discharger's name
3. Permit number (if applicable)
4. Address or location
5. Phone number
6. Receiving waters
7. Overflow or pumped?
8. Quantity
9. Date and time of incident
10. Basement back-ups?
11. Ongoing?
12. Reason for emergency
13. Treatment provided (none, primary, etc.)
14. Any downstream user(s)? (water supply, recreation areas, etc.)
If yes, you must notify them immediately.
15. Local media and the public notified?
16. Environmental damages? (fish kill, etc.)
17. Do you need assistance?
18. Would you like someone to call you back?

When bypassing, wastewater treatment facilities must take samples once every 3-4 days for permitted effluent parameters. Unless otherwise instructed, it is not necessary to call back upon completion of the emergency. However, you must record the emergency event, along with the above information and, if required, submit the report.



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