

# ENR NEWS

For the concrete masonry and hardscape industry

Volume 38, Number 11 November 2008



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## THE VALUE OF WORKPLACE SAFETY

An effectively managed worker safety and health program can be a big factor in reducing work-related injuries and illnesses and their related costs. Addressing safety and health issues in the workplace also saves the employer money and adds value to the business. Recent estimates place the business costs associated with occupational injuries at close to \$170 billion—expenditures that come straight out of company profits.

When workers stay whole and healthy, the direct cost-savings to businesses include:

- lower workers' compensation insurance costs;
- reduced medical expenditures;
- smaller expenditures for return-to-work programs;
- fewer faulty products;
- lower costs for job accommodations for injured workers;
- less money spent for overtime benefits.

Safety and health also make big reductions in indirect costs, due to increased productivity, higher quality products, increased morale, better labor/management relations, reduced turnover, and better use of human resources.

Implementing an accident prevention program will allow a small business to learn first-hand that the cost of accident prevention is far lower than the cost of accidents.

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A PUBLICATION OF THE



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# SAFETY IN THE CONCRETE INDUSTRY

**MORE THAN 250,000 PEOPLE WORK IN CONCRETE MANUFACTURING. IN A TYPICAL YEAR, OVER 10 PERCENT OF THOSE WORKERS—28,000—EXPERIENCE A JOB-RELATED INJURY.**

Potential hazards for workers in concrete manufacturing:

- Eye, skin and respiratory tract irritation from exposure to cement dust;
- Inadequate safety guards on equipment;
- Inadequate lockout/tagout systems on machinery;
- Overexertion and awkward postures;
- Slips, trips and falls; and
- Chemical burns from wet concrete.

## CEMENT DUST

Hazard: Exposure to cement dust can irritate eyes, nose, throat and the upper respiratory system. Skin contact may result in moderate irritation to thickening/cracking of skin to severe skin damage from chemical burns. Silica exposure can lead to lung injuries including silicosis and lung cancer.

Solutions:

- Rinse eyes with water if they come into contact with cement dust and consult a physician.
- Use soap and water to wash off dust to avoid skin damage.
- Wear a P-, N- or R-95 respirator to minimize inhalation of cement dust.
- Eat and drink only in dust-free areas to avoid ingesting cement dust.
- 

## WET CONCRETE

Hazard: Exposure to wet concrete can result in skin irritation or even first-, second- or third-degree chemical burns. Compounds such as hexavalent chromium may also be harmful.

Solutions:

- Wear alkali-resistant gloves, coveralls with long sleeves and full-length pants, waterproof boots and

eye protection.

- Wash contaminated skin areas with cold, running water as soon as possible.
- Rinse eyes splashed with wet concrete with water for at least 15 minutes and then go to the hospital for further treatment.

## MACHINE GUARDING

Hazard: Unguarded machinery used in the manufacturing process can lead to worker injuries.

Solutions:

- Maintain conveyor belt systems to avoid jamming and use care in clearing jams.
- Ensure that guards are in place on mixers, block makers, cubers and metalworking machinery such as rebar benders, cutters and cage rollers.
- Establish and follow effective lockout/tagout procedures when servicing equipment.
- Be sure appropriate guards are in place on power tools before using them.

## FALLING OBJECTS

Hazard: Workers may be hit by falling objects from conveyor belt systems, elevators or concrete block stacking equipment.

Solutions:

- Avoid working beneath cuber elevators, conveyor belts and stacker/destacker machinery.
- Stack and store materials properly to limit the risk of falling objects.
- Wear eye protection when chipping and cleaning forms, products or mixers.

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## POOR ERGONOMICS

Hazard: Improper lifting, awkward postures and repetitive motions can lead to sprains, strains and other musculoskeletal disorders.

Solutions:

- Use handtrucks or forklifts when possible.
- Lift properly and get a coworker to help if a product is too heavy.
- Avoid twisting while carrying a load. Shift your feet and take small steps in the direction you want to turn.
- Keep floors clear to avoid slip and trip hazards.
- Avoid working in awkward postures.

## CONFINED SPACES

Hazard: Mixers and ready-mix trucks have confined spaces that pose safety risks for workers.

Solutions:

- Follow established procedures for confined space entry and work to assure safety.
- Guard against heat stress when cleaning mixer drums.
- Wear appropriate protective equipment to avoid silica exposure when removing concrete residues from

inside truck mixer drums.

## VEHICLES

Hazard: Poorly maintained or improperly handled vehicles can lead to crushing injuries at the plant site or other injuries for truck drivers.

