

# Pennsylvania LICA Newsletter -Summer 2019



## ***TRENCH SAFETY – CONFINED SPACES – COMPETENT PERSON TRAINING – ALL 3 RIGHT AT YOUR FINGERTIPS – DON'T MISS IT!***

**Monday, September 9, 2019  
@ Earthborne Inc.,  
Warrington, PA**

**8am – 4pm**

**MUST RSVP BY 9/7/19**

**CLASS IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST 30  
RESPONDANTS**

**(SEE PAGE 2 TO REGISTER)**



**Monday, October 14, 2019  
@ Ramada by  
Wyndham**

**45 Holiday Inn Road  
Clarion, PA 16214**

**8am – 4pm**

**MUST RSVP BY 10/2/19**

**CLASS IS LIMITED TO THE FIRST  
30 RESPONDANTS**

**(SEE PAGE 2 TO REGISTER)**

**MONICA RAKOCZY WILL BE ADMINISTERING BOTH CLASS. SHE IS THE  
OWNER, OPERATOR AND FACE OF ENTERTRAINING SOLUTIONS INC.**

### ***Strong, successful, young, businesswoman.....***

Those are not descriptors traditionally associated with women in the workforce. Especially not the construction world, where still today, men account for nearly 85% of the workforce. Narrow the focus a bit more to job-site and industry safety, where Monica Rakoczy, 36, of Lancaster PA is changing that demographic, and the historically dull (albeit undeniably important) narrative that embodies all things OSHA and safety training. In 2017, Rakoczy opened EnterTRAINING Solutions, providing OSHA safety training for the construction, industrial and utility industries. There was no guarantee of success, particularly for a woman in that field. It was largely unprecedented, especially at her age.

**TESTIMONIAL:** DH Funk & Sons, LLC., an excavating contractor is quoted as saying, "The first time we had Monica in to do our safety training, we were a little apprehensive as to how she would relate to our field employees. WOW, is all I could say after the first 5 minutes of her presentation! Monica has a gift of relating to her audience along with her excellent knowledge and understanding of a safety culture within a company. That was 3 years ago, and we still use her because of her abilities, and the employees actually ask when Monica is coming to do training for the year. Monica is at the top of her game when it comes to Safety Training!" **(see page 2 to register)**

**\*Monica has been hired by National LICA to teach  
safety classes at Con-Expo next March in Las Vegas!**



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

(see our website for all the details)

- ❖ *Trench Safety/Confined Spaces/Competent Person Class --8am--4pm-- (Monday, September 9, 2019) --@ Earthborne Equipment-Warrington, PA (N/C to members-MUST RSVP)*
- ❖ *PALICA Picnic & Scholarship Awards Presentation (July 2019-date TBA)*
- ❖ *National Summer Meeting in Vancouver, Washington (July 9-13, 2019)*
- ❖ *PA One Call Safety Days, September 19, 7am-2pm, Pittsburgh Int'l Airport, Field Maintenance Hanger Rd., Moon Twp*
- ❖ *DOT Regulations Class w/Q&A & DINNER --(Wednesday, September 25<sup>th</sup>) at Eagle Equipment, West Chester PA -6PM -MUST RSVP!*
- ❖ *Trench Safety/Confined Spaces/Competent Person Class --8am--4pm-- (Monday October 14<sup>th</sup>) @ Ramada by Wyndham, Clarion, PA (N/C to members - MUST RSVP)*

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# OSHA Trench Safety, Confined Spaces & Competent Person Training

(cut out and email or mail – see options below)



I am registering for the September 9<sup>th</sup> class (8am-4pm) @ Earthborne Trucks & Equipment Inc., 160 Titus Avenue Warrington, PA 18976: (deadline is 9/2/19)

NAME(S) of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

\*\*\*\*\*

I am registering for the October 14<sup>th</sup> class, (8am-4pm) @ Ramada by Wyndham, 45 Holiday Inn Lane, Clarion, PA 16215 – (deadline 10/9/19)

NAME(S) of attendees: \_\_\_\_\_

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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\*\*\*\*\*

\*\*Mail form to Joanie Micsky, Executive Director @ 775 Mercer Rd., Greenville, PA 16125 or you can register by email: [PENNSYLVANLICA@GMAIL.COM](mailto:PENNSYLVANLICA@GMAIL.COM) or by phone at 724-866-1082.

Please note the deadlines to register but classes are limited to 30 attendees and both classes already have PALICA members registered so don't wait; when class is full we will start a waiting list for any cancellations. These classes won't be offered again this year!



