FALL BUSINESS MEETING AND SEMINAR

The 2017 Fall Business Meeting of MICA is scheduled for Wednesday, October 18, and Thursday, October 19, 2017, in Omaha, Nebraska. The site of this fall’s meeting is the Embassy Suites Downtown Hotel in Omaha. This will be our eleventh year at this hotel.

This year’s fall business meeting will include updates and discussions on several topics crucial to your business operations. The technical sessions will include presentations on business costs and profitability, motivating your people to improve company performance, rethinking business and personal success, and the impact of new OSHA regulations on your company. We will focus on providing the membership with new insights on these issues as we continue to help you to improve in your industry and in your businesses.

In keeping with President Winters’ theme of “human relations”, we will have a presentation on “What’s a Life Worth, and Are You Willing to Pay the Price to Save It?”. Robert (Bob) McCall is President of Inspire High Performance LLC, where he gets to follow his true passion of helping companies and organizations build a culture of high performance where all can work at their top potential every day, thus preventing injuries, saving lives, recognizing errors, and improving processes. He is a prolific speaker and is author of the projected best-selling book Zero Accidents and Injuries: Are You Willing to Pay the Price? Bob’s motto is, “Make a difference everywhere you go.”

From Pittsburgh, PA, Bob attended Tuskegee University and majored in Building Construction Technology. He worked ten years with Bechtel Power Corporations in construction, maintenance, and operations of nuclear power plants, eight years for Alliant Energy in Iowa at the Duane Arnold Energy Center. Bob became the first African American Plant Manager when he was hired by Progress Energy to serve the Lee Plant in Goldsboro, NC; one year later he was promoted to General Manager for the Eastern Region Fossil Generation Department. In that role, he was responsible for five plants, traveling maintenance, engineering and project management. Bob had the opportunity to leave Generation and support Progress Energy’s Transmission department as General Manager of Asset Management and in Distribution as the General Manager of the Southern Region, as well as the Vice President of the Eastern Region in Energy Delivery where he was responsible for 13 operation centers, serving 350,000 customers. After 33 years in the industry, Bob retired from Duke Energy as General Manager of Fleet Services, where he was responsible for managing over 13,000 vehicles and mobile equipment valued at over $600 million dollars, operating in six states with 58 locations.

We missed Gary Auman at our June convention, but he will be back in October to update us on the OSHA rule changes that will be affecting our members. He will provide us with his annual update on OSHA regulations, and he will also bring us up to date on how the recently finalized rules are being implemented by OSHA on the job sites, and how they will impact our businesses. This is a do not miss session for you and your key safety professionals.

Pete Nielsen is a leadership and organizational development coach with Performance Contracting (PCI) out of Lenexa, KS. He is passionate about working with leaders at all levels to build and deliver learning & development tools and strategies that maximize individual potential, enhance personal effectiveness, and enable leaders to execute organizational strategy. He will share with us his approach to “Rethinking for Business and Personal Success”.

Prior to joining PCI, Pete led the global training and development function for several large companies, in industries ranging from engineering to equipment finance to retail and transporta-
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

TO: THE MICA MEMBERSHIP

Just a quick reminder that The Board of Directors of MICA will bring to the active membership a proposal to revise and amend the current by-laws of the association at the regularly scheduled fall business meeting of MICA. The vote on the by-laws amendment is scheduled to take place on Wednesday, October 18, 2017, during the first general session of the fall meeting. There was a committee that reviewed the by-laws line by line and agreed on necessary revisions and then presented them to the full Board. I want to thank them for their time and effort put forth on this update. Our current by-laws require that you notify the MICA office, in writing, of one or more partners, officers, or employees who shall represent, vote, and act for such member firm in all affairs of the association. Please email the MICA office with the name or names of those individuals who may represent your firm. Further note which of these individuals will be attending the fall business meeting to vote on this proposal.