Solutions:

- Make sure back-up alarms on vehicles are functioning.
- Avoid overloading cranes and hoists.
- Use care with the load out chute on concrete mixers to avoid injuries to hands and fingers.
- Beware of hot surfaces on equipment and truck components.
- Guard eyes against splashes of aggregate materials during loading and unloading.
- Use hearing protection if needed to guard against excessive noise exposure during cement loading/unloading and while using pneumatic chippers inside truck mixer drums. **CMN**

*Information compiled from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, [www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov).*

# NCMA SAFETY RESOURCES & PROGRAMS

## NCMA SAFETY WEBSITE

This new website offers a safety calendar, message board, compliance tips and more sponsored by NCMA and ICPI maintained by safety software provider Intec, Inc. Members can access the relevant safety information by visiting Safety Resources on [www.ncma.org](http://www.ncma.org).

## NCMA eSAFETYLINE



Another program developed by NCMA and ICPI is eSafetyLine Safety Software. The software is a comprehensive safety program that includes

compliance, training, and recordkeeping materials. The software also contains safety information needed to operate equipment for 67 different pieces of equipment unique to block plants and 11 additional pieces of equipment for paver plants thanks to a lot of hard work by the NCMA and ICPI Safety Software Task Groups. Links are provided to provincial safety and health web sites to assist those members who operate plants in Canada. The eSafetyLine software is sold as an annual subscription at a cost of \$150/year for members of NCMA and ICPI (\$450/year for nonmembers) to continue to access the software. Your \$150 subscription permits access for up to three establishments. For additional

subscriptions or other inquiries, please feel free to contact Dennis Graber, NCMA Technical Publications Director at 703-713-1900 or [dgraber@ncma.org](mailto:dgraber@ncma.org).

## NCMA BLOCK PLANT SAFETY COURSE

13-14 November 2008 @ NCMA Headquarters

This two-day course will train concrete masonry and hard-scape production, operations, and safety managers and personnel how to enhance worker safety & minimize injuries. Participants will receive the OSHA 10-hour course completion card and a free, one-year subscription to the NCMA Safety Software. Topics include:

- OSHA Compliance
- Machine Guarding (Including Lock Out / Tag Out)
- Insurance and Cost Savings
- Forklift Safety
- Flammable and Combustible Liquids
- Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans, and Fire Protection
- Safety and Health Programs (Including Confined Spaces and Fall Protection)
- Electrical
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Hazard Communication

Tuition is \$650 for NCMA Members and \$1,300 for nonmembers. To register, contact Brittaney Kamhong Thompson, NCMA Schools Administrator, at 703-713-1900 or [bkamhong@ncma.org](mailto:bkamhong@ncma.org).

## NCMA/ICPI SAFETY AWARDS

See page 6 for a full description and entry form.

## WASHINGTON WIRE:

# NCMA Scores Victory for Sustainable Design

*Landmark Legislation directs DOD to incorporate “principles of sustainable design” and “life-cycle cost-effective practices” in military construction.*

President Bush has signed into law the Department of Defense (DOD) authorization bill for fiscal year 2009. This legislation funds the nation's military programs. The bill includes a major provision that addresses one of NCMA's top legislative priorities. That particular provision requires the Secretary of Defense to incorporate principles of sustainable design and life-cycle cost-effective practices as an element in all military construction projects submitted to Congress for approval. All projects submitted by DOD elements—including the U.S. Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and Air Force—will have to take into account these criteria.

By enacting this provision, Congress is validating through legislation the arguments long articulated by NCMA and the concrete masonry industry that the DOD should be utilizing construction materials that are more sustainable and cost-effective over the life cycle of the construction project. These new requirements will likely require a significant paradigm shift on the part of the DOD in the way building materials are selected. While some military service branches have continued to favor the use of durable building materials—which provide maximum long-term sustainability and lower maintenance costs—other branches have sacrificed long-term cost-effectiveness and performance in the interest of achieving short-term objectives.

“NCMA has continued to take the lead in working with

members of the U.S. Congress to ensure that design priorities for military construction are properly realigned,” according to NCMA President Bob Thomas. “This legislation is of particular importance to NCMA members, as well as other segments of the masonry industry and members of the North American Concrete Alliance (NACA). We look forward to working with our industry partners in supporting the military service branches in the months and years ahead to fully implement these provisions.”

“From the beginning of our dialogue with Congress going back to last year, the House Armed Services Committee members and senior staff expressed a willingness to work with NCMA to address our ongoing concerns regarding the choice of building materials used to house our troops,” declared Don Foster, Chairman of NCMA's Government Affairs Committee. “Our legislative effort focused on the 2009 DOD authorization bill as the appropriate legislative vehicle in which to seek to incorporate the life-cycle language.”

