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Job Safety, Chemical Use & Safety For Power Wash Contractors



Presented By



NOTES

EXAMPLE

INTRODUCTION

This seminar was created to help you keep yourself and your employees safe on the job. PWNA commissioned the creation of this Safety Program to meet both the spirit and the provisions of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Hazard Communication Standard.

Please ask every question. This is the best way to learn. If you have a question that only pertains to you, you might consider saving it until a break time to receive a personal answer.

Please pre-read this manual before class. Feel free to mark any words or sections that you want us to explain in greater depth. We are happy to help you.

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This manual is intended as a guide to help contractors avoid safety problems. It is not intended to replace the counsel of professional advisors. It is not intended to replace the instructions written by the manufacturer of your choice of any equipment, supplies, or materials.

This manual is not a chemistry textbook. It is solely intended to give a contractors-eye view of the products that many of us come into contact with each day. Alliance Training Inc. is not liable for your interpretation or use of any of the information in this manual.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Peter Marentay has been helping business owners be more successful for more than twenty years. He began teaching and training in 1985 as a part of the Domino's Pizza training program. Named Corporate Person Of The Year (1984) by Domino's Pizza Distribution, he helped create the Executive Development course at Domino's Pizza (1990). He was twice elected President of CanFac, Domino's Pizza's Franchise Advisory Council for Canada, and also served on the President's Council of Domino's Pizza. As the President of CanFac, Marentay initiated the effort to help struggling franchise owners in Canada turn their operations around from 1988-1990. A former VP of Coffee Beanery, Pete headed up both New Concept Development and Equipment Distribution for this growing retailer.

Marentay served two terms as a Director of PWNA, and as chairman of both the Certification and Communications Committees. Pete co-authored the original PWNA Wood Certification course and taught this class for PWNA since 1999. He also teaches several courses geared to power wash professionals.

Marentay owns Sun Brite Supply, a distributor of specialty products for the power wash industry.

Everett Abrams has Wood Certifications from Power Washers of North America, Wolman, Flood, and Penofin. He teaches the Wood Certification Class for PWNA and is also on the Board of Directors of PWNA. He is regarded as one of the top experts in the industry. Abrams has also been instrumental, and received a Certificate of Appreciation, in organizing National Roundtable Meetings to educate and elevate the professionalism and standards of the Wood Restoration and Pressure Washing industries.

Abrams resides and works in Shamong, N.J., where he owns Abrams Plus Inc. (Deck Restoration Plus, Abrams Pressure Washing Plus, Abrams Pest Control Plus, and Abrams Farms Plus). Deck Restoration Plus is a franchise company that specializes in exterior wood restoration and manufactures a complete line of logo-specific chemicals and supplies.

Abrams has been an Instructor for PWNA Wood Certification since 2003. He is also a member of the National Pest Management Association (NPMA) and the Forest Products Society.



Power Washers of North America (PWNA)

The Power Washers of North America is the only association of contractors for the power washing industry that is not aligned with any vendor or manufacturer. The purpose of the organization is to promote trade education, and to facilitate networking and the sharing of experience among it's hundreds of contractor members.

PWNA requires all member-companies to carry insurance for the protection of their customers and the overall reputation of contractors in this business. PWNA supports the establishment of Standards within the industry so that customers benefit by choosing to hire a PWNA contractor. PWNA also offers job referrals and technical support to its members.

These contractors welcome participation by manufacturers, distributors, and industry associates so that PWNA members remain informed of developments and stay on the leading edge of the industry. Alliance Training supports the worthy goals of this group.

To find out more about PWNA and how to join, please visit their website at www.pwna.org

THE PWNA CODE OF ETHICS

I will, at all times, conduct my business in a fair and honorable manner.

I pledge to represent my products and services as they actually are, to do what I promise and to promise only what I can reasonably do, to compete fairly with others on the merits of my products and services, and to refrain from false or misleading statements about my competitors or their products or services.

I commit to maintain adequate insurance coverage to protect my customers' property.

I promise to comply, to the best of my knowledge and ability, with all rules and regulations prescribed by law and government agencies for the health, safety, and well-being of my employees, my customers, the public, and the environment.

I pledge to perform all services using the Best Management Practices and Standards adopted by PWNA.

SAFETY

Safety is a sensitive subject for contractors. The myriad of laws and precedents facing contractors are intimidating, employees seldom want to cooperate, and sometimes safe practices affect job profitability. With all of these forces working against the idea of a completely safe workplace, it is no wonder that we'd all rather just not think about the problem.

