



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Maine Chapter

March
2024
Volume 3

**March is
Eye Safety
Month!**

NEWSLETTER

Message from the Editor...

Greetings Maine Chapter members and welcome to our 4th newsletter!

We had a great set of virtual meetings last month that showed us that the membership of our Maine Chapter is interested in becoming more active and sharing ideas.

This month we're addressing Workplace Eye Wellness Month at my work with increased training on the value of safety glasses, goggles, and face shields. We're pushing the message that it's "OK" to change out glasses when they become scratched and ineffective.

- Kurt

Eye Injuries Are a Serious Issue

Each day about 2000 U.S. workers have a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment. About one third of the injuries are treated in hospital emergency departments and more than 100 of these injuries result in one or more days of lost work. Most of these injuries result from small particles or objects striking or abrading the eye. Some of these objects, such as nails, staples, or splinters of wood or metal penetrate the eyeball and result in a permanent loss of vision. Large objects may also strike the eye/face, or a worker may run into an object causing blunt force trauma to the eyeball or eye socket. Chemical burns to one or both eyes from splashes of industrial chemicals or cleaning products are common. Thermal burns to the eye occur as well. Among welders, their assistants, and nearby workers, UV radiation burns (welder's flash) routinely damage workers' eyes and surrounding tissue.

In addition to common eye injuries, health care workers, laboratory staff, janitorial workers, animal handlers, and other workers may be at risk of acquiring infectious diseases via ocular exposure. Infectious diseases can be transmitted through the mucous membranes of the eye because of direct exposure (e.g., blood splashes, respiratory droplets generated during coughing or suctioning) or from touching the eyes with contaminated fingers or other objects. The infections may result in relatively minor conjunctivitis or reddening/soreness of the eye or in a life-threatening disease such as HIV, B virus, or possibly even avian influenza.

Engineering controls should be used to reduce eye injuries and to protect against ocular infection exposures. Personal protective eyewear, such as goggles, face shields, or safety glasses must be used when an eye hazard exists. The eye protection chosen for specific work situations depends upon the nature and extent of the hazard, the circumstances of exposure, other protective equipment used, and personal vision needs. Eye protection should be fit to an individual or adjustable to provide appropriate coverage. It should be comfortable and allow for sufficient peripheral vision. Selection of protective eyewear appropriate for a given task should be made based on a hazard assessment of each activity, including regulatory requirements when applicable.

Courtesy – Wayne State University FP&M Safety Talk



ASSP Maine Chapter Virtual Meeting Highlights

On February 20th and 21st the ASSP Maine Chapter Executive Board conducted two roundtable discussions in TEAMS format with members who opted to participate and share their interests in future association meetings and events. We had excellent participation with nearly 20% of the Maine membership weighing in. It was encouraging to see the Safety profession so well represented in Maine and that its many facets of activity are alive and well. With the diversity of Safety professional roles and functions it became obvious that, not only are there several disciplines of Safety leadership in the Maine Chapter, but there is a hunger for more information on how to successfully perform them.

Our objectives in meeting your needs are several-fold:

1. Conduct gatherings that are beneficial and provide value to those who attend
2. Offer a forum where many can share “Best Demonstrated Practices” based upon their personal experience
3. Allow feedback from all
4. Always be “time-conscious” with an agenda that is value-added

Attendees to the meetings were encouraged to share their suggestions regarding their needs. One of the things we learned is that many members have knowledge they can share at future meetings. We decided the best way to share these experiences is to have the member provide a brief presentation on their topic during future virtual meetings.

Here is our plan:

- Schedule future virtual meetings, open to the entire membership, every other month. The first of these meetings will be scheduled later this month on Thursday, March 28th @ noon.
- Past President Sean Ryan will kick off the process with a presentation on the recent construction project at Maine Medical Center in Portland.
- Future meetings will feature other members sharing their expertise – we have a few who’ve already volunteered but we’re always looking for more. We’re thinking a brief 20–30-minute presentation in a very open format – with time to have questions and discussion afterwards.
- We hope these presentations will gain momentum and that we can continue to provide them every other month.

If you are interested in hosting one of these presentations, please reach out to either:

“Safety” John L. Lowrie, CPP

Membership Chair

Cell: (207) 849-0889

Kurt A. Kirkland, CSP, CIT

Chapter President

Cell: (805) 798-0257

Remember: YOU have the power to make the ASSP Maine Chapter what we want it to be!

About 2,000 workers sustain job-related eye injuries each day



Flying or falling objects



Tools



Chemicals



Particles & Sparks

90% could have been avoided by wearing eye protection

What are you doing to promote Workplace Eye Wellness Month?

Share your best practices with the Maine Chapter!

MEET YOUR ASSP MAINE CHAPTER BOARD MEMBERS

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The Board typically meets every other month; we maintain all our meeting minutes on the ASSP Maine Chapter website.

To contact your Board Members, go to: <https://maine.assp.org/>

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Mar 28th @ Noon – Virtual mtg for Maine Chapter members

Apr 24th @ 3pm – Executive Committee Mtg

Aug 7-9th...ASSP Safety 2024 -Denver

Oct 15-17th 97th Annual Maine Safety & Health Conference



Meet your ASSP Maine Chapter Vice President, Barbara Brennan:

"I am the Regional HSE Manager for the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic regions with Vortex Companies, a leading provider of trenchless infrastructure rehabilitation solutions. I have been in the safety field for 12 years and I hold several credentials, including Certified Safety Professional (CSP), Safety Management Specialist (SMS), and Certified Instructional Trainer (CIT).

I am responsible for overseeing the implementation and compliance of health, safety, and environmental programs for the Mid-Atlantic and Northeast regions, covering multiple projects and teams. I am passionate about providing quality safety training and education to workers, managers, and clients, as well as ensuring the highest standards of safety and environmental performance for Vortex Companies and its partners.

My husband and I reside in New Jersey with our three children and two grandchildren but I also live in Maine for two weeks out of every month, to support the Northeast region."



Barbara Brennan, CSP, SMS, CIT, CHST

Regional HSE Manager

Vortex Companies – www.vortexcompanies.com

Please send your questions, comments, suggestions, and feedback and I will respond as soon as I am able.

This Newsletter is not possible without the input from the Chapter Membership!

Chapter President: Kurt A. Kirkland president@maine.assp.org