“This statutory change is aimed at beginning the shift away from the use of less durable, less sustainable building materials in military construction projects,” continued Thomas. “This legislation will spur growth for our member companies, provide jobs within those communities hosting military bases, and enhance our industry's role as responsible stewards of our environment.” **CMN**

## New Member

### Nova Chemicals

Daniel Quinn  
Commercial Manager  
Nova Chemicals, Inc  
1550 Coraopolis Height Road  
Moon Township, PA 15108  
PH (412) 490-4397  
FAX (412) 490-4325  
WEB [www.novachem.com](http://www.novachem.com)

NOVA Chemicals develops and manufactures chemicals, plastic resins and end-products that make everyday life safer, healthier and easier. Our employees work to ensure health, safety, security and environmental stewardship through our commitment to Responsible Care®. NOVA Chemicals shares are traded as NCX on the Toronto and New York stock exchanges. **CMN**

## TEK 6-6A Determining the Recycled Content of Concrete Masonry Products

Have you ever wondered what can be done to make your units more “green” and what can be counted as recycled content toward accumulating LEED points and other sustainability credits? How do you calculate the recycled percentages to report to the design team? What about left over units from a job site? What does introducing some of these unconventional recycled products do to the properties of the unit such as fire rating? These and many other questions are addressed in the all new TEK 6-6A Determining the Recycled Content of Concrete Masonry Products.

This TEK is intended mainly for producers but is also very helpful in justifying LEED credits to architects, engineers, residential designers, contractors, builders, plan reviewers and building officials. The TEK can be accessed on member's e-TEK sites (for links go to [www.ncma.org](http://www.ncma.org)) or you can order hard copies of the publication by calling NCMA at (703) 713-1900. **CMN**

## 2009 International Codes Finalized



In the fourth and final series of meetings to finalize the 2009 editions of the International Codes (including the International Building, Residen-

tial, Fire, Energy Conservation, and related Codes) several thousand governmental officials, fire fighters and fire marshals, and industry representatives converged on Minneapolis September 14 through 23, 2008 to review and approve the latest design and construction revisions to the 2006 International Codes. The following list summarizes a few of the nearly 9,000 change proposals debated throughout this process that are of interest to the concrete masonry industry:

- **Adoption of 2008 TMS 402/ACI 530/ASCE 5 and TMS 602/ACI 530.1/ASCE 6**

The 2008 edition of the Masonry Standards Joint Committee (MSJC) Code and Specification will be referenced by the 2009 International Residential and Building Codes (IRC and IBC). This national masonry standard includes the latest design and construction requirements for masonry, including updates to structural design requirements, clarified and reorganized seismic detailing provisions, and updated construction practices, including the use of self-consolidating grout. As part of the adoption of the 2008 MSJC, the masonry design provisions in the IBC provisions have been significantly streamlined through the removal of redundant and confusing requirements.

- **Residential Fire Sprinklers**

In a groundbreaking change, the

International Code Council (ICC) membership overturned previous recommendations and will now require all residential dwelling units constructed to the 2009 International Residential Code (IRC) to be protected by an automatic fire sprinkler system.

- **Structural Integrity**

In partial response to the attacks on the World Trade Center Towers, a series of new structural integrity provisions have been introduced for high rise buildings to help mitigate the potential for progressive collapse subsequent to an isolated failure or damage to a structure. These new design and detailing provisions can be easily met with reinforced masonry construction.

- **Impact Resistance**

For certain high-risk buildings and for all buildings more than 420 feet in height, wall assemblies of exit and elevator enclosures must now be constructed of materials resistant to soft body and hard body impact. Due to their proven robustness and resilience to impact resistance, concrete and masonry assemblies are automatically deemed to comply with these new requirements.

- **Gravel Ballast Roofing Materials**

A series of proposals to expand the use of gravel ballast roofing materials in hurricane regions and high-wind zones was disapproved. Investigations following natural disasters, including Hurricane Katrina, repeatedly demonstrate that concrete roof pavers and similar ballast systems outperform gravel ballast and result in less damage by minimizing wind-borne debris.

- **Air Barriers**

Proposed requirements to place unsubstantiated requirements to test for air leakage of new buildings into the International Energy Conservation and Building Codes were disapproved. While the masonry industry remains resolved in identifying and implementing energy saving measures into the built environment, the proposed performance criteria were based on inaccurate and outdated data and could not be feasibly executed in the field. As a compromise, the ICC membership approved a clarification to existing air barrier requirements for residential construction that permits either visual inspection or whole-house testing to ensure that the building envelope has been properly sealed.

