

"We're Not Cowboys but Concerned Contractors:" Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety Updates SSHO in Government Safety Requirements

BY MARSHA COHEN

As the Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety (CDMCS) opened its meeting, Co-chair Devon Carlock, started with a safety briefing, pointing out "the muster station is at the lamppost at the corner of Volt Street and Wisconsin," across the street from The George Town Club in Washington, D. C., where the group had convened for its quar-

terly meeting on October 25. According to Weckwerth, and Slifer concurred, "There's a lack of clarity about certification versus competency and the requirements vary from USACE district to district. This is leaving us with a shortage of qualified safety officers. And in the future it will get worse if we cannot have younger people working with us now as trainees. We're recruiting top-level college graduates, but because they are fresh out

three years of experience within the past five years in supervising/managing dredging activities and other specific activities." (For further reference, see 1.7.1.6.4 Safety Personnel Training Requirements for Dredging.)

This was an important point, which was also addressed by Kevin Cannon of Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America in his presentation of OSHA



Attending members, left to right: Kevin Cannon of AGC of America; David Howard, Manson Construction; Nazia Shah, also of AGC; Co-chairs Devon Carlock and Albert Wong; Treasurer Michael Gerhardt; Glenn Thomas, chair emeritus; Luis Bonilla of Weeks Marine; Alan K. Slifer, Norfolk Dredging Company; and Tim Weckwerth, also of Weeks Marine.

terly meeting on October 25.

CDMCS was founded about 10 years ago and continues to gain momentum under the tutelage of the two Co-chairs Carlock, vice president of safety & government relations for Cottrell Contracting Corp, and Albert Wong, senior program manager for Construction & Operations Safety at U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Headquarters, and Treasurer Michael Gerhardt, assistant executive director of Dredging Contractors of America (DCA).

"One of the goals of the group," Carlock said, "is to create uniform standards for safety, including the hiring of qualified safety personnel." This issue was raised extensively by Tim Weckwerth, vice president of safety for Weeks Marine and his colleague, Luis Bonilla, health, safety & environment manager, and Alan Slifer, safety & personnel director, Norfolk Dredging Company.

of school and don't have adequate years of experience, they don't come into consideration for our job sites."

Michael Gerhardt informed the meeting that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) regulations for dredging personnel have instituted an exception in its regulations for Site Safety Health Officer (SSHO). Gerhardt pointed out that the current EM385-1-1 Corps Safety Manual, revised and published in 2014, does NOT require five years of continuous experience to be approved as an SSHO for dredging activities. It reads, "Exception 1: For dredging contracts, the SSHO requirements established in the standardized contract clause for dredging project site safety personnel shall be used as it is included in the current UFGS for Governmental Safety Requirements." This exception states as follows: "The SSHO and a CDSO [collateral duty safety officer] must have a minimum of

updates. Other OSHA updates included information on crane operators, drug testing, disciplinary policies, and new silicate exposure sampling procedures.

FUTURE SAFETY FOCUSES

The floor was then passed to Albert Wong, who reported on mishaps and accidents. Hand safety continues to be a major challenge, and he referred to the CDMCS new Hand Safety video that has just been released (see page 24). But Wong also emphasized the importance of ergonomics. "Ergonomics should be the next great focus. We should take a look at the third and fourth order of effects from previous injuries caused by a lifetime of lifting heavy items." His warning to all was "don't let it slide," and his advice was, "Look at the claims you have to determine if you need to view ergonomic issues." Weckwerth commented, "Ask yourself if your

employees could pass the physical tests they passed when they were hired years ago.”

According to Carlock, other issues that should be addressed in the future are “the need for fatigue management plans and how the opioid crisis is affecting the industry.” This all speaks to the heightened awareness of the industry in recent years. Carlock remarked, “There’s a perception that we’re dredging cowboys. But we’re not. We self-govern, and we know that employees need PPE. Districts need to understand that we are concerned. We know we’re liable if things go wrong, and we need as an industry and as safety officers to communicate better with the Corps.”