THE HANDSHAKE

It's amazing what can happen just by paying attention. Besides, I never thought I would have a life-changing experience at Wal-Mart.

I don't remember the exact date I met Marty for the first time. Up to that moment, nothing that day seemed particularly important – certainly not what brought me to the store in the first place. Like a lot of people who want to get through a checkout line, my thoughts were on speed, nothing more. The line I was standing in wasn't moving as quickly as I wanted, and I glanced toward the cashier.

There stood an affable-looking man in his seventies. Slightly stooped and of average build, he wore glasses and a nice smile. I thought, well, he's an old guy, and it probably takes him a little longer to get the chores done.

For the next few minutes I watched him. He greeted every customer before he began scanning the items they were purchasing. Sure, his words were the usual, "How's it going?" But he did something different – he actually listened to people. Then he would respond to what they had said and engage them in brief conversation.

I thought it was odd, but I guess I had grown accustomed to people asking me how I was doing simply out of a robotic conversational habit. After a while, you don't give any thought to the question and just mumble something back. I could say, "I just found out I have six months to live," and someone would reply, "Have a great day!"

This old cashier had my attention. He seemed genuine about wanting to know how people were feeling. Meanwhile, the high-tech cash register rang up their purchases, and he announced what they owed. Customers handed money to him, he punched the appropriate keys, the cash drawer popped open, and he counted out their change.

Then magic happened.

He placed the change in his left hand, walked around the counter to the customer, and extended his right hand in an act of friendship.

As their hands met, the old cashier looked the customers in the eyes.

"I sure want to thank you for shopping here today," he told them. "You have a great day. Bye-bye."

The looks on the faces of the customers were priceless. There were smiles and some sheepish grins. All had been touched by his simple gesture - and in a place they never expected.

Some customers would walk away, pause for a moment, and look back at the old cashier, now busy with the next customer. It was obvious they couldn't quite comprehend what had just happened. They would gather their things and walk out the door, smiling.

Now it was my turn. As expected, he asked me how I was doing. I told him I was having a good day.

"That's good," he said. "I'm having a good day, too." I glanced down at the name tag on his red vest, the kind experienced Wal-Mart cashiers wore. It read, "Marty".

I said, "It looks like you enjoy your job, Marty?"

He replied, "I love my job."

(Continued on page 6)
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Marty told me how much I owed, and I handed him some money. The next thing I knew he was standing beside me, offering his right hand and holding my change in his left hand. His kind eyes locked onto mine. Smiling, and with a firm handshake, he said, "I sure want to thank you for shopping here today. Have a great day. Bye-bye."

At that moment I wanted to take him home and feed him cookies. It was as if Sam Walton had come back from the dead and invaded this old guy's body.

I left the store, walked through the parking lot and got into my car. On the drive home, I couldn't shake what had just happened. I had been in that store a hundred times and had never walked away feeling like that.

Who was that guy?

Using some of these techniques when dealing with coworkers and customers will yield some great benefits for you as well as them.

Thanks for reading and remember “BE HAPPY & SAFE OUT THERE.”

Dale Winters
MICA President

FRAUD ALERTS VS. CREDIT FREEZES

The following article was written by Lesley Fair on the Federal Trade Commission website:

Consumers are apprehensive about the security of their personal information and recent headlines about data breaches have moved the needle substantially on the -ometer that measures such things. As a business executive, your customers and employees may be coming to you with questions. Here are answers from the FTC about two topics on consumers’ minds: fraud alerts and credit freezes.

Fraud alerts and credit freezes can be very helpful tools for consumers. People don’t have to be victims of identity theft to use them, but they should weigh their options in light of their personal circumstances. If they’re not sure what’s right for them, here are some points to ponder.

What do fraud alerts and credit freezes do? With a fraud alert, a business must try to verify a consumer’s identity before extending new credit. Usually that means calling to check if the person is actually at the particular store attempting to get credit. With a credit freeze, no one – including the consumer – can access the consumer’s credit report to open a new account. If consumers put a credit freeze in place, they’ll get a PIN number to use each time they want to freeze, unfreeze, and refreeze their account.