- **Foundation Dampproofing**

Proprietary exemptions to permit precast concrete foundation walls to be installed without dampproofing membranes were disapproved citing their lack of technical justification or demonstrated field performance. **CMN**

*Representing the masonry industry and the Masonry Alliance for Codes and Standards (MACS) at these hearings included Canan D'Avela (Arizona Masonry Guild/Western Block Co.), Ed Freyermuth (Arizona Masonry Guild/Superlite Block-Oldcastle), Chip Clark (Brick Industry Association), Steve Skalko (Portland Cement Association), and Jason Thompson (National Concrete Masonry Association). For more information on the activities of the International Code Council or the I-Code development process, please contact Jason Thompson; [jthompson@ncma.org](mailto:jthompson@ncma.org).*

# SAFETY AWARDS PROGRAM

## OVERVIEW

This program offers recognition for safety-conscious Producer and Associate Members of the National Concrete Masonry Association (NCMA) and the Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute (ICPI) who have exemplary safety records during the calendar year.

The awards will be presented during the 2009 International Concrete Products Exposition (Icon Expo). Award recipients will also be recognized in *CM News* and in other trade publications. Participation in the awards presentation is not a requirement to receive an award.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The NCMA / ICPI Safety Awards Program is open to all production or manufacturing facilities of Producer or Associate Members of NCMA or ICPI in good standing during the reporting period. Each facility enters individually; eligibility is limited to facilities with production or manufacturing personnel in their Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) 300 logs or equivalent Canadian injury reports.

The awards are for the reporting period of 1 January 2008 through 31 December 2008. Any entrant facility with any fatalities recorded during the period covered by the program is automatically disqualified from receiving any safety awards for the period covered by the program.

To enter, complete and submit a copy of the facility's OSHA 300 log or equivalent Canadian injury report, covering the entire reporting period, with the Safety Awards Program Entry Form and entry fee, by 15 January 2009. Submitted figures must represent all employees at each plant or location for which a separate OSHA log or equivalent Canadian injury report is kept.

## ENTRY FEE

There is a nominal fee of \$295 per facility entry. The entry fee includes one ticket to the awards ceremony. Each Producer or Associate member may enter multiple facilities (one facility per entry form). If an award recipient is unable to attend the awards ceremony, that recipient's award will be mailed, at no additional charge, to the address provided on the entry form.

## SAFETY AWARDS CATEGORIES

### Outstanding Safety Performance Award

This prestigious award, the highest level of safety achievement in a single year, is given to any (and all) NCMA Producer or Associate member facilities or ICPI Producer or Associate member facilities with zero OSHA (or equivalent Canadian injury report) recordable injuries during the award reporting period.

### Milestone Award (*new for 2008!*)

This highly coveted award shall be bestowed only upon those NCMA Producer or Associate member facilities or ICPI Producer or Associate member facilities with five, eight, or ten consecutive years of Safety Awards Program entries with zero OSHA (or equivalent Canadian injury report) recordable injuries.

### Excellence in Safety Award

- All remaining NCMA Producer, NCMA Associate, ICPI Producer, and ICPI Associate entries are eligible for this second-tier award based on the work categories described below. In the event of an incidence-rate tie, all tied entries will receive an award.
- The Gold Producer Award will be given to the NCMA Producer member facility or ICPI Producer member facility with the best recordable-injury incidence rate in each category.\*
- The Gold Associate Award (*new for 2008!*) will be given to the NCMA Associate member facility or ICPI Associate member facility with the best recordable-injury incidence rate in each category.\*
- The Silver Producer Award will be given to the NCMA Producer member facility or ICPI Producer member facility with the second-best recordable-injury incidence rate in each category.\*
- The Silver Associate Award (*new for 2008!*) will be given to the NCMA Associate member facility or ICPI Associate member facility with the second-best recordable-injury incidence rate in each category.\*

\* Excellence in Safety Awards are categorized by total number of hours worked at a facility, as follows:

Category I	0 - 40,000 hours
Category II	40,001 - 80,000 hours
Category III	80,001 - 140,000 hours
Category IV	140,001 - 200,000 hours
Category V	200,001+ hours

The recordable-injury incidence rate (IR) is based on the number of OSHA 300 log (or equivalent Canadian injury report) recordable injuries for each facility during the reporting period, compared to the number of hours worked. This incidence-rate formula will be used to express all entries as the number of recordable cases per 100 employees:

$$(IR) = \frac{(\# \text{ of Recordable Injuries}) \times (200,000)}{(\text{Total \# of hours worked})^{**}}$$

\*\* "Total # of hours worked" during the reporting period is for all personnel, for the facility being reported on this form.



# SAFETY AWARDS PROGRAM

## ENTRY FORM

### INSTRUCTIONS

This Entry Form, the entry fee, and a copy of the entrant facility's OSHA 300 log or equivalent Canadian injury report (without employee names) must be received at NCMA Headquarters no later than 15 January 2009; this is a receipt deadline, not a postmark deadline. Please complete a separate form for each location where a separate OSHA log or equivalent Canadian injury report is maintained. NCMA or ICPI will contact the safety representative listed on the Entry Form to confirm any award received.

