



# Oil Patch Quarterly

Exclusive Program Managed by Sisk & Company

Fourth Quarter 2008

## INSURANCE NOTES

### Optimizing Employee Benefits Plan Value

If employees completely understand their company benefits, they can empower themselves to address many of their ongoing financial concerns. When employers promote the proper application of benefits products through targeted education and communication they find increased employee participation rates and improved employee retention and loyalty, and many believe improved business performance.

The costs of providing healthcare and other benefits remain high, and workers' needs are even more diverse. But an effective employee benefits plans can not only address employee financial concerns, but can also support retention initiatives and control costs.

Three factors play a key role in benefits plan optimization strategies:

1. **Breadth and Depth:** Offering a comprehensive safety net for all employees with a broad slate of benefits that can be personalized to the diverse needs of individual employees

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### Keep Employees Safe this Winter

**Preventing Winter Slips, Trips, and Falls** - Winter is upon us and with it comes the hazards of snow and ice around the workplace. Some very common winter injuries are slips, trips, and falls caused by icy and slick conditions. Here are a few prevention tips:

- Keep the work areas and walkways as clear of snow and ice as possible.
- Wear slip-resistant, insulated footwear.
- Take small steps on slippery surfaces.
- Avoid walking too fast, running, quickly changing directions, or coming to a sudden stop.
- While walking, keep hands out of pockets to catch yourself if you fall.
- Use handrails.
- Avoid carrying materials that obstruct vision.
- Use three points of contact when entering and exiting vehicles.

**Dress for Cold-Weather** - For outdoor workers, proper clothing is essential to protect against hypothermia, frostbite, and other winter hazards. A few recommendations are:

- Dress in layers that can be added or removed as needed.
  - The outer layer should deflect wind and allow ventilation
  - The middle layer should absorb sweat and retain insulating properties in a damp environment.
  - The inner layer should allow ventilation and provide warmth.
  - Be mindful that loose and bulky clothing can be become tangled in machinery or equipment.
- Keep a change of clothing available, including socks, in case work clothes become wet.
- Wear insulated, waterproof, slip-resistant footwear.
- Keep hands covered; if practical, wear mittens instead of gloves.
- Keep head covered; up to 40 percent of body heat can be lost when the head is exposed.

Adapted from materials provided by Pinnacol Assurance; for a copy of the Winter Safety Tips poster, call Pinnacol at 1-800-873-7242.



## LESSONS LEARNED

### **Employee Unfit for Duty Must be Safely Escorted off Jobsite**

A worker was intoxicated when a co-worker arrived to pick him up and car pool to the job site. The driver allowed the intoxicated buddy to "sleep it off" on the drive to the location. When they arrived the supervisor noticed the intoxicated employee and would not let him work. Since they were 50 miles from home, the intoxicated employee was told to sleep it off in the car.

Due to the cold temperatures the car engine was run during breaks. When co-workers broke for lunch, they started the car to warm it and noticed the intoxicated employee continued to sleep. After completing work for the day they attempted to wake the employee only to find he had died. Even though the supervisor did not allow the employee to work, this was determined to be a compensable work related fatality.

#### **Lesson Learned:**

Employers / supervisors are not only required to make a decision regarding whether an employee can safely complete their job duties, but also if it is decided they cannot work then they are responsible to get the employee home safely when removing the employee from the job site.

## **MSEA and Sisk & Company Helping Clients with Seminars & PetroDocs Website**

Over the past several years we have been working diligently to increase the safety services offered to MSEA members. The three biggest activities are the free safety seminars offered to MSEA members and Sisk and Company clients (*All MSEA seminars are open to non-clients who may attend by paying the registration fee.*), the personalized safety support available to clients and the new website – PetroDocs.

During 2008, Sisk & Company sponsored 36 safety seminars that covered topics of interest to oil and gas contractors. In addition, we also conducted 6 MSEA quarterly safety meetings for MSEA members. These were held on the Front Range and Western Slope.

We provided one-on-one safety consultation / services to numerous MSEA clients. This support included written programs, safety meeting topics and presentations, help with questions, etc.

Finally, we developed and continue to refine a website – [www.petrodocs.com](http://www.petrodocs.com), an on-line library of safety and health programs and articles. PetroDocs is a membership based "Document Store" of oil field related safety information. The mission is to provide oil and gas related businesses with written safety documents that will help you build or refine your safety programs. New materials are being added regularly, so check the site often. Access to PetroDocs is included with your MSEA membership.

To get a username and password, contact Denise Bender at 303-831-7100 or [dbender@tjsisk.com](mailto:dbender@tjsisk.com). Username and passwords can be personalized. If there is a preference, please provide this information in your e-mail. E-mail requests made without username and password specifications will be randomly generated.

What is planned for 2009? We are currently planning our 2009 seminar schedule. In addition to the 10 seminars that have been well attended in 2008, we are adding two new programs. The first is a cost containment certification workshop; the second is an employment law workshop.

Cost Containment Workshop will include the following:

- Overview of the 6 steps required for Cost Containment
- Customized Cost Containment materials
- Personalized advice in developing the program

Employment Law Workshop will include the following:

- Colorado Anti-discrimination laws
- Setting up personal policies
- Hiring and firing considerations

**Look for the flyers announcing these seminars to see the full list of topics covered.**

## Managing Change in Uncertain Times Impacts Your Business and Safety

Listening to TV or reading the newspaper these days can lead to uneasy feelings about your business. Or maybe you are concerned about future work. To help employees through any transition, you'll need to take a proactive role in managing and communicating change to your staff.