**DOT CLASS LIKE NONE OTHER – DON'T MISS THIS OPPORTUNITY  
TO SPEND AN EVENING WITH ONE OF THE BEST  
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Officer Brian Carpenter spent 15 years with the state police, the last 5 as an instructor in Part A/Part B Passenger Vehicle and Size & Weight. Last two years as a Master Instructor – and this is even more impressive, there are only 28 of these instructors in the entire country. We, in PA, are fortunate enough to have him as one of them. We, at PALICA, have been very fortunate that he's taught 3 of the 6 classes we've held in the past 5 years. Every person that attended the PALICA Winter Meeting in Harrisburg this past March was able to enjoy his presentation methods, humor and honesty about issues you all face every day.

Eagle Power Equipment, one of our Associate Members has opened a new CASE Shop in West Chester, PA and has offered to host this event. Please make a point to attend if you are in the eastern side of the state, and they'll even provide dinner for everyone at the end of a long day!

We'd appreciate RSVPs for the event so we can plan on space and food but if you find you can come at the last minute, please do.

**CALL JOANIE AT 724-866-1082  
OR EMAIL @  
Pennsylvanialica@gmail.com to  
register by September 20, 2019**

# MOVING YOUR COMPANY FROM PAPER TO DIGITAL RECORDKEEPING

by Tom Jackson, Randall Reily Copyright

People trust paper records, but paper isn't easy to share. If you need to know when a machine was last serviced and have to go look it up, if people in your company or shop have to paw through file cabinets or rely on somebody's memory of what was said a week ago....that isn't good.

There are plenty of software products to help you make the transition from paper to digital recordkeeping, but making the leap from one to the other takes time and effort. To help you understand what you need to know and what your need to do, we talked with John Kane, product manager at B2W Software.

## You Need a Champion

"To get the ball rolling, assign a technology advocate, an evangelist, who will drive the project from beginning to end," says Kane. Your evangelist also needs to get buy-in from everyone. He must convince the shop manager of the value of improving efficiency, show the executive team a positive cost/value equation, and help accounting, estimating and back-office staff understand that the system will improve their processes, too.

## Smartphones and Tablets

With a digitally enabled workforce, there's no getting around the need for smartphones and tablets in the field. "This means you are able to do electronic inspections that can pass defect data to your maintenance software automatically," says Kane. "The timing is instant; you reduce multiple phone calls, and the company becomes more proactive instead of reactive in their maintenance."

## Implementation

Kane recommends not trying to do it all at once, but rather bring each department up to speed, one at a time. You'll also have to assign someone to input data, things like maintenance codes, component codes, failure and action codes, employee IDs and job codes. "Getting that right up front is hugely important," Kane says.



## Merging Data

"The connectivity between accounting systems and a CMMS (computerized maintenance management system) is key, especially when you are looking at moving the data between your estimating software, and field tracking, scheduling, dispatching, maintenance and accounting," says Kane. All of that ties together. Fortunately, there are systems that will let you import your old data automatically. "But the data that used to be in silos is going to have to flow together," says Kane. "Companies have to think about how all that data will flow back and forth between different divisions in the company."

## It Comes Down to Culture

Change is hard, and making the transition from paper to digital means your company has to have a culture that embraces change. "It flows from the top," says Kane. The executive team has to have buy-in, but that trickles down to the mid-level managers. You have to know who your audience is when you sell this to them, and they have to see the value they will get out of it, whether they are mechanics, foremen, estimators or executives."



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# Diesel Technician Shortages-A Perfect Storm Gathering for Decades- Part II

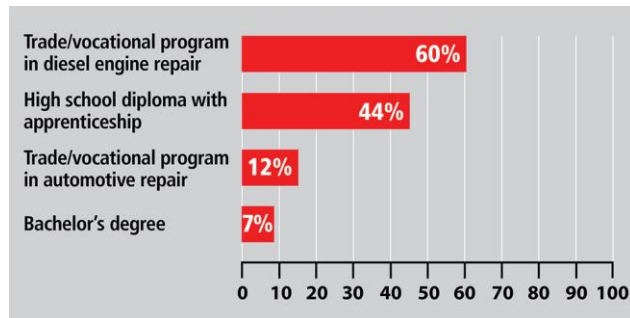
(A copyright credit to Equipment World, a publication of Randall-Reilly.)

**Everyone now knows: this is serious.**

Construction technicians talk pay, why they leave

As part of a broad-based report on technicians, Equipment World parent Randall-Reilly queried 70 technicians working in construction firms, dealerships, independent garages and other places of employment. In total, the report had 1,219 respondents, including 822 in heavy-duty trucking, 139 in agriculture, and 188 in automotive. Click here to download the full report.

