

# Western Xpress

## WESTERN DISTRICT QUARTERLY NEWS

April 2004

**D**uring the year the MSHA Bellevue Field Office participated with the Washington Aggregate and Concrete Association to provide valuable Part 46 Annual Refresher Training to approx. 600 miners. To provide a perspective, this is 25% of the mining work force in the state of Washington. I would like to give a special thanks to Eric Johnson from EFS and Gary Hebel, Inspector for their assistance in helping train the nation's miners so they are able to go home to their families each day.

The Vacaville Field Office hosted its annual Informational Seminar, Spring Thaw 2004, on March 16, at the Holiday Inn Express in Vacaville. Our 'partners in mining' in attendance for this day-long event represented approximately 35 mining operations. Topics presented and discussed included Complacency and Safety, by Joseph Balkovek of Lehigh Southwest Cement Company; Safety as a Value, by Nancy Morehouse of A. Teichert & Son, Inc.; and the benefits of belonging to the time honored Joseph A. Holmes Association by Patty Borer of Syar Industry. Topics presented and discussed by Western District personnel included Supervisor's Responsibilities, Cathy Matchett; Contractor's Responsibility, John Perez; and Workplace Examinations by Karonica Glover.

**Safety Tip:**  
**Watch what you do today**  
**So you can live another day.**

We'd like to Thank Diane Fionda for all her hard work with the Holmes Safety Association.

Thanks to

Dan Scorza, United Safety Associates  
Diane Fionda, TXI/Riverside Cement  
Terry Tyson, Hanson Aggregates Regional

Safety Director

Tony Serpas, Cal OSHA District Manager

Frank D'Orsi, Safety Consultant

Lance Yoshioka, BATF

For the Presentations they gave at our Spring Thaw Seminar and making it a great success.

### TRUCK TARRING

As we all know, MSHA also inspects facilities where the final product is bagged, palletized, and loaded on flatbed semi-trailers for shipment. An area of concern is the tarping of the loaded trailers, as the driver has to unroll the tarp from atop the load. Unless some protective action has been taken, the driver is exposed to a potential fall hazard during this process. There are several methods by which this hazard can be eliminated.

- **Powered truck tarping stations**  are commercially available that permit tarping to be done from ground level.
- Tarping facilities may be provided which allow safe access to the top of the loads. If these are used, mine operators must direct drivers to their location and provide any training required. Some of the devices and/or systems are categorized as *passive* (meaning fall protection is provided whenever a person moves to an at-risk position); while others are *semi-passive* or *active* (meaning some action is required before one moves to a position from which a fall could occur). Each type requires that the truck be positioned in the location where the fall protection is furnished.
  - *Passive* – Passive fall restraints generally consist of permanently-

mounted handrails, screens or other devices that enclose a truck on its sides. They are positioned close enough to the truck and its load so that a person will be restrained and not fall to a level below should there be a slip, trip, or loss of balance. Safe access, usually in the form of steps, walkways, ramps or ladders must be provided to access the different levels (e.g. the flatbed level or the top of a palletized load.)

- *Semi-passive* – Semi-passive fall restraints are similar to those described above, but are not permanently fixed in place. They are positioned to the side or above the trucks, and to prevent damage to the equipment or the trucks, they are normally positioned out of the way. They are lowered, pivoted, swung or otherwise moved into position after a truck has entered the area, then moved back out of the way after tarping is complete.
- *Active* – Active fall restraints include provision of safety harnesses or belts, fixed-length or adjustable self-retracting lanyards, overhead attachment points, cables or rails, etc. Persons working in positions where they could be at-risk of a fall don the equipment before working at height.

It is not acceptable to tell the drivers to move their truck off the mine site to tarp the load, and in fact, may result in tickets being issued by the police for traffic violations such as obstructing traffic and operating the truck on a public road with an untarped load. Simply moving a safety hazard to another location in order to avoid compliance is unacceptable.

### Hard Hats



There is a common misconception that there is a predetermined shelf life on hard hats--this is not the case. Both the 1986 and 1997 versions of the ANSI standards address service life under maintenance and care of the hard hat. Those standards state that all hard hat components should be inspected daily for signs of dents, cracks, penetration and any damage due to impact, rough treatment or wear. Any hard hat that fails the visual inspection should be removed

from service until the problem is corrected.

In addition to everyday wear and tear, ultra violet (UV) radiation can pose a problem for hats constructed of plastic materials. Damage caused by UV radiation is easy to spot. The hat will lose its glossy finish and eventually take on a chalky appearance. Further degradation could cause the shell to actually start flaking away. Once the effects of UV radiation are detected, the hard hat should be immediately replaced.

“Bump caps” do not comply with ANSI guidelines and are not acceptable for use where an ANSI-compliant hard hat is required. Additionally, a hard hat cannot be worn over the top of a ball cap.

## Health Corner

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### TEN SUPER FOODS YOU SHOULD EAT!

