

SORT REPORT

Water & Sewer Risk Management Pool
555 – 116th Avenue NE, Suite 249
Bellevue, WA 98004

Phone: (425) 452-9750
Fax: (425) 452-9740
www.wsrmp.org

Safety Operations Resource Team

Chairman:

Kurt Oakland ♦, Woodinville ♦

Vice-Chair:

Darin Wolfe♦, Alderwood ♦♦♦

Committee Members:

John Tadlock, Sammamish Plateau ♦♦

Keith Olson♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦, Cedar River

Peter Dressel, Karcher Creek

Dan Foster ♦♦♦, WSRMP Representative

Bill Latham♦, Annapolis

Joe Thompson♦♦♦♦♦♦, Olympic View

Randy Screws ♦♦♦, Karcher Creek

Robert Smart♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦♦, Covington

Don Cureton, Manchester

Steve Moye, Coal Creek ♦♦♦♦♦♦

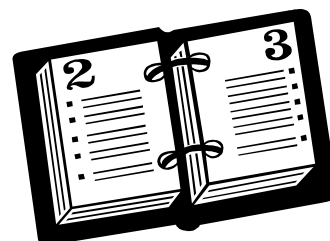
Josh Deraitus, King Co. Water 90

♦ Represents a SORT program created by a member or a district

Upcoming Events...

Oct 21 SORT Meeting—Woodinville Water District

Nov 18 SORT Meeting—Karcher Creek



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Pool

SORT REPORT

Safety Operations Resource Team

October 2003

Volume 7, Issue 3

Providing you with a look at what's happening with safety in our pool

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Questions? Ask SORT

If you or your district have any safety related issues that you would like researched, send them to the pool office. Your issue will be addressed in the next newsletter.

A Word From the SORT Chair



I was able to attend the Governor's Safety Conference in Seattle. Governor Locke opened the conference highlighting a reduction in accidents by 8.4% since 2000 and 33% since 1992. He reiterated that the only acceptable injury and fatality rate is zero, so there is still additional work to do in this area. Some 50,000 preventable ergonomic-related injuries occur every year in Washington and we must reduce employee exposure to workplace hazards that cause or aggravate work-related musculoskeletal disorders. The Ergonomics Rule will continue to reduce injuries, save costs, and protect jobs. Governor Locke also

discussed the rewrite of many of the industrial standards in 2003 and 2004 so they would be easier to read and understand.

There were many new vendor displays at this year's conference ranging from cameras on a pole that allowed you to see inside utility access ports to equipment mounted to a welder that eliminated shock hazards. There was also a forklift rodeo and a pole-top rescue competition.

The variety of displays, classes and fun activities made this a very educational and enjoyable conference to attend. I would highly recommend that staff members ranging from utility workers to managers attend this conference in the future.

Kurt Oakland

Valve Failure Kills Two Workers

Two Missouri-based utility employees were killed when a water valve that they were replacing blew off a 10" diameter water main. Water quickly filled the trench which was approximately 4'-6" deep by 6'-0" long and 6'-0" wide. The valve struck an employee injuring him severely and causing him to be lost in the swirling water. The crew chief was attempting to rescue the employee and fell while the ground he was standing on was undermined by the water and collapsed. He fell into the excavation and was pulled under the muddy water.

The utility company backhoe operator, who was trying to help those in the excavation, stopped an ambulance returning to its station. Ambulance personnel immediately called for assistance and within fifteen minutes several rescue units were at the scene.

The backhoe operator also called in an emergency to the company dispatcher. He and another employee went to shut the valves off and stop the rapid flow of water from the 10" main into the excavation.

The body of the crew chief was recovered after the water was pumped out of the excavation (20-30 minutes) by the fire department and the utility company. The other employee was removed approximately four hours later since the body was buried in the mud and had become entangled in ground roots and a gas line. Both were pronounced dead at the scene.

Take a moment to consider what steps you would take to prevent this from happening to you and your crew. Turn to page 3 to see what recommendations we came up with.