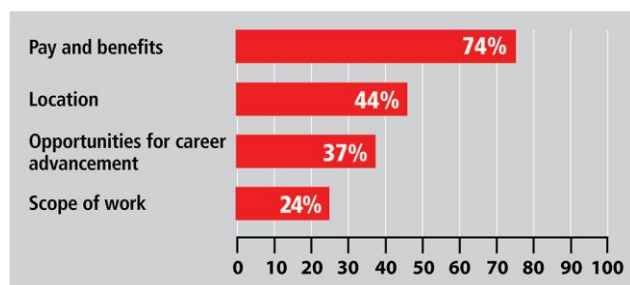
What level of technical education/training have you completed?



Construction technicians trend higher in total pay

	Construction	Heavy-duty trucking	Agriculture	Automotive
Less than \$30,000	1%	3%	4%	6%
\$30,000 - \$39,999	5%	12%	16%	11%
\$40,000 - \$49,999	9%	26%	26%	16%
\$50,000 - \$59,999	22%	21%	24%	16%
\$60,000 - \$69,000	19%	20%	12%	15%
\$70,000 - \$79,000	18%	6%	4%	8%
\$80,000 & up	26%	12%	14%	26%

Construction technicians' top 4 reasons in choosing a new job



**EOW Tech Shortage special report** ▶ Part 2 of a four-part series



by Marcia Graver Doyle, Tom Jackson, Don McLoud

As the technician shortage grows, cooperation among dealers, manufacturers, schools, trade associations and nonprofit groups is kicking into high gear.

"The industry itself won't survive if we don't all work together," says Doug Hammond, department chair for the Agriculture Engineering Technology Department at State University of New York at Cobleskill. "When I say 'we,' I mean the dealership groups, the equipment manufacturers, the educational facilities, and support for the kids coming up through the vocational training."

The sense of urgency is underlining some longstanding programs, such as Caterpillar's ThinkBig effort and the Associated Equipment Distributors (AED) Foundation's diesel tech accreditation program, which accredited its first diesel technician program at Ferris State University in 2001.

As the shortage grows, the industry is building upon such programs and coming up with new ones. It is also working harder to get the word out to the high schools and even younger grades that the profession offers good pay and advancement opportunities. Without further such cooperation, industry and school leaders say, the problem will only get worse.

*Continued on next page*



## Taking techs to the next level

With rapid advancements in [construction equipment technology](#), diesel techs not only need a tech school degree or apprenticeship to get started but must remain willing to learn throughout their careers. No organization dedicates more time and effort to the advancement and professionalism of construction diesel technicians and heavy equipment fleet managers than the Association of Equipment Management Professionals.

“The value of AEMP is realized in the education and training we provide on workforce issues through our conferences, online university and committee work,” says association CEO Donte Shannon. “AEMP is committed to a thriving talent pipeline for the current technician workforce, as well as equipment management professionals of tomorrow.”

The association’s Certified Equipment Manager program for fleet managers with more than five years of experience covers such topics as financial management, procurement and acquisitions, parts management, and HR issues.

Tim Morgan, fleet manager for Branch Civil and a recent inductee into the AEMP Hall of Fame, has mentored more than 50 equipment professionals through AEMP programs and pulled wrenches for 20 years before joining the organization and earning his CEM designation.

“You learn about the iron and the dollars – that’s the easy part of the job,” Morgan says about AEMP. “The most important thing you will learn is about the people. You learn what it takes to manage people and surround yourself with people who are better than you, and you’ll learn to lead with a servant’s heart. If you do those things, you’ll have a very long and satisfying career.”

For contractors and shop managers looking to recruit more techs, AEMP recently created the Workforce Development Committee, which has created the Guide for Hiring Veterans workbook.

“We are developing roadmaps and a tool bag of resources to help members find experienced technicians coming out of the military,” says Keith Barrett, the committee’s past chairman. The committee is also creating a video on finding qualified technicians, as well as a series of webinars, podcasts and job posting portals.

“While technology is changing most jobs,” says Brett Faucett, current committee chair, “the need for skilled equipment technicians who are willing to learn and adjust to new technologies is going to endure – meaning skilled technicians have a great future.” – Tom Jackson

## Dealers joining together

In Colorado, [construction equipment dealers](#) got so concerned about the shortage they decided to combine forces to tackle the problem.



High school students who graduate from the two-year Center of Advanced Technology-North Diesel Power technology program are heavily recruited for entry-level technician jobs.

"We had tried a number of resources to find service technicians, and it almost got to the point there was no one left to even interview," says Giles Poulson, president of Faris Machinery in Commerce City, Colorado.