**Cantaloupe.** A quarter of a delicious melon supplies almost as much vitamin A and C as most people need in an entire day.

**Sweet Potatoes.** A nutritional All-Star – one of the best vegetables you can eat. They're loaded with carotenoids, vitamin C, potassium, and fiber! Mix in unsweetened applesauce or crushed pineapple for extra moisture and sweetness.

**Fat-free (Skim) or Low-fat Milk (1%, NOT 2%).** Excellent source of calcium, vitamins, and protein with little or no artery-clogging fat and cholesterol.

**Salmon or other fatty fish.** The omega-3 fats in fish, especially fatty fresh fish like salmon and rainbow trout can help reduce the risk of sudden-death heart attacks.

**Oranges.** Great-tasting and rich in vitamin C, folic acid, and fiber.

**Broccoli.** Lots of vitamin C, carotenoids, calcium, and folic acid.

**Whole-Grain Bread.** It's higher in fiber and has more vitamins and minerals than enriched white or “wheat” breads.

**Watermelon.** Excellent source of vitamin C and carotenoids – and it tastes great! Perfect for a snack, dessert, or picnics.

**Beans.** Inexpensive, low in fat, and rich in protein, iron, folic acid, and fiber. Choose garbanzo, pinto, black, Navy, kidney, or lentils. Eat them as a side dish or snack, in a tortilla with salsa, or in a soup.

**Spinach or Kale.** Loaded with vitamin C, carotenoids, calcium, and fiber. Steam'em and eat'em.

## Just for fun Tramp Miners...A Dying Breed

Author Unknown  
Submitted by Rick Manville



In my lifetime I have had the fortune (or misfortune, depending on one's personal views) of knowing several "Migratory Mineral Extracting Experts"—TRAMP MINERS. Stereotyped images of broad cross sections of people tend to leave a sour taste in my mouth, but several characteristics became evident to me in my casual association with this special breed of man.

Descriptive adjectives that we are in the habit of using to describe individuals that deviate from the accepted norm according to society standards, such as bum, ignorant, stupid, etc., DO NOT apply to the TRAMP MINER. My own limited scope of observation began at a very impressionable age—about 25---and ranges from remote mining camps in both the high and low desert to hard rock mines and mountain towns in the Rockies. I have by no means met them all, nor am I qualified to make character judgments, but I would like to share some of the impressions that linger from my fading memories of the TRAMP MINER.

The TRAMP MINER is capable of consuming unreal quantities of alcohol, hour after hour, day after day, and occasionally week after week. He seems to prefer socializing with fellow TRAMP MINER'S more than with outsiders. The most popular reason to stop a good party seems to be a lack of money or assets that are easily converted to cash.

The TRAMP MINER seems to be a highly mobile creature. He might appear in three different states (not necessarily adjoining) in as many days using a 1969 Plymouth (with bald tires) as his prime mode of transportation. Some maintain new vehicles and mobile homes, while others never bother to possess anything but a pair of second hand "diggers", a clean set of tramping clothes, and a suitcase. A lack of transportation, however,

never seems to restrict the rapid movement of the TRAMP MINER.

The TRAMP MINER seldom projects a tacky image. He likes to keep his clothes neat, his hair in place, and his body clean. He stands erect and looks at your eyes when he is addressing you with an impression that you are being conned, (pulling your leg) crosses your mind frequently during most encounters with the TRAMP MINER.

The TRAMP MINER possesses an uncanny ability to go directly to the one pub in town that is frequented by other TRAMP MINER'S, even though it may have been fifteen years since he was in that particular town. He always encounters someone with whom he has worked somewhere along the "tramp trail".

Communication . . . this area always amazes me. It may take a mother, wife, or the F.B.I. months of even years to locate a particular TRAMP MINER, but another TRAMP MINER can have a letter to him at a General Delivery address (maybe under an alias), somewhere within three days!

The TRAMP MINER seems to possess the personality that allows him to "fit in" in almost any situation if it happens to be convenient or to his advantage to do so. On the other side of the picture, however, he does not tend to engage in lengthy arguments. If his opponent in the debate doesn't conform to his views, there is usually "minor or" attitude adjustments made to the opponents head, depending on the situation. He is usually not particular with whom he does battle or for what reason. He may fight with his partner in the evening and be back on the tramp trail with him in the morning.

With the advent of new laws that require companies to invest large sums of money to hire and train miners, I fear that the Migratory Mineral Extracting Expert may become extinct, or at least an endangered species. Even though they are experts at their trade and normally very productive when they work, mine operators are becoming more and more hesitant to hire them knowing that they will stay only long enough for another tramp stake.

If anyone can think of a way to preserve the "habitat" of the TRAMP MINER, please jot it down and mail it to:

Preservation of the TRAMP MINER HABITAT  
General Delivery  
Any Mining Town, U.S.A.

P.S. Donations may be left with the bartender at one of the many TRAMP MINER rendezvous points.

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**The End**