He continued, “Toolboxes and company culture play an important role. The top tier management has to buy into safety and provide money for programs, to encourage Stop Work Authority, to upgrade PPE, and to make sure there is an open channel to senior management. Plus, don’t underestimate the value of drone surveillance and unplanned on-board visits from safety officers.”

The consensus of the meeting was that the industry has upped its training programs. “In fact,” Carlock said, “we exceed industry standards.” But he added, we would welcome a qualification course for SSHOs or an apprenticeship or internship program to make the role of safety officers attractive to the younger generation and point the way for a career path within the industry. Glenn Thomas emphasized, “We need to be present and represented and thoroughly involved” with the development of standards.

Luis Bonilla of Weeks Marine and H. Cooper of Dutra Group followed up with two other important reports. Bonilla presented the “Accident Report for the Fourth Quarter,” covering a range of reporting on the Nature of Injury or Illness and Types of Incidents. These included statistics on length of service for the company, dredging experience in general, and employee age. This data is submitted anonymously, guarded by an outside third-party and only used for statistical comparisons. It makes it possible for the companies to monitor themselves and compare their own performance from quarter to quarter. By doing so, each company can signal potential areas of improvement.

H. Cooper initiated a discussion on “Confined Space Entry” and the inherent dangers. All present agreed that this is an ongoing topic that requires a rescue plan and teamwork. Issues include sufficient exhaust while doing hotwork, having a hole watch person, adequate training and the inadequacies of air tanks for the rescuers. Ideas about self-rescue plans, gas meters and improved oxygen tanks were among the topics discussed, but everyone agreed that “dialing 911 is not an option.” Someone mentioned that a study was done that indicated that for emergencies on the water, rescue by land-based fire departments took more than 30 minutes to arrive.

AMERICAN WATERWAYS OPERATORS GUEST SPEAKER

Brian Bailey, the director of safety & environmental stewardship at American Waterways Operators (AWO), which represents the towboat and tugboat industry, was invited to share some of his organization’s experiences. The organization has been growing, and he attributes this growth to its ability to offer added value to its members, such as benchmarking themselves by region and sector. This translates into successful bidding on contracts. The data it collects on safety remains anonymous but gives the participating companies a means to competitively prove and improve themselves. Bailey invited members to attend AWO’s conference in January.

Bailey described how courses, training programs and lessons learned offered by AWO help them form a safety partnership with the Coast Guard and lead to better compliance with regulations. “We’ve had strong private sector leadership and developed what we call the AWO Responsible Carrier Program. This is part of a Coast Guard-AWO Safety Partnership.” In addition, he said, “An education process is necessary, and to really benefit the members it is essential to report accidents and incidents with consistency.”

Besides CDMCS officers Albert Wong, Devon Carlock and Michael Gerhardt, the members present were David Howard, dredge operations manager, vice president, Manson

Construction, Alan K. Slifer, safety & personnel director, Norfolk Dredging Company; Glenn Thomas, chair emeritus; Luis Bonilla and Tim Weckwerth, from Weeks Marine; Kevin Cannon and Nazia Shah of Associated General Contractors (AGC) of America. Carol Shobrook, president of Sales and Marketing of JT Cleary; Howard “H” Cooper, corporate safety director of the Dutra Group, Phyllis Harden of Pine Bluff Sand and Gravel Company, Daniel Callais, corporate safety director of Mike Hooks, Inc., Joe Sellers, corporate safety director of Durocher Marine, and Kurt Luedtke, president of Luedtke Engineering Company were linked in online.

The discussions, both of the people at the meeting in person and via computer, were intense and speak to the dedication of the group. New members are welcome and should contact Devon Carlock or Michael Gerhardt. The next meeting will be held February 7 in Washington, D.C. ↗

WEDA to Host 2018 Conference in Norfolk

The Western Dredging Association (WEDA) 2018 Dredging Summit and Expo will be held at the Hilton Norfolk The Main Hotel in Norfolk, Virginia, from June 25 to 28.