Then in 2014, Poulson says, local Caterpillar dealer Wagner Equipment invited Faris and other dealers in the state to help grow a diesel power mechanics program at the Community College of Aurora. The one-year college program alternates on an accelerated four-week rotation of classroom instruction and paid internships.

"This gets them out in a year, and then it's on-the-job training," Poulson says.

The Colorado dealers now participate in two open houses each year at the college's diesel tech building to give prospective students and their parent's insight into career opportunities for technicians. A panel of dealers also interviews candidates for internships at their dealerships.

"It's a way for all of the dealers to have all of the same questions answered at the same time," says Marty Winters, service manager for Faris, which represents GOMACO, Gehl and Wacker Neuson, along with several other lines. "From that we determine which of the candidates we want to interview one on one and make offers to the ones we want. If they have multiple offers, they choose whichever dealership they feel would be a better fit."

### Hitting the high schools

RoadBuilders Machinery and Supply has also found success in reaching out to high schools and offering scholarships and internships. The Komatsu dealer based in Kansas City, Kansas, employs about 85 technicians companywide.

"We're taking the long approach, and we're going to invest in high school and college kids and grow our own," says Doug Mehner, Road-Builders corporate service manager. "We have the opportunity to mold them into who we want as techs."

RoadBuilders' approach involves grassroots work, including 20 to 30 recruiting events at high schools and seven to eight events at colleges each year. The dealer builds relationships with instructors, parents and students.

"You have to just dive in and get some stuff going with those guys," Mehner says. "We have to engage with them about four to six times in order to get them to commit to our company."

Such an aggressive approach is urged by the AED Foundation, which now has 45 accredited heavy technology programs at 34 colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. This includes Caterpillar's ThinkBig, Komatsu's Advanced Career Training and John Deere technician programs. Combined, the AED-accredited programs certified more than 400 technicians last year.

By the end of this year, the foundation plans to have more than 60 accredited programs at more than 50 colleges and for-profit entities, in addition to five high schools.

High schools are now integral to technician recruiting efforts. "We wanted to formalize some of the pipelines going from high schools into the college programs," says Steve Johnson with the AED Foundation. "A lot of decisions are being made even early in high school about student career decisions. We actually recommend to our dealers they start working with the kids at the middle school level."

In 2017, the Center of Applied Technology-North (CAT-North) in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, became the first high school diesel technician program to earn the foundation's Certification of Recognition.

Students travel by bus from their home high schools and spend part of the day in intensive instruction and hands-on learning in CAT-North's Diesel Power Technology Program. They can take a four-week introduction to the career as early as ninth grade. They can then take Level 1 starting in 10th grade and move on to Level 2 the following year, giving them two years of instruction and training.

Graduates have the skills for entry-level technician positions, says Lori Chearney, the school's assistant principal.

"The majority of our kids in diesel are very interested in getting out and getting right into the workforce," she says.

### Preparing tomorrow's techs

Those who seek diesel tech grads should be prepared to wait in line.



"I'm not joking when I say we have four or five jobs for each student," says Craig Kuehl, instructor at Milwaukee Area Technical College. "People come in and recruit right from the school, and there are way more jobs than I have students."

It used to be that the top students got the best offers, Kuehl says. "But today, honestly, employers don't even ask what their grades are; they need them that bad."



High school students in the CAT-North Diesel Power Technology program take a field trip to John Deere construction equipment dealer JESCO.



There are a variety of college degree programs for budding technicians. Programs include those that graduate students within a year, while others require at least two years of instruction. Many integrate internships, while others require campus attendance for much of the day. Some programs are sponsored by manufacturers and are open only to those selected by dealerships, while others are college-sponsored and open to all students who qualify.

Most of the diesel tech degree programs are designed to prepare graduates for entry-level technician positions with contractors, fleet shops, dealerships and other businesses in need of diesel technicians.

Students who gain work experience before and during their college attendance can also start in positions with salaries above entry level.

For instance, State Technical College of Missouri is heavy on internships, with four internships required for its five-semester Associate in Applied Science degree in heavy equipment technology.

"We work to marry a student with an internship employer," program's department chair, Ed Frederick.

After completing the program, students can usually obtain equivalent of an entry-level position plus two to three years experience, he says.

The college is also one of 11 U.S. sites for Caterpillar's ThinkBig program, in which local Cat dealerships sponsor students to undergo two years of classroom and hands-on instruction while also gaining experience in the dealership's service departments. The program is based on Cat proprietary curriculum and focused on Cat equipment. Students have to be sponsored by a dealership to qualify.

John Deere is another construction equipment manufacturer that has developed partnerships with technical colleges to offer diesel tech programs.