Total hours worked during the reporting period, for all personnel, for the facility being reported on this form: \_\_\_\_\_

Total number of recordable injuries and illnesses. Total of OSHA 300 columns G-J (or Canadian equivalent): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Facility: \_\_\_\_\_

Facility Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Company or Facility Safety Representative: \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Representative's Telephone Number at Work: \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Representative's Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Safety Representative's Mailing Address at Work: \_\_\_\_\_

*I hereby certify that the information above is true, accurate, and fairly reflects the safety performance of the entrant facility.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
Safety Representative's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### MEMBERSHIP CATEGORIES (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

NCMA Producer       ICPI Producer       NCMA Associate       ICPI Associate

### PAYMENT INFORMATION (SELECT ONE)

\$295.00 Check enclosed      ~or~       \$295.00 Charge my credit card (American Express, Visa, or MasterCard)

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Card Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name on Card: \_\_\_\_\_ CVV2 Security Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Cardholder's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE: One facility per Safety Awards Program Entry Form**

Please mail, FAX, or email your entries to:  
J. David M. Rozsa, ACA • Manager of Professional Development, Certification, Education, and Accreditation  
National Concrete Masonry Association • 13750 Sunrise Valley Drive • Herndon, Virginia 20171-4662  
Telephone: 703-713-1900 • FAX: 703-713-1910 • Email: drozsa@ncma.org

Challenging Economy? Don't Despair; Prepare! - It might seem like now is the time to crawl into your [block] basement and hide from the storm, but in fact, now is the best time to invest in relevant job training. Why, you ask?

- In this slow economic environment, newer workers are not gaining enough experience or learning crucial skills.
- Senior staff are spending a large amount of time servicing struggling clients and cannot mentor newer members of your team.
- With college graduates taking more and more positions, practical training is vitally necessary to complement the academic knowledge.
- When things improve, you want to be ready to take advantage of new opportunities, using the best-trained team you can assemble. Now is the time to prepare them (and yourself).

That is where Concrete Products University<sup>SM</sup> (CPU<sup>SM</sup>) comes into the picture. CPU provides the tools you need to overcome the challenges confronting you, through:

- Cutting-edge courses that teach you and your colleagues how to improve your production process, become more successful at your job, and add value to your business;
- Train-the-trainer sessions that arm you with the knowledge and credibility you need to penetrate specific markets;
- Conference education sessions that address critical issues facing the industry; and
- Certification programs that help you market your verified industry expertise.

To register, call NCMA Schools Administrator Brittaney KamHong Thompson at 703-713-1900 or email her at [bkamhong@ncma.org](mailto:bkamhong@ncma.org).

## *For the skills and knowledge you need to succeed, turn to Concrete Products University.*

### **Block Plant Safety Course**

13-14 November 2008 @ NCMA Headquarters

This two-day course will train concrete masonry and hardscape production, operations, and safety managers and personnel how to enhance worker safety & minimize injuries. Participants will receive the OSHA 10-hour course completion card and a free, one-year subscription to the NCMA Safety Software. Topics include:

- OSHA Compliance
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- Insurance and Cost Savings
- Forklift Safety
- Flammable and Combustible Liquids
- Exit Routes, Emergency Action Plans, Fire Prevention Plans, and Fire Protection
- Safety and Health Programs (Including Confined Spaces and Fall Protection)
- Electrical
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Hazard Communication

Tuition is \$650 for NCMA Members, \$1,300 for nonmembers.

### **Block and Hardscape Products Sales Course**

17-20 November 2008 @ NCMA Headquarters

This course provides entry-level sales professionals with an overview of concrete masonry and hardscape products and systems. In addition to product training, participants learn from industry experts about market trends and how to sell to designers, contractors, and landscape architects. The course agenda is balanced between concrete masonry product knowledge, hardscape product knowledge, and fundamental sales skills. Participants gain a solid foundation for selling products with confidence and dealing effectively with customers.

The Block and Landscape Products Sales Course is open to new personnel responsible for selling concrete masonry systems and to seasoned

sales personnel in need of additional training or refresher tips.

Tuition is \$975 for NCMA Members, \$1,500 for nonmembers.

### **SRW Installer Train-the-Trainer Course**

3-4 December 2008 @ NCMA Headquarters

The SRW Installer Course and Certified SRW Installer<sup>TM</sup> (CSRWI<sup>TM</sup>) exam are delivered locally by NCMA-authorized industry representatives (SRW Installer Trainers). NCMA Members whose employees complete the SRW Installer Train-the-Trainer Course can provide a valued service to and build relationships with SRW installer contractors by sponsoring local course sessions and certification exams.

In the past five years, NCMA's SRW Installer Trainers have taught the SRW Installer Course to more than 7,500 installers. As installers become better trained, wall failures decrease, which promotes the SRW market and helps you sell more units.