We want you to be aware of specific laws that apply to our industry, but rather than concentrate on learning the entire menu of laws and requirements we will simply concentrate on the implementation of a common sense safety program for power wash contractors.

The heart of any effective safety program is communication, awareness, and enforcement. We must communicate all dangers we are aware of. We must raise worker awareness of dangers through regular reminders. We must insist on employee cooperation with our safety program.

The greatest obstacle to safety in the workplace is attitude – both on the employee's part and the employer's part. Employees tend to believe they are somewhat unlikely to get themselves into trouble, and if they would be involved in an accident, they won't actually be seriously hurt. Employers tend to look at the cost of safety instead of the savings safe practices bring. These attitudes work in unison to produce workplace disasters.

Employers and employees all gain when a safe environment prevents injury or death, lost time and lost opportunity, and needless costs. Our goal is to help your company be more successful by avoiding the problems that accompany workplace accidents.

In this course we will discuss a typical safety program already in place in a service company just like yours. We will present suggestions and recommendations that have been used effectively in real-world conditions.

The safety program recommended here is one of education, training, regular reminders, tracking, and enforcement of the rules. An employer who does all of these things is not only likely to avoid accidents related to the workplace; he or she is also likely to avoid finding themselves in court. Everybody wins when safety is a normal element of the workplace.

POLICIES

We suggest you establish company policies to provide a clean, safe, and healthy environment for all of your employees. Your company's goal should be to eliminate work-related injuries.

In the pages that follow, we have outlined some policies, rules, and procedures that could positively impact your safety and that of your employees. As with any list, it may not contain every rule for safe conduct. Common sense is important, but if you implement and follow these rules and procedures you will be making a very important statement.

Remember that any Safety Program is only as good as you make it. Take the time to think, act, and work safely - for yourself, your employees, and their families.

SHARING INFORMATION

Information sharing is the first step in Safety Training. Information can be found from several sources:

- Container labels and product data.
- Material Safety Data Sheets.
- Lists of hazardous products in work area.
- Equipment Owner's Manuals
- Formal training in the safe and proper use of products and equipment.

In addition, we suggest you provide employee access to the following:

- A criteria for hazard evaluation of products.
- This Safety Manual.
- Federal Regulations 29 CFR 1910.1200.
- Material Safety Data Sheets
- Typical lists of hazardous products posted in the appropriate work areas.

One of the objectives of this program is to create a visible connection between labels, Material Safety Data Sheets, the List of Hazardous Products, training, and work practices. Accordingly, this Safety Manual touches much of the daily activity within your company.

Any safety program is an ongoing process. It is not fixed or static. For your Safety Program, we recommend a series of activities:

1. Evaluate or describe the potential hazards of all products in the work area. Obtain information about any potentially hazardous products you purchase from your supplier.
2. Share hazard information with your employees.
3. Share hazard information with local authorities.

Within your company, information about potential hazards and information on how to prevent problems should be presented as part of initial training and orientation as well as during regular weekly Safety Meetings.

A copy of the OSHA Hazardous Communications Standard, the federal regulation which establishes this program, should be made available to all employees. Similarly, a copy of your state's Right-to-Know statute should be available.

SAFETY PROGRAM OVERVIEW

An effective formal Injury and Illness Prevention Safety Program starts with the first day on the job and doesn't end until employment ends. All major elements of a Safety Program should be re-examined annually to ensure it remains an effective program.

Primary responsibility for the implementation, management, and administration of the Safety Program is vested in the company owner.

Policy administration and technical oversight is delegated to the field supervisors.

Employee Safety Training

It is in every company's best interest to make every reasonable effort to keep personnel trained and informed in safe work practices. Safety training is provided initially as part of the employee's orientation and ongoing through regular Safety Talks.

Key elements of a safety-training program include:

- Written Safety Policies presented and discussed during initial orientation.
- Review of the company's safety rules and safe work practices with the employee by their supervisor prior to the commencement of work and every time a new task is attempted for the first time.
- Documentation of Safety Training (with signatures) as part of your Company's Safety Training Program.

It is recommended that any Safety Program you implement be fully documented for the protection of the company. Record who attended any session, what was discussed, the date and time of the presentation, etc. You may have to demonstrate some day that your company made every reasonable effort to communicate, educate, and enforce.

It is recommended that you create a Safety Manual specific to your company that outlines the Safety Rules and Policies that your company adopts. This is how most employees learn what behaviors are acceptable and what behaviors are not.

It is suggested that you hold regular safety meetings to reinforce what the Safety Manual states. This is a very useful tool, because short Safety Talks can touch on subjects that are relative at that moment in time. (A 10-minute Safety Talk, given every Monday morning, is one of the smartest ways to keep safety in the forefront of your employees' thoughts. See the next page.)