"These programs are at the forefront of recruiting students," says Doug Hammond, of the Deere-sponsored construction and forestry program at SUNY Cobleskill, "because it connects with the student before they're even here, and they know where they're going when they're done."

## Job-ready students

*SkillsUSA is the largest organization in the country dedicated to developing students with manual arts abilities. The career and technical student organization serves more than 395,000 high school, college and middle school students and professional members enrolled in training programs in trade, technical and skilled service occupations.*

*"If you work with your hands or you are in an industry that hires people who work with their hands, we have students who are studying occupations related to your business," says Eric Gearhart, the organization's director for partnerships. "We are aiming for world-class workers, leaders and responsible citizens. Our graduates are job-ready on day-one."*

*SkillsUSA boasts a 98 percent graduation rate in the past five years – compared to 82 percent for kids in non-career/technical education.*

*More than 20,000 instructors teach members in 4,300 school chapters. There are currently 3,932 student members enrolled in diesel technician training programs.*

*At the SkillsUSA National Championships, winners of state competitions come to Louisville, Kentucky, for a skills challenge. In the diesel equipment technology competition, contestants cycle through 14 stations where they test and troubleshoot engines, electrical and electronics systems, and powertrain systems, as well as demonstrate a variety of mechanical and general shop skills. They are then evaluated on their job interview skills and take a written test. Winners advance to a global challenge.*

*During the week of the national championship, students also participate in community service projects, such as building park benches, cleaning and painting, says Gearheart.*

*"I don't know of anyone who has participated in this and not come away inspired by the students and the corporate citizenship," he says. "Come to Louisville and find out what's right about America's youth." –Tom Jackson*



In the diesel equipment technology competition, SkillsUSA students cycle through 14 stations where they're tested on engines, electrical and electronics systems, and powertrains.



Job interview skills and a written test are also part of the SkillsUSA National Competition for student diesel techs.

## Dealers finding what works

Dealers say their most successful recruitment efforts are close to home, seeking students for scholarships and internships within the surrounding community for nearby colleges and tech schools.

"We try to get our interns fairly close to our branches," says Mike Bond, training manager with Komatsu dealer Roland Machinery out of Springfield, Illinois. "Sometimes we've had students that have to drive an hour to one of our shops. Those are the ones we typically end up losing because they don't want to travel that far after they graduate."

Dealers also find success in outlining the professional paths students can take, beyond working in the shop.

"I talk about career development from day one," says Mehner, who started as a mechanic after graduating from a two-year diesel tech program. "You can start as a diesel technician, and this career will take you anywhere you want to go." Providing paid internships and scholarships to tech school students also gives dealers another selling point for attracting technicians – no college debt.

"When people hear that we have an internship program that will give you a degree in two years with zero student debt and a job, that's attractive," says Tony Tice, training manager with Cat dealer Thompson Machinery, headquartered in the Nashville area.

In most cases, dealers require students to pay or finance their tuition upfront. Students can get reimbursed after they have graduated and worked with a dealer sponsor for an agreed upon period.

"They need to have skin in the game, especially in the diesel technician field where it's not easy," Mehner says.



A CAT-North student gets a hands-on introduction to a Volvo L110H wheel loader at a middle school summer camp sponsored by Volvo Construction Equipment dealer McCung-Logan Equipment in Baltimore.

Photo: McCung-Logan

Dealers approach tuition reimbursement on different time schedules; those we interviewed for this story paid out after two to five years of full-time employment.

However, Wagner Equipment, the Caterpillar dealer in Colorado, does provide upfront tuition and tools for its students, says Randy Myer, manager, Wagner Training Institute. "We go through an extensive interview and vetting process, and we ask them to sign a four-year contract," he says. "We really don't get our revenue offset – which we estimate to be around \$250,000 per student – until somewhere between 42 and 46 months of employment."

Successful recruiting dealerships don't stop with internships and scholarships. They match what students learn in the classroom with experience in the shop. They also link their students with experienced technicians who can serve as mentors.

"Mentors have got to volunteer," Mehner says. "It's got to be something they want to be a part of." It also involves its own training, especially on how to build effective relationships with younger people. "I tell my mentors that I want them to learn more from the younger generation than they teach them."

## Higher pay

Graduates are also earning higher pay than in previous years, with starting hourly wages ranging from \$20 to \$24, depending on the student's experience and geographic area.

"Two years ago our students were leaving our program with effectively nine months of education and making about \$18 an hour," Kuehl says. "Today that number is probably \$20 to \$21."