How long do fraud alerts and credit freezes last? A fraud alert lasts for 90 days. If the consumer doesn’t take the affirmative step of renewing the fraud alert, it automatically expires after that. Identity theft victims are entitled to an extended fraud alert, which last seven years. In almost all states, a credit freeze lasts until the consumer temporarily lifts it or permanently removes it. In a few states, it expires after seven years.

How much do fraud alerts and credit freezes cost? Fraud alerts are free. Depending on the state law, credit freezes may involve fees. In most states, they’re free for victims of identity theft. For others, they cost about $5 to $10 each time the consumer freezes or unfreezes their account with each credit reporting agency.

How can a consumer put a fraud alert or credit freeze in place? For a fraud alert, consumers can contact any one of the three major credit reporting agencies by phone or online. The law requires that the credit reporting agency notify the other two of the consumer’s fraud alert request. Identity theft victims who want an extended fraud alert must mail or upload their Identity Theft Report, which they can create at IdentityTheft.gov. To put a credit freeze in place, consumers must contact each of the three credit reporting agencies separately at the companies’ credit freeze portals.

Credit freezes are a powerful tool, but it’s not a one-size-fits-all thing. If consumers are about to apply for new credit – for example, a mortgage, car loan, or student loan – they should consider the cost and potential hassle of unfreezing and refreezing each time. But for people who won’t need new credit anytime soon, a credit freeze may be a good choice.

If customers, colleagues, or friends have more questions, the FTC has three publications of interest: Place a Fraud Alert, Credit Freeze FAQs, and Extended Fraud Alerts and Credit Freezes. Consider sharing them through your social networks.
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(Continued from page 1)

tion services. Pete began his career consulting to firms in a variety of industries to apply the principles of leadership and organizational development to individuals and organizations. He also spent 14 years delivering consulting services to leaders across the globe.

As someone who has been leading people for over 10 years, Pete understands what it takes to lead and is enthusiastic as a trainer, coach and speaker. He is an expert in communications, management skills and personal effectiveness and an energetic, engaging speaker for groups of all sizes.

Dr. Tom D. Lewis with Creighton University will provide us with one of this educational sessions on cost analysis and profitability. Tom has been teaching accounting for over 38 years and has been recognized for his excellence in teaching by Creighton University and its students. He has been awarded the “Robert F. Kennedy Outstanding Teacher” award by the Student Senate at Creighton; the most prestigious teaching award given by the University. Tom has conducted educational seminars nationally for the Rural Electric Association and is an expert in financial operations for electrical cooperatives. He has spoken at our fall meetings numerous times, and we have invited him back for another educational and informative session.

We will hear from Peter Gauchel as he provides an enlightening presentation on the newly developed promotional slide presentation on the 8th edition of the National Commercial &

Industrial Insulation Standards manual. This slide presentation will be used to promote the use of the manual to the engineering community.

The fall business meeting will address the above issues and more. We will once again have three concurrent forums dealing with member issues. We will have a union contractor forum, an open shop contractor forum, and an associate member forum, all running simultaneously.

Last year our associate members classified as fabricators, distributors or independent reps were invited to display their products at our fall business meeting. The table top displays were available for viewing by our membership during our extended welcome reception. We will continue with such displays again this year for our manufacturer member firms. We will be limiting the size of the displays and limiting the participants to those associate member firms that are classified as manufacturers. These table top displays will be open for viewing during this year’s Wednesday evening reception. We have a slight change in the start of the Wednesday reception. In order to accommodate earlier dinner reservations, our reception will begin at 5:00 p.m. and conclude at 6:30 p.m. This will still leave you with plenty of time for dinner and socializing with your fellow MICA members.