Listed here are some good Safety Talk topics. Any one of these could easily be made into multiple short discussions for Safety Talks. Select the most appropriate mini-topic, and spend 10 minutes discussing the important points of that topic with your crews as they begin their work week.

Electrical Safety

Fire Safety

Hazardous Materials

Equipment & Tool Safety – Hand & Power Tools

Temperature & Weather Safety Issues

Material Handling

Confined Spaces

Workplace Housekeeping – Slips, Trips, & Falls

Ergonomic Injuries

Horseplay

First Aid for specific dangers

Heimlich Techniques

Personal Protective Gear

Driving Safety

Note: The CODE OF SAFE PRACTICES starting on Page 9 lists hundreds of safety rules that make excellent Safety Talk

topics.

EXAMPLE

Hazard Identification Process

A system for identifying and evaluating workplace hazards (including periodic inspections to identify unsafe conditions) might include:

- Safety Program Audits may be available from your insurance carrier at no charge. If it is available, request that this be done annually.
- Location Safety Audits (self-inspections of known trouble spots) should be conducted monthly. A standard checklist can be used to facilitate these inspections.
- Employees should be encouraged to (or even rewarded for) bringing hazardous conditions to the attention of their supervisor.
- The results of all inspections should be shared (both the problems and the corrective actions) with employees during regular Safety Talks.

Safety Communications

Safety communications are critical to providing employees with instructional updates about your company safety program. It also provides an avenue by which employees can provide feedback and input, which is useful in developing new safety programs.

A good system for communicating with employees on safety matters might include:

- Periodic memos or other correspondence to employees from the company, President, and/or the Safety Coordinator (if your company names one).
- Safety Suggestion Box allows employees to offer anonymous comments and suggestions related to health or safety matters without the fear of reprisal.
- Safety materials posted on the bulletin board or included with the pay envelopes.
- Weekly Safety Talks conducted by supervisors providing employees with ongoing opportunities for discussing safety issues. A regular Monday morning 10-minute discussion is a great safety reminder, and it addresses timely safety issues and promotes employee involvement and input.

SAFETY POLICY AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is recommended that your company adopt a formal written Safety Policy to protect both employees and the company. You should set a firm goal to strive for safety by eliminating work related accidents.

It is the responsibility of the company owner, all supervisors, and employees to adhere to the Policies and lead by example so that all subsequent employees can see every day that yours is a company striving to be safe – no matter what.

Supervisory Responsibilities

Each staff member, managing supervisor, and work group leader is expected to abide by the following minimum safety responsibilities:

- Enforce Safety Regulations, Rules, and Safe Work Practices.
- Participate in (or run) Safety Talks (weekly is suggested).
- Provide positive and productive suggestions and feedback.
- Conduct scheduled and unscheduled inspections of department or work areas.
- Correct or initiate corrective actions for any unsafe conditions identified in timely manner.
- Solicit employee suggestions for improving workplace safety.
- Follow company policy in disciplining those who break safety rules, always treating violators with fairness, yet firmness.
- Commend employees who are safety conscious. Provide employee recognition for positive contributions--let them know how the company appreciates their active participation. Consider incentive rewards for safe behavior or safety suggestions that are implemented.
- Set the tone for safety by personal example and a demonstrated commitment to performing duties in the safest way.

Employee Safety Responsibilities

Although the law places primary responsibility for health and safety on the employer, employee responsibilities are also necessary to make the program work. Make sure your company Policy Manual states that each employee is responsible for the following minimum activities:

- Obeying all safety and health standards, rules, and regulations and safe work practices.
- Not removing, displacing, damaging, destroying, tampering, or tearing off any safety devices safeguards, notices, or warnings.
- Not interfering with the use of any safety equipment or safeguards by others.
- Using safety equipment or safety devices provided for employee protection as appropriate.
- Practicing good housekeeping by keeping workplaces clean and orderly.
- Reporting any unsafe condition to supervisors.
- Reporting accidents promptly to a supervisor, regardless of extent of injury or damage.
- Taking part in safety activities, including inspections, training sessions, accident investigations, or other related actions as appropriate.

SAFETY TRAINING

Adequate employee training should be provided to enhance employee safety and meet any regulatory training requirements. Good business practice and OSHA requirements dictate that your company should have an official Safety Training Program. Employee Safety Training is required for the initial orientation; whenever an employee changes job tasks (requiring new orientation); whenever employees are exposed to new substances, processes, procedures, or equipment; and whenever your company receives notification of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.