Graduates are also finding increasing pay and advancement opportunities within a relatively short time. One of Bill Kleman's former students at Salt Lake Community College worked for four years in a construction equipment dealership and is now a shop foreman at a large construction equipment rental store. Kleman, assistant professor in the Diesel Systems Technology program, expects his former student will move up to service manager or a similar position soon. He also has students who have been diesel techs for five or so years and are now making over \$100,000 a year with overtime.

"There's just an immense amount of opportunity for somebody that's entering this field that may not want to be a technician their entire life," Frederick says. "This will give them the foundation and groundwork to move into other facets of the field."

## OEM support for technician training

*While schools and associations do their part to bring more young people into the equipment technician world, OEMs are also cognizant of the challenge, and most of the majors dedicate resources to promoting the industry. Some examples:*

- *The Caterpillar Foundation has worked with its dealers for more than 30 years to provide \$850,000 in cash grants to educational partnerships focused on developing entry-level technicians throughout North America. Caterpillar and its dealers also currently partner with 20 secondary-level educational institutions and 68 dealers in 10 countries to deliver its ThinkBig program.*

- *John Deere supports a number of educational programs and scholarships and engages its employees in volunteer opportunities in those areas. The John Deere Tech program creates a mechanism for dealers to prepare future technicians. It has also connected dealers with exiting military personnel through events hosted at military facilities.*

- *Volvo partners with SkillsUSA and Skills Competences Canada to promote awareness of the skills gap and encourage young people to consider training in the trades, including diesel mechanics. The company sold a commemorative gold-colored 50th anniversary A40G articulated truck at a Ritchie Bros. auction in Orlando, Florida, and donated the proceeds of the sale to the two organizations.*

—Tom Jackson

## Business partnerships crucial

Today, technical colleges and schools have become the middle man between prospective high school talent and employers.

All avenues are sought in the effort to attract students to the field. "We are trying a lot of different things to see what works," says Hammond. "Right now, we don't have anything

where we're saying, no, we won't try." As a result, one of Hammond's priorities is building relationships among everyone involved: students and their parents, high school personnel, companies needing diesel techs and SUNY Cobleskill.

Businesses are also getting into the act. Shell Lubricants, for example, was hearing from its customers about their troubles in finding qualified diesel technicians and decided to form a partnership in 2014 with Universal Technical Institute, including its diesel technology program.

Shell Pennzoil provides annual scholarships to young entering students as well as to military veterans transitioning into the civilian workforce, says Nancy Bruner, Shell Lubricants director of influencing marketing for North America. It also provides scholarships to students who have completed UTI's core program and are ready for advanced education or OEM-specific training.



High school students get to compete for prizes in equipment-operation contests, among other activities, at the annual High School Day put on by SUNY Cobleskill. The event allows dealers to connect with prospective diesel techs before they enter the college's diesel technology program.

Concerned about students who may encounter unexpected hardships, Shell also formed a program with UTI in which students facing an emergency can receive prepaid Visa and Shell gas cards to help them through the crisis. Beyond helping students, the company donates its lubricants to UTI's automotive and diesel programs and provides training to instructors on lubricant technology, fuel technology and future energy alternatives, Bruner says.

Such business/school partnerships are essential. Kleman recalls that when he first came to the diesel tech program at Salt Lake Community College, the hydraulics program was sorely in need of updated equipment. Having formerly worked at a John Deere construction equipment dealership, he called in some favors in the industry and got newer equipment for students. "The students get around some of that [construction equipment](#) and think, 'Wow, that would be fun to work on,'" Kleman says.

For dealers to have consistency in their technician pool, they need to start looking at recruiting and tech college partnerships as an ongoing effort, Hammond says. That means sticking with these programs even during economic downturns. "You've got to keep that pipeline full," Kleman says. "Every time you have a recession, the economy booms after."

# CUT DOWN YOUR SILICA EXPOSURE!

(BY Corey Rimmer – Control Director at CAN Insurance)



Respirable Crystalline Silica (RCS) is a common airborne exposure on construction sites every day. There are several job tasks that produce silica including, but not limited to: blasting, cutting, grinding, tuck-pointing, jackhammering and mixing. OSHA estimates that the new silica standard, enforcement began September 2017 – will save over 600 lives and prevent more than 900 new cases of Silicosis, lung cancer, COPD and kidney disease caused by silica exposures each year. Per the updated standard, 29 CFR 1926.1153 **Respirable Crystalline Silica**, every jobsite with a potential for silica exposure should have a designated competent person available for assistance and guidance. **Know who the competent person is upon arrival at the jobsite**, as this is your best resource in the field to assist in controlling exposures and selecting appropriate measures for protection.

## Ten tips to reduce your silica exposure on the job:

- 1) If you see a dust cloud from work operations where sand or concrete are present, assume silica is also present. If observed, be aware that actions towards reduction should be in place.