Our room block at the Embassy Suites has been released. The hotel is taking reservations on a room available basis at the
**FUTURE MICA MEETING DATES**

Fall 2017 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 18 & 19, 2017, Embassy Suites Downtown, Omaha, NE.

Winter Board and Committee Meetings — January 2018, TBD.

61st Annual Spring Convention — June 18 — 21, 2018, Mystic Lake Casino Hotel, Prior Lake, MN.

Fall 2018 Annual Fall Business Meeting — October 17 & 18, 2018, Omaha, NE.

**MICA MEMBER ADDRESS/INFO. UPDATES**

Be sure to inform the MICA office of any changes or corrections to your listing for either the MICA Directory, e-mail correspondence or mailing address. Even if you update your company listing on the MICA website, please inform the MICA office of the changes. We try to be as current as possible with your help.
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standard rate. We generally have some last minute cancellations, so if you are in need of a room at the hotel for the fall business meeting, let us know. We will put you on our list and then contact you if we hear of a last minute cancellation. If you wish to reserve a room now, room reservations are to be made directly with the Hotel. You should call the hotel reservations department at (800) EMBASSY (362-2779) to make your individual room reservations.

This year’s program is a must attend for you and your key employees. We have tiered this year’s registration fee to encourage more participation by individual firms. The Board has also voted to keep the registration fee the same as last year. The registration fee is $205.00 for the first attendee from a member company. Registration for a second attendee from a given company is reduced to $195. Registration for all additional attendees is $185 per attendee. Please complete the fall business meeting registration form and e-mail/mail/fax it to the MICA office by October 6, 2017. Your prompt response helps us to plan a more efficient and effective meeting for you. Please note that you can pay the registration fee by credit card or by check. You may access the registration form at the MICA website or contact the MICA office, and we will send you a copy.

Your Board of Directors is very conscious of meeting costs and again has attempted to make this meeting most affordable. Your Board wants this meeting to be an educational and informative meeting that is cost effective for you. We look to the fall meeting as an opportunity for you to bring one or two key employees to this meeting. It is an excellent chance for you to expose your key people to the benefits of participating in MICA activities. We hope that you take advantage of this low-cost, educational experience.

The Board of Directors is asking for your help in promoting MICA to potential new members. The Board is providing one complimentary registration to any first time potential contractor member firm who attends the fall business meeting. Please make a concerted effort to inform one or two potential member firms about the fall business meeting. Invite them to attend and let them know about the complimentary registration. Share your registration material with them and encourage them to join. The cost is minimal and the first-hand look at MICA is the best way to promote the benefits of belonging to MICA.

The fall business meeting is designed to help you to become a better, more educated business professional. We have designed a program that not only addresses problems but also provides you with solutions. Do not miss this opportunity to come together to share business concerns with your fellow MICA members. Make your plans now to attend the 2017 Annual Fall Business Meeting this October in Omaha!

PRE-MEETING EDUCATIONAL SEMINAR INFORMATION

In past years, we have combined an educational seminar with the fall business meeting. This combination of business meeting and seminar was designed to keep your travel costs to a minimum, yet allow you to participate in both educational activities. This year, the Board decided to sponsor a free half-day educational seminar on “Safety Preparedness”. The Board is sponsoring this seminar as one of the many benefits that come with your membership in MICA. This half-day seminar will be held on Tuesday, October 17, 2017, from 1:00 p.m. until 4:45 p.m. at our fall business meeting hotel, the Embassy Suites Downtown, in Omaha. If you are interested in registering for this educational seminar, please complete the registration sheet which was mailed to all members and send it back to the MICA office. Space is limited, and registration will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis. The number of attendees per company may have to be restricted depending on the overall interest shown by the membership. If you need another copy of the registration material, just contact the MICA office, and we will send you a copy.