Be up front with employees. Make sure that employees first learn about changes or lack of changes from leaders rather than through the grapevine. If your employees hear rumors about restructuring, spin-offs, new work, etc.; your job of communicating what the actual situation is will be much more difficult. After all, resisting change is natural - it's human nature to avoid the unknown and maintain familiar work patterns. Overcome this resistance by talking to your employees before rumors begin to fly.

During these times, it is important to work with supervisors and lead personnel to share your message about the business, and the importance of following correct work procedures. Now more than ever, you want employees to work safely. This must be continually emphasized. Reinforce that safety is important and make sure you have the tools needed to do the work safely.

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It is always important to encourage employees to report injuries immediately. When an injury is reported to you or the employee's supervisor, gather the basic details and file the first report of injury to Pinnacol as soon as possible (within 24 hours is always best). Then conduct an accident investigation.

The purpose of the accident investigation is to determine the root cause so preventive / corrective actions can be implemented. While conducting the accident investigation, always have a questioning attitude. This will help determine the correct sequence of events and help point to the true cause. Use the accident investigation to learn what happened and apply these lessons to prevent future accidents.

### ***Benefit Plans Value - Continued from page 1***

2. **Cost Efficiency**: Pursuing differentiating strategies for controlling costs – the second most important benefits objective for employees – through the use of voluntary benefits, work/life balance and wellness programs.
3. **Decision Support**: Working to ensure the proper application and wide adoption of employee benefits through effective communications, advice and guidance.

Adapted from 2008 MetLife Study of Employee Benefits Trends

## OSHA NEWS

### Unannounced Inspection Plan Changed

By Megan Meagher,  
OSHA Outreach and Compliance Specialist

OSHA recently updated its Site Specific Targeting (SST) Plan. Changes include giving more control to area offices on the number of inspections they perform, and revising the process for removing sites from the list, among other areas. In a notice dated Nov. 5, 2008, OSHA outlined the following changes:

- Regional administrators may authorize area offices to not complete all of the

inspections on the primary list of SST sites if those offices have additional inspection commitments.

- Partnership establishments may not be deleted from the primary list until after the annual cycle is created. Voluntary Protection Program and Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) sites may be deleted prior to cycle creation or after the cycle is created, because these sites have met the rigorous evaluation standards of these programs.

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## OSHA Inspection Plan - *Continued from page 3*

- Businesses that have undergone a comprehensive inspection in the last 36 months will be deleted from the list.
- SHARP sites will be deleted from the list based on the regional administrator's approval. The notice also offers guidance to compliance officers who discover after arriving at a business that it is an on-site consultation SHARP site.
- Area directors no longer have to demonstrate "current knowledge concerning the industry" to authorize expansion of a health inspection.
- Businesses that are on a list that is part of an OSHA emphasis program can be moved to the current inspection cycle.

### OSHA Record Keeping

Check out <http://www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/handbook/index.html> for information on the OSHA logs or contact Megan Meagher of the Denver Area OSHA Office with any questions at 303.844.5285 x105.



This past year we have seen many changes to the economy and the political climate. During 2009 we can be assured that more change is on the way. I am looking forward to working with you, the MSEA member, in the coming year to help you improve your safety and loss control programs.

At Sisk & Company we are committed to helping you run your business as safely as possible. We understand it is your business and you will run it as you see fit. However, we can provide you with safety and loss control support that if implemented can reduce employee accidents and help improve your e-mod, which lowers your Workers' Compensation premiums. In most cases, the services offered by Sisk through the MSEA are at no cost to MSEA members.

We are working to expand the information on the MSEA website – [www.gomsea.org](http://www.gomsea.org). In addition, the PetroDocs website – [www.petrodocs.com](http://www.petrodocs.com) has a tremendous amount of material available to help you build your safety program, and more is being added regularly. Make sure you check out these two websites.

**Best wishes for a safe and productive 2009!**

## Contact Information

The Mountain States Energy Alliance (MSEA) is a not for profit association dedicated to helping members create a safer work environment in the oil and gas industry. The MSEA offers an exclusive workers' compensation program underwritten by Pinnacle Assurance for its members. MSEA members receive a 4% discount on their workers' compensation premium and may also qualify for a dividend payment based on favorable loss experience of the group. To see if your company qualifies for the program or for more information about the MSEA program contact one of the following.

Mike Eastop  
Dave Tacha  
Jeff Parent  
Tom Sisk

For benefit information contact:  
Todd Heiserman  
Dutch Ross

**The following websites provide excellent insurance and safety information:**

[www.tjsisk.com](http://www.tjsisk.com)  
[www.gomsea.org](http://www.gomsea.org)  
[www.petrodocs.com](http://www.petrodocs.com)

**If you have questions or comments about this newsletter, contact:**

Dan Klimek  
Loss Control and Safety Manager  
E-mail: [dklimek@tjsisk.com](mailto:dklimek@tjsisk.com)

**SISK & CO.**



1700 Broadway, Suite 1000  
Denver, Colorado 80290  
Phone 888.333.6620  
303.831.7100  
Fax 303.831.7377