- 3) Where feasible, perform work in an open space to help minimize your exposure to respirable crystalline silica (RCS). This acts as a general ventilation method and can assist in reducing overall exposure to silica.
- 4) If you believe the task you are completing produces RCS, refer to “Table 1” in the OSHA standard.
- 5) When in doubt, engineer it out. Work control methods such as wetting the process and HEPA filter vacuums may limit the amount of potentially harmful silica dust becoming airborne.
- 6) Always adhere to your employer’s written exposure control plan for silica.
- 7) Avoid housekeeping practices that may product or contribute to an increased silica exposure. Use methods like water, sweeping compounds, and vacuum systems with HEPA filters.
- 8) Refrain from using compressed air while cleaning clothing, equipment, floors and other surfaces.
- 9) When using tools and equipment, always follow manufacturer specifications for proper use, maintenance, care and cleaning.
- 10) Always try to eliminate or reduce the hazard first; use personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators/dust masks as a last resort.
- 11) **Review all potential RCS exposures with the jobsite competent person** prior to beginning work. If you have questions, concerns, or see an uncontrolled operation, reach out to this individual.

**ALWAYS REMEMBER: YOU ARE IN CHARGE OF YOUR OWN HEALTH AND SAFETY!**



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Earthborne Trucks and Equipment is a family owned and operated business, proudly celebrating over 40 years of service in Warrington, Pennsylvania. We are an official dealer in PA for JCB Construction Equipment, Rayco Forestry and Morbark Tree Care products, to name a few. In addition, our dealership specializes in full service maintenance of locally operated truck fleets and heavy equipment. Earthborne provides service for all your truck and equipment needs, including Preventive Maintenance Programs, Welding/Fabrication, and Tire Service, utilizing the latest electronic manuals and service tools available in the industry. One of our biggest assets is the dedicated and hardworking employees at our dealership. We have long term ASE and AED Certified Technicians who are proud of their commitment to keep Earthborne's local customers on the move. Our technicians are also busy traveling the country servicing our customers out in the field. Our Rayco Specialist, Kevin Welsh, travels our great country, spending 4-6 weeks at a time, servicing our customers and their machines, with a focus on Asplundh Tree. No rain, sleet or snow slows him down, nor the deep woods of the Appalachian's or the mountains of Colorado. He'll be there for your major/minor repairs, preventative maintenance and full training of your crews and operators on proper care of your forestry mulchers. Most repairs can be done on site, saving downtime and huge amounts of money.



In addition to our large inventory of new and used equipment for sale, we also offer a selection of rental machines. Our knowledgeable staff will work with you to help you select just the right equipment to most efficiently complete your job. Whatever your workday calls for, Earthborne has the equipment and service team you need to power through it. Our high-quality, low-hour rental fleet meets the demands of any jobsite, and it includes the full support of our service and parts teams in the field. We have a full range of rental equipment including mulchers and tree care equipment, excavators, skid steers, backhoes, wheel loaders and loadalls, complemented with Specialty attachments.

This Fall, Earthborne will be moving into our new, state-of-the-art dealership and full service facility located next to our Titus Avenue location in Warrington. The dealership is built with the customer in mind and includes a large showroom, full demo area where customers can run the equipment as well as a comfortable customer lounge. The Service area will have three lanes for drive through service for all sized trucks and equipment.





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# safety matters

Construction

## Trenching and Excavating Rules by the Numbers

On average, two workers are killed every month in trench collapses. To ensure your health and safety, it's important for employees to have an understanding of various rules related to trenching safety.

Let's examine some of the trenching and excavating rules by the numbers:

1. The 18-inch rule—In situations where sloping is being used in combination with protective systems, but the protective system does not reach ground level, shoring or shielding must extend a minimum of 18 inches above the vertical side of the trench.
2. The 2-foot rule—Those working around a trench must keep soil piles and heavy equipment at least 2 feet away from the edge of trenches. This helps to prevent cave-ins and crushing injuries.
3. The 4-foot rule—For your safety, access and egress to all excavations will be provided, including ladders, steps, ramps or other safe means of exit for employees working in trench excavations 4 feet or deeper. These devices will be located within 25 feet of you at all times to ensure you can exit a trench quickly in an emergency.
4. The 5-foot rule—Trenches 5 feet deep or greater require a protective system, unless the excavation is made entirely in stable rock. Protective systems are determined by the designated competent person and refer to sloping, shoring and shielding. If the trench is less than 5 feet deep, a competent person may determine that a protective system is not required. If you have questions regarding who the employer-designated competent person is, ask your supervisor.
5. The 20-foot rule—Trenches 20 feet deep or greater require protective systems designed by a registered professional engineer.