We anticipated presenting a mock OSHA onsite inspection, a mock informal conference and, finally a mock OSHA hearing as a result of the inspection and conference. After further discussion with Gary Auman, it was decided that we could provide you with a more informative and learning experience if we first concentrated on the activities that would precede a trial, the preparation for an OSHA inspection, the inspection itself, and the results and implication of the inspection. We will hear from Gary Auman and Doug Fletcher during the seminar.

Mr. Doug Fletcher is a retired OSHA inspector, who is now consulting with clients and safety issues. Doug has worked as a safety and health professional for over 25 years. He is a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) and a Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH). Prior to starting Fletcher Safety Consulting, Inc., Doug worked for Federal OSHA in the Omaha Area Office. During his 17 years with OSHA, he served as a Compliance Safety and Health Officer (Industrial Hygienist), Compliance Assistance Specialist (CAS), Assistant Area Director (AAD), and as the Acting Area Director of both the Omaha and Des Moines Area Offices.

Prior to his work with OSHA, Doug was an EHS Project Manager for Terracon Environmental, Inc., and an Industrial Hygienist with the U.S. Department of Defense. Doug received a Bachelor’s of Science degree in Biology from Tulsa University, Tulsa, Oklahoma and a Master’s of Science degree in Molecular Genetics from The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio.

Gary Auman is MICA’s legal counsel and OSHA expert. Gary Auman is a shareholder and named director in the law firm of Auman, Mahan & Furry in Dayton, Ohio. He graduated with an electrical engineering degree from the University of
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Louisville in 1969 and a law degree from The Ohio State University in 1976. He served four years in the U.S. Air Force at Wright Patterson from 1969 – 1973. He has defended employers in workers’ comp and OSHA since 1976. He defends OSHA cases nationally. He is a frequent speaker and is much in demand across the country, especially on OSHA topics. He has presented papers at the International Roofing Exposition and regularly presents papers at the Iowa-Illinois Annual Safety Conference. He has worked with OSHA in its development of safety and health standards and he has defended OSHA cases in several federal appellate courts. He represents four national and regional trade associations in the construction industry.

The following summarizes what will be covered during the seminar:

• How to prepare for an OSHA inspection.
• How to effectively participate in an OSHA inspection.
• Options available to an employer following an OSHA inspection.
• OSHA’s focus areas during inspections.
• If you are unfortunate and receive an OSHA citation, what should you do?
• Significant effects a citation may have on your business.
• Items to consider before you schedule an informal conference?
• If you go to an informal conference –some considerations.
• What are next steps after the informal conference?
• Notice of Contest?
• What does filing a Notice of Contest mean?
• Are there strategies to consider when filing a NOC?
• What is there beyond the NOC?
• Changes in OSHA standards that have created greater vulnerability for the employer.

You will be able to draw a lot of practical ideas on how you can respond to an OSHA compliance officer while still preserving your rights as an employer. This half day session is appropriate for business owners, safety directors, superintendents, and/or any site supervisors.

This seminar is designed for anyone that is directly involved in a project from superintendent, project manager, to upper management who may have direct interaction with an OSHA inspection. If you deal with any of these issues, this seminar will benefit you.

The seminar is free, but travel and lodging is at your expense. Space is limited, so do not delay in registering.

Take advantage of this seminar offering in conjunction with our annual fall business meeting. The fall business meeting will be held on Wednesday and Thursday, October 18 & 19, 2017. Save yourself time and travel by registering and attending both the seminar and fall business meeting.
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OPTIMISTIC LOOK AT STATE OF CONSTRUCTION IN Q3 COMMERCIAL CONSTRUCTION INDEX, BUT CONCERNS ABOUT WORKFORCE SHORTAGES PERSIST

By Donna Laquidara-Carr, Industry Insights Research Director, Dodge Data & Analytics

The current USG+USCC Commercial Construction Index Report (CCI) reveals that overall contractors are finding the state of the construction industry to be strong, but they continue to feel anxiety over workforce shortages.