The theme for this year’s conference is “Navigating the Future in Dredging,” which will focus on dredging presentations with an emphasis on research, technology development, and pilot-scale projects within academia, government and industry. Speakers are encouraged to provide presentations that highlight the application of the work’s findings to future logistical, technical, and economic constraints and regulatory requirements within the dredging environment. This year’s conference location in Norfolk, Virginia, also provides an opportunity to highlight naval projects and Chesapeake Bay related topics. ↗



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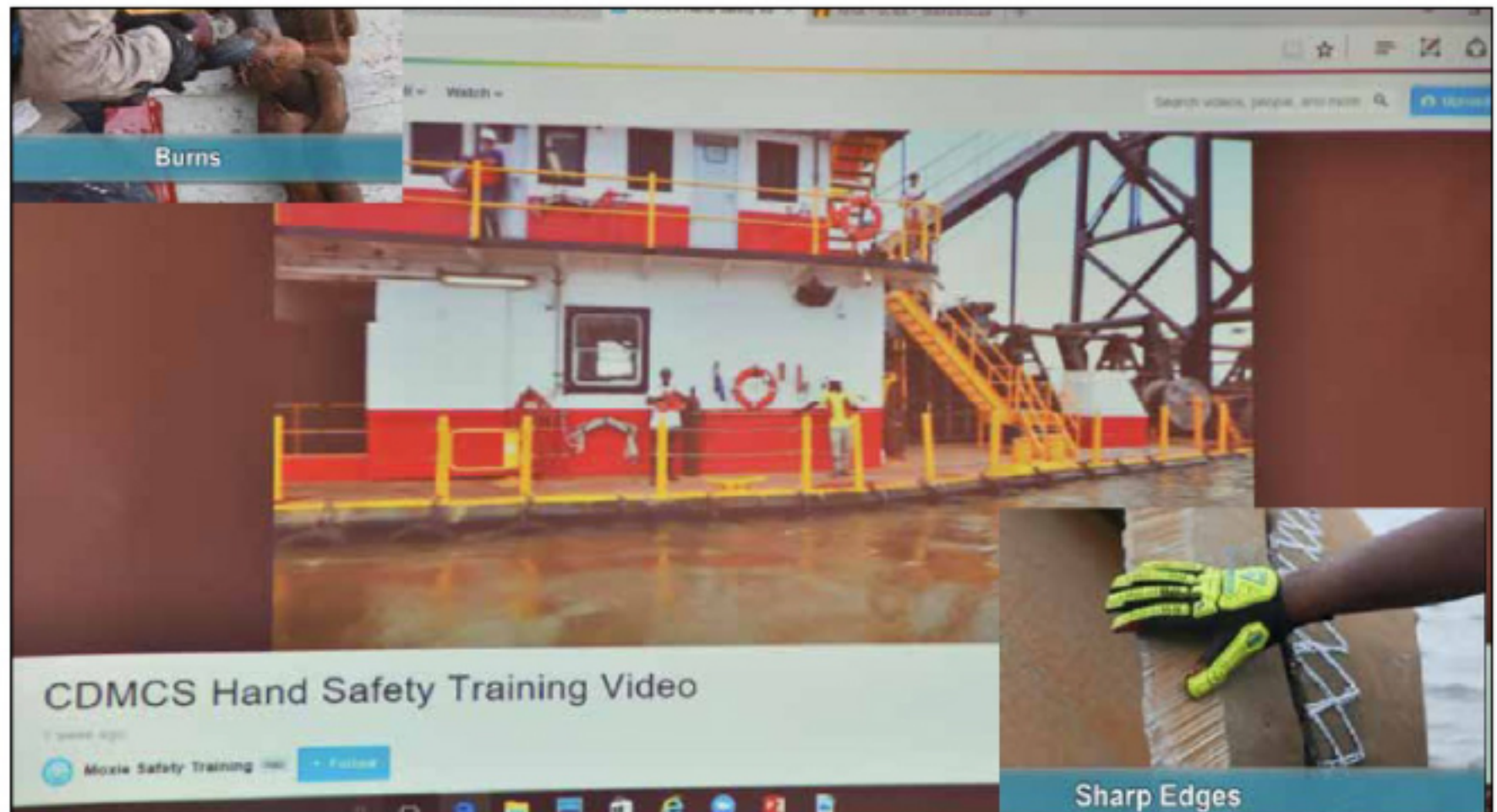
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CDMCS Releases Hand Safety Video



These clips from the hand safety video, created by the Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety, highlight important issues for dredging operations. The video visualizes and demonstrates many aspects of hand safety risks and protection measures.

