A devastating crowd crush incident occurred this past weekend in Seoul, South Korea during a packed Halloween event. At least 150 individuals were killed and over 100 other individuals were injured. Last year, another crowd crush incident occurred at the Astroworld Festival in Houston, Texas killing approximately 10 individuals. Crowd crush incidents can occur when a moving crowd is funneled into a smaller space or when a densely packed crowd has an influx of additional people. The most common injury and cause of death during a crowd crush is compressive asphyxia, where respiration is prevented by external pressure on the body.

Crowd crush incidents can be mitigated by crowd management. OSHA has some guidelines to help employers avoid injuries during the holiday shopping season or during other events where large crowds may gather. OSHA recommends that employers planning large events adopt a plan that includes the following elements: Planning, pre-event setup, during the event procedures, and emergency situations. For details of what these elements should include, see OSHA’s fact sheet.

COVID-19 Booster and Annual Flu Vaccines

The holiday and flu seasons are right around the corner and so the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) has urged Wisconsinites to get an updated (bivalent) COVID-19 booster shot and the annual flu vaccine. Everyone 5 years of age and older is now eligible for an updated COVID-19 booster.

Individuals may also safety get their COVID-19 vaccines and other vaccines, including the flu shot, at the same time. Getting one or more vaccines during the same appointment is called coadministration. Coadministration is a common medical practice that can ensure that individuals can get up-to-date on all needed vaccines in one appointment in case they cannot make a return visit to obtain additional vaccines at a later date.

However, individuals may choose to wait a time between receiving the updated COVID-19 booster dose and the flu shot. For more information visit Getting a Flu Vaccine and a COVID-19 Vaccine at the Same Time.

The Great American Smokeout, November 17th

The Great American Smokeout is designated as the third Thursday of every year by the American Cancer Society. This campaign encourages smokers to use the date to make a plan to quit, or make advanced plans to quit smoking on that day.

Smoking is a personal decision, so why bring it up here? There is evidence that the combination of tobacco use and exposure to some chemical and physical agents in the workplace can produce or increase the severity of a wide range of adverse health effects. For more information on Adverse Health Effects of Smoking and the Occupational Environment, visit NIOSH’s webpage.

If you, or someone you know, are ready to quit smoking you can receive free assistance from the Wisconsin Tobacco Quit Line at 1-800-QUIT NOW.

Upcoming Webinar Topics

The WisCon Weekly Webinars that happen on Mondays are taking a break for time being to account for the holiday season. The Webinars are scheduled to begin again during the new calendar year on January 9, 2023.

Sign up here to get a reminder when the webinars restart. Click here to view previous webinars!
Drowsy Driving Prevention Week is November 6-13, 2022

The National Sleep Foundation holds Drowsy Driving Prevention Week (DDPW) every year during the week following the end of Daylight Saving Time. As drowsy driving is responsible for over 6,400 deaths each year in the U.S., the goal of the campaign is to reduce the number of drivers who operate a vehicle while sleep deprived.

Driving while drowsy has some similarities to driving while under the influence of alcohol and can be considered as dangerous. A Clinical Trial from 2000 found that moderate sleep deprivation produces impairments in cognitive and motor performance equivalent to legally prescribed levels of alcohol intoxication. After 20 hours of being awake, drowsy drivers can be expected to have a level of impairment comparable to a driver with a 0.08% blood alcohol content, the current legal limit in Wisconsin as well as many other states.

What can you do? Monitor yourself for signs of fatigue and encourage others to not drive when tired. Signs and symptoms of drowsy driving can include the following:

- Frequent yawning or difficulty keeping your eyes open,
- Having trouble keeping your head up or “Nodding off”,
- Inability to remember driving the last few miles,
- Missing road signs or turns,
- Difficulty maintaining your speed, and
- Drifting out of your lane.

For more information on Drowsy Driving Prevention visit the National Sleep Foundation.

OSHA will say that the standards they have are often outdated and are based on research that can be more than 70 years old. The standards themselves are also subject to the legislative rule making process, so even when the science indicates that stricter regulations are needed to protect employees sometimes proposed regulations may be relaxed in order to preserve businesses and even industries over the health of workers. This is why it is so important for companies to strive beyond what OSHA requires and reach for industry best practices whenever possible. One of the first steps on that journey is to develop a Safety and Health Program Management System.

OSHA has a website dedicated to assisting employers with getting a Safety and Health Program up and running. They offer the following 10 steps as a way to get your program started and a workbook to help you through it.

1. Establish safety and health as a core value.
2. Lead by example.
3. Implement a reporting system.
4. Provide training.
5. Conduct inspections.
6. Collect hazard control ideas.
7. Implement hazard control ideas.
8. Address emergencies.
9. Seek input on workplace changes.
10. Make improvements.

Once you get started you may also find the Safety Pays Calculator helpful in convincing management that spending on safety will save them in the long run.

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WSLH COVID-19 Consulting
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