The CCI is a quarterly economic index designed to gauge the outlook for and resulting confidence in the commercial construction industry. Each quarter since Q3 2016, Dodge Data & Analytics (DD&A) has surveyed contractors across the country for the CCI in order to better understand their levels of confidence in the industry and top-of-mind concerns.

Most of the underlying economic factors included in the survey are quite strong. The current CCI Report reveals a healthy amount of backlog reported by contractors, with the current average backlog of 9.5 months close to their average reported ideal of 12 months. Nearly all contractors (95%) also report that they expect their revenues to stay the same or increase in the next 12 months, and over one third of contractors (37%) expect their profit margins to increase in the next 12 months.

Despite this overall optimism, there is one area of concern that is still troubling contractors and has been for the last year: workforce shortages. While over half of contractors (53%) expect to employ more workers in the next six months, even more (60%) report a high level of difficulty in finding skilled workers, with almost one third more (31%) reporting a moderate level of difficulty. This concern isn’t just about the number of workers available, but also about the skills they possess, with similar percentages reporting a high (54%) or moderate (37%) level of concern about the adequacy of workers’ skills.

Training is one way to enhance skills in the workforce, but engagement in this area varies widely across the industry. Over one third (34%) are highly engaged in offering training, with either training/certification requirements or a formal skills development plan in place. An additional one quarter (26%) report that they regularly communicate to their workers about training opportunities, a more moderate level of engagement. Another third (33%) are passively supportive of workers who seek out training opportunities on their own, and 7% are not engaged in any of these efforts.

It will be interesting to see how the workforce challenges continue to evolve, and the data on concerns about skilled workforce availability, about the level of skills and about the cost of labor will continue to be tracked on a quarterly basis in the CCI. The fourth quarter study will also feature a look at improving jobsite efficiency, a different way of tackling the challenges created by these shortages.
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NIA FALL SUMMIT WILL BE HELD ON DECEMBER 12-13, 2017

After much discussion and consideration about the best path forward, and based on survey results from our NIA Fall Summit attendees and NIA member companies exhibiting at IEX USA, NIA and its leaders have decided to reschedule the Fall Summit for December 12-13, and hold it alongside Reed Exhibitions’ IEX USA trade show.

Supporting Houston
Please know we have taken all member feedback into consideration and believe this to be the best possible option given these difficult circumstances. Our first priority before making this decision was the safety of Houston’s residents and our members in the areas affected by Hurricane Harvey. We have heard from several sources in Houston that they will be ready for business by December and rescheduling our meeting will help support Houston’s businesses and residents during their recovery process.

Other Considerations
We know that these are not ideal dates, but once Reed Exhibitions rescheduled their show, we felt it was important to support our member companies that were already committed to exhibiting at IEX USA. We also recognized that it would be more cost effective for NIA members to travel to one show instead of two.

Speakers and Committee Meetings
We have confirmed almost all of our previously scheduled speakers for the new dates. We expect to have the same educational content and to hold all committee meetings during the rescheduled event. We had a really fantastic event planned and are very glad to be able to move forward with it.

Same Location
The location, hotel, and Convention Center are the same as initially planned. The Fall Summit and IEX USA trade show will take place in Houston, Texas, at the George R. Brown Convention Center.

Registration
Fall Summit registration is now open for the new dates. If you have already registered for NIA’s Fall Summit, your registration will automatically transfer to the new dates. If you can’t make the December dates, NIA encourages you to transfer your registration to another member of your team to take advantage of all the educational and networking opportunities at Fall Summit. If you need to request a refund, NIA is lifting its normal policy and offering full refunds by October 9, due to the unusual circumstances. Or, if you would prefer, NIA will donate your registration fee to support hurricane disaster relief efforts. All refund and donation requests must be made by email by Monday, October 9, 2017. Any questions regarding transferring your registration or refunds should be sent to events@insulation.org.
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NIOSH LAUNCHES MOBILE LIFTING CALCULATOR APP

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) announces the availability of a new, free mobile application (app) for smart phones and other mobile devices that can help workers stay safe when manually lifting objects as part of their job. The app, NLE Calc, is based on the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation (RNLE), an internationally recognized standard for safe lifting.