The two-day SRW Installer Train-the-Trainer course teaches fundamental SRW installation guidelines, material and system component properties, soils and compaction, the effect of water, site practices, and how to teach this subject to installers. Attendees learn effective presentation skills in the context of adult education, and how to become a knowledge resource for business partners.

Tuition is \$250 for NCMA Members only.

### **Sponsored Production Courses**

The NCMA Research and Development Laboratory staff can create production-related courses on demand, tailored to fit your company's needs. The NCMA Laboratory, production facility, and newly-renovated, state-of-the-art, Concrete Products University classroom are all available to host your custom course. Call NCMA Production Specialist Mike Maroney at 703-713-1900 to explore your options. **CMN**

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Visit [www.ncma.org/cpu](http://www.ncma.org/cpu) for a schedule of upcoming courses and for more information about these educational opportunities.

## Apprentice of the Month: Joey Green, Always a Mason

When I last wrote about Joey Green, the millennial year of 2000 had been the busiest year of his life. Green had graduated from the masonry sequence at Pearl River Community College in Poplarville, Miss., started his own business and married . . . and the year was far from over. Shortly thereafter, he appeared on the cover of a masonry trade publication. His career as an “up-and-coming” mason was set.

Picture Green today. He is 10,000 feet above the floor of the Gulf of Mexico and 300 miles from shore. As a Sub Sea Engineer on a Transocean Deep Water Drilling installation, Green works 12 hours on and 12 hours off, 14 days on and 14 days off. “The rigs are always running,” he says. Green works on the well control equipment, preventing blowouts, escaping gas and explosions.

I had expected Green to be the successful owner of a masonry contracting company. And he was. How he ended up on an oil drilling rig is a story worth telling.

For three years, he owned and operated Green’s Masonry & Associates. At various times he employed six to seven masons and 10 to 15 laborers. Two bridges, two Interstate overpasses and overpass extensions were major contracts for his company. Over 300,000 bricks were required on each job. At that time, because of the growth of the company, Green took on a partner. The next major project, among many others, was a 10,000 sq. ft. hunting lodge with seven fireplaces that required brick, stone and tile.

While the project was successfully

completed, the partnership needed to be dissolved. In 2004 Green cut ties with his partner. His own personal residence was under construction and his wife was pregnant with their second child.

To get back on his feet financially, Green worked for six months in Chicago, laying brick through the winter.



“It’s funny how life works sometimes,” Green says. “While we were working on one of our bridge projects in 2002, a fellow drove through looking for work. I hired him. I guess he appreciated the work at the time and experienced the quality of work that we were doing. He said to me, ‘Joey, if you every need work yourself, give me a call.’”

“Of course, I called him and told him I was the one that needed work this time. JR said, ‘Pack up your truck with tools and come on up.’ Twelve hours later I was layin’ brick in Chicago.”

“After six months, I got home for Christmas. As I was getting ready

to head back to Chicago, my daughter said to me, ‘Daddy, please don’t leave any more.’ That was what it took to get me out of the masonry trade . . . at least for the time.”

Green had a friend who told him that he could get Green a job on an oil rig. Because of the pay and benefits, Green thought he had to do it.

When the company saw his work ethic and realized that his engineering studies at the University of Southern Mississippi (prior to Pearl River C.C.) would be advantageous, they put Green

into their Fast Track Program after just three months on the rig.

Like most masons would, Green likes the responsibility of working in his own department, with his own tools, with less supervision.

In the future, Green sees himself promoted to working the rigs off Venezuela and Trinidad, 28 days on and 28 days off. He envisions working with the company that sub contracts with BP and Exxon for 20 years. “Considering my family, the benefits are just too great,” Green says.

Green continues to work part-time as a mason and envisions doing it full time again after his “drillin’ days.”

“My passion in life is building and producing . . . and masonry is a big part of that. As a point of comparison,” he says, “I like to hunt and fish, but it is not a passion.”

“I still get a lot of jobs because people know me and the kind of work that I do. Because of my schedule, the jobs I do these days have to be done in seven to ten days. It’s usually repair work or specialty work – stone work, retaining walls – projects that can’t be more than eight feet high. That would require more people!” explains Green.

Although the lure of good wages, locked-in medical insurance and company stock options will keep him in the oil drilling business for possibly 20 years, Green still has the desire to own his own business again.

“I learned a lot of valuable lessons from my first entrepreneurial experience,” Green says. The next time I know to tend to my own business, depend less on others; and I won’t carry so many eggs in one basket.”

Green lives in Hazelhurst, Miss., with his wife, Heidi, their daughter, Shaylin, 7, and son Turner, 5.

