

OSHA Region 3 Focus Four Campaign

By: Amy Dennis and Devlynn Deitrick, OPA-Philadelphia interns

The beginning of May marks OSHA’s annual “National Safety Stand Down To Prevent Falls in Construction”, an event that encourages employers to stop work during the day to inspect fall protection equipment; have conversations about potential hazards; discuss protective measures; and review safety and health goals and policies. The stand down initiative began in 2014 to emphasize the need to recognize, evaluate, and control fall hazards, since it is the leading killer in construction.

This year, OSHA’s Region III, working with the Mid-Atlantic Construction Safety Council (MACSC), launched a four-month regional “Focus Four Campaign” that began in February and ends this month. In conjunction with the national safety stand down, the Focus Four Campaign aims to reduce injuries and fatalities resulting from the four leading causes of death in the construction industry: Fall Hazards, Electrical Hazards, Struck-By Hazards and Caught-In or -Between Hazards.



The “Focus Four Campaign” is an extension of a joint initiative started in January 2014, between the MACSC and OSHA. It included a month-long “Fall Protection Equipment Inspections”, conducted throughout the Tri-State Area by member companies of the Council. The goal was to reduce the risk of falls in the workplace by thoroughly inspecting all fall protection equipment being utilized on active jobsites.

OSHA worked with the MACSC to generate a customized tracking report for the entities to capture participant’s data during the month-long initiative. The result was that 18 % of safety equipment inspected was proactively removed from service and replaced. This was a remarkably high rate, considering the fact that the construction managers had provided their site subcontractors advance notice of the inspections. As a result of this measurable success, the initiative expanded to include additional MACSC members in addition to other construction associations, including the Philadelphia General Builders and Contractors Association, the Interior Finishing Contractor’s Association, and the Subcontractors Association of Delaware Valley.

The month-long inspections were repeated again in 2015 and 2016. While the number of pieces of equipment inspected grew each subsequent year, the rate of removal equipment removed from service incrementally decreased from 18% in 2014, to 11% in 2015, to 8% in 2016. In the three years of the inspection initiative, there were a total of 7,950 pieces of fall protection equipment inspected with 971 pieces removed. This initiative has helped

to identify and remove from service damaged equipment, and helped potentially save workers lives.

“This is a great example of industry, workers, and government working together cooperatively to identify and correct hazards” said Richard Mendelson, OSHA’s Regional Administrator in Philadelphia. “This initiative fixes potential problems before a fall occurs and without relying on enforcement. I’m encouraged by the results and hope than even more companies participate in the future.”



OSHA’s Philadelphia Area Office Compliance Assistance Specialist Jim Harray and OSHA Region III Labor Liaison Jim Touey provide a training session on the Focus Four Hazards to 80 members of the Elevator Constructors Local 5 members.

In addition to the inspections, OSHA and MACSC’s Construction Managers’ Group developed “Tool-Box Talks.” These took place each month of the campaign, and featured a different Focus Four Hazard. Each month, an introductory email with four to eight “Focus Four Hazard” tool-box talks were distributed electronically to the region’s 10 area offices, two state plan states Virginia and Maryland, and the six OSHA Consultation Projects. The information was then distributed

to each network’s stakeholders.

Since the launch of this campaign, the relationship between OSHA and MACSC and its subcontractors has continued to strengthen through direct engagement. OSHA personnel now routinely participate at the MACSC monthly membership meetings, where they present updates on training, provide technical support, and listen to council member concerns. MACSC shares information from OSHA with their industry network which serves to enhance consistency and continuity throughout this inherently dangerous industry.

OSHA and MACSC will continue working together to communicate a unified message about the importance of making safety a top priority in the construction industry. The Focus Four initiative is an innovative model of the benefits that can be achieved when varying organizations share resources to achieve a common goal.