The new app is designed to assist workers in manufacturing, healthcare, retail and other industries where lifting is part of the job. NLE Calc determines a score based on the data you enter about your lifting task and provides recommendations to help you optimize the task, or perform it differently, in order to prevent injury.

“NLE Calc is a quick and simple way for a worker to assess their risk for injury before they manually lift an object,” said NIOSH Director John Howard, MD. “The information workers used to find in a manual is now in their back pocket and can help prevent one of the most common, and costly, work-related injuries.”

Work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WMSD), common in industries where lifting is part of the job, cause one-third of work-related injuries resulting in missed workdays, costing about $45 to $54 billion annually in lost productivity and treatment, according to estimates from the National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine.

Based on the user’s input, the app calculates the lifting index, which is the ratio of the load lifted to the recommended weight limit for the lifting task, and displays the risk level as yellow (low), orange (medium), or high (red). Unlike most commercially available lifting apps, NLE Calc also gives workers the option of using the composite lifting equation to optimize multiple complex lifting tasks, for example lifting many objects of various weights in succession or lifting objects in awkward positions.

In addition to calculating the lifting index, the app provides users with recommendations to optimize the lifting task. Some examples of recommendations include the following:

- Bring the load closer to the body.
- Avoid twisting while lifting.
- Raise the load to waist height before lifting.
- Minimize the distance the load must be lifted.

Workers, employees, and occupational health professionals around the world have been using the Applications Manual for the Revised NIOSH Lifting Equation (RNLE) for over 20 years to assess risks associated with lifting tasks, to prevent the onset of lower back pain, and to reduce WMSD. The manual outlines requirements and limitations to use the RNLE, procedures to assess physical demands of a lifting job, and sample problems to demonstrate how the equation can be applied to various workplace scenarios.

For more information about NLE Calc or the topic of ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders, please visit the NIOSH website at www.cdc.gov/niosh.

OLDER WORKERS EXPERIENCE MORE JOB FATALITIES

An analysis of federal statistics finds that older people are dying on the job at a higher rate than workers overall, despite a general decrease in the number of workplace fatalities.

According to the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, 35 percent of fatal workplace accidents in 2015 involved an employee who was 55 or above. That’s about 1,700 out of a total of just over 4,800 fatalities reported nationally. Researchers consider the findings alarming, especially as large numbers of baby boomers are choosing to continue to work past 65, the traditional age of retirement.

The data suggest that the overall rate of workplace fatalities was down 22 percent between 2006 and 2015. But for older workers, the fatality rate was more than 50 percent higher than for all workers. During that period, there was an increase of about 37 percent in older people in the workplace, compared with a 6 percent rise in the overall working population.

Many strategies to prevent older workers from injury and death are the same as those recommended for protecting workers of any age. For example, measures to prevent slips, trips, and falls benefit younger and older workers alike.

The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) offers the following recommendations for keeping older workers safe:

Match tasks to abilities. If older workers have physical limitations, assign them to tasks that do not require them to strain beyond their ability.

Manage hazards. When assessing workplace hazards, consider whether conditions that might be safe for younger employees could pose a problem for older workers. For example, a noisy environment might not bother a 25-year-old, but an older person in the same setting might have difficulty hearing and communicating with coworkers about risks and other issues.

Consider ergonomics. Design work environments that address ergonomic concerns. Examples include better illumination where needed, screens and surfaces that produce a minimum of glare, ergonomic workstations and tools, and adjustable seating.

Invest in training and skill-building. Encourage workers to learn from one another, with older individuals serving as mentors, and younger people teaching elder co-workers how to use and adapt to new technologies.
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