BY MARSHA COHEN

A comprehensive video on hand safety has been released by the Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety (CDMCS). The video is available to members and non-members for a nominal fee. Since last winter the video has been in the works as a result of brainstorming among members and prioritizing industry needs. Identifying “risks to hand” as a first video project was “obvious” to the contractors. They looked at construction industry statistics and at their own incident reporting.

As the narrator explains, hands are central to all dredging and construction work, but hands are also vulnerable and hand injuries are common. According to the United States Department of Labor, 110,000 Lost Hand Injuries occurred in one year, which resulted in six days away from work per employee. That translates into 660,000 Lost Work Days. Shockingly, 70 percent of these accidents occur because employees were not wearing gloves. A hand injury can result in disabling a worker for even simple tasks. Sometimes this injury will be temporary, but too often it can be permanent.

“These statistics motivated us to create a training program video that provides dredging and marine construction employees with extensive hand safety work practices,” Devon Carlock, co-chair of CDMCS, said. He, along with Glenn Thomas and Michael Gerhardt, working on behalf of CDMCS, have all played a major role in getting this video ready. “We’re excited to have been able to raise the funds to make this video, and we thank all the dredging companies who

supported us financially in this important endeavor,” Thomas said.

“You might think that all of this, something that so plainly affects crew members, would be an easy sell, but clearly based on statistics, hand safety training is underappreciated and avoidable accidents occur every day. This video goes a long way toward reducing risks to hands. It can help employees stay safe and reduce liability costs for employers,” Gerhardt said.

The video is clear: machinery, equipment, lines and cables, tools and chemicals all pose threats to the hands of personnel. Only knowledge can prevent accidents. And the video provides practical “hands-on” knowledge on a wide range of hand safety hazards. Any job on a dredge can result in a hand injury from improper hand placement, pinch points, improper tool usage and sharp edges. How to avoid this? By identifying hazard factors, by staying aware and alert always and slowing down. Rushing causes mistakes.

Dredging contractors want to provide a safe environment, but crew members must also take responsibility for following procedures. This includes situational awareness, avoiding placing hands in between machinery, using hands-free lifting mechanisms, regularly maintaining tools and selecting the appropriate tool for each task. Simple solutions such as checking cords and plugs, making sure there is adequate lighting, closing sharp tools and never using damaged tools also add up to improved and safer work conditions. This takes extra time but eliminates some common risks.

NO ONE GLOVE COVERS ALL JOBS

The video visualizes and demonstrates these and many other aspects of hand safety risks and hand safety protection measures and preparedness. Positioning hands properly, avoiding loose garments and removing jewelry and the proper use of gloves are all covered. A whole series of gloves are examined ranging from leather palmed gloves for line handling to gloves that protect from burns and electrical shocks. No one glove covers all jobs and, in fact, surprisingly, for some tasks gloves themselves can be a danger.

Other hand safety recommendations are made such as pre-job planning, talking the work through and Job Safety Analysis (JSA), as well as personal protective equipment (PPE) in general. From on-deck work to connecting floating pipelines to food preparation for the crew, hands are essential, and hand safety is as well. Watching the video is a learning experience – no matter what your job is in the company.

The video is the first such initiative of the Council for Dredging and Marine Construction Safety. “The positive feedback on this video has gotten our members planning for more videos in the future, perhaps one on ergonomics,” suggests Albert Wong, who co-chairs the CDMCS with Devon Carlock. “Back related injuries are high on the list of challenges that contribute to disabled workers.”

The Hand Safety video has been funded by the CDMCS and its members and is available for purchase by contacting <https://cdmcs.org/safety-resources/safety-videos/>.