Green concludes, “I will always consider myself a mason by trade. I still love laying brick. It is still my passion.” **CMN**

# Tool Safety Quiz

Tools, both hand and power, are found everywhere at every jobsite- regardless of the trade doing the work. While these tools are a craftsman's best friends, they bring many hazards to the jobsite. The same tool that makes a job much easier can also be the cause of a tragic or even fatal accident. The best way to prevent these accidents is to use tools carefully and keep them in safe operating condition. The Power Tool Institute states as a reminder "the demands of safety apply to all". This includes the weekend do-it-yourselfer, the apprentice as well as the master craftsman.

Presented here are some basic safety facts for tools, things that everyone in construction should already know. However, it never hurts to be reminded of these common-sense safety practices. What follows is a true-false quiz to see how much of these practices are remembered and, more importantly, applied on the job.

### 1. When a chisel is unavailable at a jobsite, a screwdriver can be used in a pinch.

FALSE- Never use any tool for any task the tool is not designed for, this includes power tools as well. Using a screwdriver as a chisel could cause the tip to break off and fly away. This sharp projectile could easily injure the user or another employee.

### 2. If the wooden handle of a hammer is loose, tape the head on and use the hammer.

FALSE- Although this tool is being used correctly, it is damaged and should be removed from the jobsite. The head of the hammer has been "secured" however the head could easily break free during use and injure someone.

### 3. While working around a flammable substance, non-sparking tools should be used.

TRUE- Traditional materials like steel and iron can produce sparks under normal conditions. When used around a flammable substance a tiny spark could be enough to cause ignition and a dangerous fire. When working around a flammable substance, tools made of brass, plastic, aluminum or a copper alloy which is non-sparking should be used.

### 4. Gloves must always be used when using power tools.

FALSE- Although certain PPE, like goggles or face shields, are appropriate for power tool work, gloves are somewhat optional. When using certain power tools, wearing gloves can be more of a hazard. It is best to check the owner/operator manual for each tool to check on the need for gloves.

### 5. It's not necessary to read the owner's manual for a power tool if you're just replacing a defective tool or an older model.

FALSE- Always read and understand the owner's manual of any new tool, even if it is just a newer or upgraded model of a previously owned tool. The defective tool may have been used for years but a new model may have slight changes that could make operating it without reading the manual dangerous.

### 6. It's fine to use power tools after you've drank a couple of beers.

FALSE- It is never all right to operate power tools under the influence of drugs or alcohol, even if it is only one or two.

### 7. It's a good idea to conscientiously repair and maintain power tools in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations.

TRUE- All tools should be inspected at least at the beginning of each work day. They should be periodically cleaned and tuned up to keep them working at peak performance. Cutting edges should be kept clean and sharp. A sharp tool is much less of a risk than a dull one. A well maintained power tool is a safer power tool.

### 8. A tool's cord should never be pulled to disconnect the tool, used to carry the tool or used around heat, oil or sharp edges.

TRUE- Pulling a tool's cord or carrying a tool by the cord could loosen the connections of the cord, weakening the integrity of the electrical system, increasing the risk of an electrical hazard. Heat, oil and sharp edges also pose a threat to the insulating ability of the

plastic or rubber coating of the cord. If the coating is cut or worn enough it can cause a severe shock to the operator or cause the tool to short out.

**9. Keeping tools plugged in when they're not in use or when changing blades, bits, cutters and the like can be a real time saver.**

FALSE- Although not having to unplug and re-plug tools after each use MAY save some time, it can also increase the likelihood of an accident. Tools should be disconnected from the power source when not in use. This helps to prevent the danger of an accidental starting. By removing the power source before repairing a tool, the possibility of getting shocked can be removed from the workplace.

**10. A tool with a faulty switch is fine to use if you can figure out a way to circumvent the switch.**

FALSE- A tool should NEVER be used with a switch that isn't functioning properly. Once the switch is discovered to be malfunctioning it should be removed from use until the switch has been repaired or replaced. A faulty switch may indicate that there is something much more seriously wrong with the tool.

Although none of these questions should have strained any brains, you can never repeat these safe practices often enough. Very often these simple safety ideas can save a life or at least make a jobsite a little bit safer. We too often lose

track of the basics of safety while looking for the next big answer to our safety issues. Sometimes we can keep many workers safe with simple answers.