While it's the competent person's responsibility to do formal inspections of the trenches, employees should speak up if they notice worksite issues. For questions related to trenching safety, speak to your supervisor.

**On average,  
two workers  
are killed  
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collapses.**

**PRINS**  
INSURANCE

# Work Comp Insights

## Layoff Considerations and How to Prepare for Potential Claims

Layoffs are an unfortunate reality for many businesses. Whether a layoff is planned or unplanned, a business can suffer major reputational harm or even be taken to court following a large-scale termination.

In fact, it's not unheard of for layoffs (and even just the threat of layoffs) to increase workers' compensation claims, particularly in a tight job market. This is because individuals faced with a loss of income, temporary unemployment benefits and the likelihood of unaffordable health insurance may look to workers' compensation as a way to sustain their income.

Although employers must never attempt to stop any individual from filing a workers' compensation claim (legitimate or otherwise), there are steps you can take to help minimize your business's liability for future claims.

### **Communicate With Your Insurance Carrier and Legal Professionals**

First and foremost, it's crucial that you let your insurance carrier know about any downsizing plans. This is because your carrier can provide tips for dealing with any workers' compensation claims that may follow the downsizing.

Working closely with a legal professional can also help you understand the relevant workers' compensation laws in your jurisdiction.

If a claim does arise, you should immediately report any suspicions you have about the claim —along with all the reasons for your suspicions—to both your workers' compensation carrier and legal professionals. The earlier you voice concerns, the more opportunities you'll have to investigate the claim, gather medical evidence and discuss defense strategies.

### **Have Strong Reporting and Investigation Procedures in Place**

Workers' compensation claims are not often decided by a singular bit of information or evidence. Rather, employers must cover multiple angles in order to defend against questionable claims effectively.

For instance, employers could provide documentation of anecdotal evidence (e.g., no one saw the individual get hurt). Objective evidence (e.g., an independent medical exam's X-ray or MRI) is also important for a strong defense. To help gather this kind of evidence and stay ahead of potential claims, accident reporting and investigation is crucial.

Regularly revisit your accident reporting policies, and require all employees to report accidents immediately, no matter how minor. Following a reported incident, you should investigate immediately. Consider separating witnesses from each other in order to get an accurate picture of what happened. Document these incidents and investigations thoroughly, and secure witness statements and signatures whenever possible.



Finally, as part of an employee's exit interview, you should consider having the employee sign a form stating whether he or she has been involved in any unreported accidents or hazardous exposures while on the job. This can help you defend against unexpected claims that arise after a layoff.

### **Maintain Strong Recordkeeping Practices**

When it comes to combating questionable future claims, accurate recordkeeping can make all the difference. Above all, employers need to know where employee records are kept and should secure photocopies of them as backups. Employers should also:

- Assign a trustworthy employee to oversee employee records. This individual should be able to provide and explain these records in court.
- Maintain a photographic or video record of your premises. This can help illustrate the conditions of your building and workspaces in the event of a claim.
- Consider using and keeping records of termination interviews in order to help determine the risk of any future workers' compensation claims. You may also want to consider performing termination physicals, as these can be useful in case an employee files a claim after being laid off. Specifically, these physicals can help establish an employee's health and fitness at the time their employment ended.

Finally, employers should ensure employee records are not destroyed, since payroll, schedules and accident reports may become vital evidence.

### **Invest in Employee Assistance Programs**

Terminations can put employees in an antagonistic frame of mind, which can lead them to bring questionable claims that they wouldn't

make otherwise. However, this risk may be reduced if an employer demonstrates that it cares about an employee's well-being during an exit interview.

To accomplish this, many employers provide resume counseling, therapy and other services that demonstrate concern for a former employee's welfare. These simple actions can ensure employees don't take a layoff personally.

### **Watch for Risk Indicators**

To better protect themselves, employers should be aware of certain indicators that they may be at risk of a future claim:

The employee is disgruntled after being fired or laid off.

- The employee has been told his or her employment is about to end.
- The employee is having financial difficulties.

It should also be noted that a lack of witnesses and medical evidence can indicate that a claim is questionable. Make note of these instances, as they can come in handy in the event of a claim.

### **Have a Strategy in Place**

While employers must never attempt to prevent an employee from making a workers' compensation claim, the above tips can assist in avoiding and defending against questionable claims. Employee reductions can pose a significant challenge for employers and are often devastating turns of events for employees. It is important for employers to have a layoff strategy broken down into goals and an action plan for the company.

For more workers' compensations strategies and advice, contact Prins Insurance, Inc. today.

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