Safety training benefits companies because it brings new ideas into the workplace or re-establishes existing ideas in safe work practices. It also allows supervisors to review the other elements of our safety program with employees and ensure that they are put into action on a daily basis.

Supervisors' Responsibility for Training Employees

Each supervisor is expected to train employees under their direction in the proper and safe way to perform their jobs.

Each supervisor will ensure that every employee has read the Company Safety Program that applies to his or her job. Supervisors are to take time to go over the written safety rules with every employee and make sure he or she agrees in writing to abide by all rules. All training activities undertaken shall be documented.

The success of a well-developed Safety Program depends upon the effectiveness of this training effort. Basic safety orientation allows us to communicate the attitude of management; the general and specific safety rules and regulations; and encouragement to develop good, productive, and safe work habits.

New employee training should include the following:

- A copy of the company Safety Rules and Safe Work Practices.
- Introduction of the employee to his or her fellow employees, working conditions, and work procedures.
- Discussion about the company's Safety Policies and Program as these relate to the employee's work setting.
- Review emergency procedures for reporting accidents, gaining medical treatment, and evaluating premises.

Specific Information for Each Employee

Each employee needs to know and understand the following:

- No employee is expected to undertake a job until he or she has received instructions on how to do it properly and has been authorized to perform the job.
- No employee should undertake a job that appears to be unsafe.
- The mechanical safeguards used by the company and the policy that these safeguards cannot be removed or adjusted by anyone other than the person who placed them.
- Each employee is expected to report any unsafe conditions encountered during work to their supervisor.
- Any injury or illness suffered by an employee, even a slight one, must be reported to his or her supervisor at once.
- Safety rules are a condition of employment, must be understood by each employee, and are applied consistently and uniformly to all employees.

COMMON CHEMICALS USED TODAY

CAUSTICS (Also called “alkaline” or “base”): Any chemical with a pH rating higher than “7” is considered a caustic. Widely used for cleaning products because they break down oils and fats. The most common caustic in our business is sodium hydroxide (NaOH). Caustics are highly corrosive and are used for cleaning ovens, clearing clogged drains, breaking down oil paints, killing mold, paint preparation, etc. Most cleaning jobs we face involve oil-related soils. Caustics can damage surfaces if they are too strong or left on too long. It is always wise to test any cleaning chemical on a hidden spot before applying to the entire surface. This family of chemicals includes:

Chlorine bleach (sodium hypochlorite): One of the most widely used cleaning chemicals today is household chlorine bleach, a strong oxidizer. Commonly found in grocery stores in a 5% - 6% solution. Also found in concentrations up to 15% for professional use. Bleach alone will kill germs and remove mold & mildew stains but won't deep clean the surface. Bleach may affect Dursban, the predominate termite treatment today. Bleach is not stable, which means that it degrades quickly. Exposure to sunlight or heat can result in loss of strength within days. Can damage some substrates like wood within minutes. Most uses of bleach involve diluting the product down to concentrations of 1% - 3%.

Can damage clothing or any soft fibers almost instantly. Will cause temporary blindness if splashed in the eyes and caustic burns if splashed on the skin. Eye and skin protection is recommended. Transfer in safe areas. Secure well in any vehicle used for transport.

Sodium hypochlorite is formed by bubbling chlorine gas through a sodium hydroxide solution. Its pH is approximately 10, making it a strong caustic (base; alkaline)

Many professionals discourage the use of bleach because of the potential for damage to the substrate being cleaned and the surroundings. Bleach remains in common use in the industry, however, because it is relatively inexpensive and readily available.

Sodium hypochlorite is a HazMat product, so shipping of this product is regulated.

SAFETY NOTES:

- **Never mix bleach with any product containing ammonia. The combination of bleach and ammonia produces a deadly gas.**
- **Never mix bleach with percarbonates or hydrogen peroxide because the chemical reaction produces excessive gas that can cause a container to explode.**
- **Mixing bleach with any acid can result in the release of chlorine gas.**
- **Mixing bleach with solvents or fuel oil can result in a possible explosion.**

Calcium Hypochlorite: Similar to sodium hypochlorite with similar results and cautions.

Sodium Hydroxide (caustic soda, lye): The basis of a majority of cleaners created for power washing contractors. Very popular with professionals. Caustics like sodium hydroxide break oils so that a surfactant can lift the oily dirt from the surface for rinsing. Used in concentrations typically varying from 1% to 50%. Used in minor amounts in many household items, even toothpaste. Breathing a concentration of the mist can irritate or damage the lungs. Contact can cause severe skin burns. Sodium Hydroxide is a corrosive and can