For additional help with safety and OSHA compliance, take advantage of the resources available through NCMA and NCMA's safety provider, INTEC, Inc. These resources include the NCMA Block

Plant Safety Software and INTEC's onsite consultation and training services. The software is available from NCMA at (703) 713-1900 at a cost of \$150/plant/year (nonmember \$450.) Additional information about INTEC's onsite services can be obtained by contacting Joe O'Connor at (607) 624-7159 or by email at joconnor@intecweb.com. CMN

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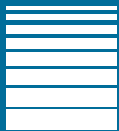


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- 5** Rocky Mountain Masonry Institute ■ Web Based System Learning – How to Test and Evaluate Masonry ■ Denver, Colorado ■ RMMI Headquarters ■ [www.rmmi.org](http://www.rmmi.org)
- 5** The Masonry Society and Masonry Institute of Oregon ■ Masonry Inspection Seminar ■ Portland, Oregon ■ University Place ■ [inf@mioctio.org](mailto:inf@mioctio.org)
- 5** NCMA and IMI ■ New Software Options for Hybrid Masonry/Steel and Load Bearing Masonry Seminar ■ Fort Wayne, Indiana ■ [www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org)
- 6-7** Carolinas Concrete Masonry Association ■ Special Structural Masonry Inspectors Workshop ■ Charlotte, North Carolina ■ Carolinas Ready Mixed Concrete Offices ■ [www.cmaonline.com](http://www.cmaonline.com)
- 6** Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute ■ Design Professional Seminar ■ Herndon, Virginia ■ Hilton Dulles ■ [www.icpi.org](http://www.icpi.org)
- 6** NCMA, IMI, and Arizona Masonry Gulde ■ New Software Options for Hybrid Masonry/Steel and Load Bearing Masonry Seminar ■ Phoenix, Arizona ■ New Horizons Learning Center ■ [www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org)
- 7** NCMA Concrete Products University ■ Instructor Training ■ Herndon, Virginia ■ NCMA Headquarters ■ [www.ncma.org](http://www.ncma.org)
- 12** Rocky Mountain Masonry Institute ■ Review of Documented Green Masonry Research Seminar ■ Denver, Colorado ■ RMMI Headquarters ■ [www.rmmi.org](http://www.rmmi.org)
- 12** NCMA and IMI ■ New Software Options for Hybrid Masonry/Steel and Load Bearing Masonry Seminar ■ Milwaukee, Wisconsin ■ [www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org)
- 12-13** Interlocking Concrete Pavement Institute Northern California Chapter ■ Level I Concrete Paver Installer Certification School ■ Seaside, California ■ GraniteRock ■ [www.icpi.org](http://www.icpi.org)
- 13** NCMA, IMI, and Masonry Advisory Council ■ New Software Options for Hybrid Masonry/Steel and Load Bearing Masonry Seminar ■ Chicago, Illinois ■ South Dearborn ■ [www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org)
- 13** Masonry Institute of Iowa ■ Annual Seminar ■ Des Moines, Iowa ■ [info@masonryinstituteofiowa.org](mailto:info@masonryinstituteofiowa.org)
- 13-14** NCMA ■ Block Plant Safety Course ■ Herndon, Virginia ■ NCMA Headquarters ■ [drozsa@ncma.org](mailto:drozsa@ncma.org)
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- 19** International Masonry Institute ■ Masonry: Beyond the Detail ■ Chicago, Illinois ■ [sconwell@imiweb.org](mailto:sconwell@imiweb.org)
- 19-21** US Green Build Council ■ GreenBuild ■ Boston, Massachusetts ■ Boston Convention Center ■ [www.greenbuildexpo.com](http://www.greenbuildexpo.com)
- 20** NCMA and IMI ■ New Software Options for Hybrid Masonry/Steel and Load Bearing Masonry Seminar ■ Harrisburg, Pennsylvania ■ Sheraton ■ [www.imiweb.org](http://www.imiweb.org)

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- 3-4** NCMA ■ SRW Installer Train-the-Trainer Course ■ Herndon, Virginia ■ NCMA Headquarters ■ [www.ncma.org](http://www.ncma.org)
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**10-11** C 07 Lime Meetings  
**10-12** C 01 Cement Meetings
- 10** Rocky Mountain Masonry Institute ■ Flashing, the Most Important Masonry Detail Seminar ■ Denver, Colorado ■ RMMI Offices ■ [www.rmmi.org](http://www.rmmi.org)
- 11** Masonry Association of Florida ■ Structural Masonry Design Seminar ■ Miami, Florida ■ [www.masonryeducation.org](http://www.masonryeducation.org)

## January

- 12-13** NCMA ■ State & Provincial Alliance Association Meeting ■ Scottsdale, Arizona ■ [hjunkt@ncma.org](mailto:hjunk@ncma.org)
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- 14-17** Hardscape North American ■ Tradeshow and Certification Programs & Seminars ■ Atlanta, Georgia ■ Cobb Galleria Center ■ [www.hardscapenorthamerica.com](http://www.hardscapenorthamerica.com)
- 20-23** National Association of Home Builders ■ International Builder's Show ■ Las Vegas, Nevada ■ Las Vegas Convention Center ■ [www.buildersshow.com](http://www.buildersshow.com)
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