(Continued on page 2)

Winter's Coming: Be Prepared



The changing season serves as a reminder to prepare for winter's adverse weather conditions. It is never too early to prepare, but if preparation is put off, winter weather will create problems.

The first snow every winter brings news stories of tire chain and snow tire shortages due to procrastination. Get your district prepared now for adverse weather, so that when it comes, your personnel can spend time on service-related issues.

Winter weather has a large impact on vehicle operations. Make sure that your entire fleet receives winterizing maintenance before the first expected freeze. Test fit tire chains on your trucks, especially for any new vehicles purchased since last winter. Be sure to repair or replace any badly worn chains.

You might want to replace any marginal tires before the wet and icy conditions of the season arrive. Winter weather conditions also require a change in driving habits. A safety meeting reviewing driving techniques in wet/icy conditions might be a prudent measure.

Severe winter weather can affect travel to and from work. Part or most of your staff might not be able to get to work. Develop plans on how to operate with a reduced staff. Such plans should include task priority lists so that vital functions are covered.

Normal winter weather can create hazards as well. Get bags of salt or other de-icing material early, so that you can keep the walkways around the office ice-free for employees and visitors alike. Preparing for winter early means that you can spend the winter preparing for summer; something we all look forward to.

Government issues recall for all Segway scooters

By Jonathan D. Salant (AP)

The maker of the Segway Human Transporter has agreed to recall the motorized scooters because riders have been injured falling off when its batteries are low. The Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) announced the recall saying that three people had been injured. One suffered a head wound and needed stitches.

The recall involves about 6,000 of the single-rider, two-wheeled scooters that can travel up to 12 mph. The scooter uses gyroscopes to keep it upright, making it less likely to fall or be knocked over.

The Segway was unveiled in December 2001 to much fanfare by Dean Kamen, an inventor who holds around 100 patents, including a wheelchair that climbs stairs and the first portable kidney dialysis machine.

The CPSC said that scooters being operated with low battery power may not have enough power to remain upright, causing the rider to fall.

Models on the list include the Segway HT i167 (i series), the e167 (e series) and p133 (p series). The scooters cost around \$4,950 apiece.

The company is offering a free software



Dubya takes a tumble off a Segway due to a low battery.

upgrade. While Segway plans to contact owners, consumers also may call the company toll free at 1-877-889-9020 between 8 a.m. and 8 p.m. weekdays to obtain the free upgrade.

Ask SORT: What about household cleaners?

Q: Is my district required to have and display a Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) on everything including store purchased items (i.e. window cleaners, paint, and motor oil)?

A: WAC 296-800-18010 states: Employers must inform current employees who are, or will be exposed to a toxic chemical. Of the existence, location, and availability of MSDS's or

alternative records, and any other records covered by this rule.

There is an exception to this rule however. Retail products used in the same manner and frequency as are used by consumers, can be termed "consumer products", and include things such as: correction fluid, glass cleaner and dishwashing liquid. These items are exempt from the MSDS requirements

for hazardous chemicals.

Example: If you use a household cleaner in your workplace in the same manner and frequency that a consumer would use it when cleaning the house, your exposure should be the same as the consumer's and you are exempt. A janitor using a household cleaner, such as bleach, throughout the day, is not considered to be a consumer, and is not exempt.

Valve Failure Kills Two Workers—continued

(Continued from page 1)

Recommendations:

1. Anyone working on pressurized lines must be trained in Lockout/Tagout procedures before performing task. The crew thought that the water main pipe went straight down the street; instead it doglegged across the street to just behind the hydrant and then traveled down the street. The 10" diameter water main was only 22" from where the new valve was

attached; not 20'-0" away as they had assumed. The crew failed to verify the distance to the 10" diameter water main by digging, sticking a rod up the six-inch pipe or using a flashlight to look up the pipe. Additional factors associated with the pipe and mechanical joint is that during the normal work processes, on both days, vibration from vehicular traffic, dumping of wash gravel and movement during alignment may have caused the

2. joint to fail.
2. Shut off valve and bleed line to reduce pressure.
3. Check pressure level BEFORE removing valve to ensure it is safe to do so.
4. Provide a means of escape from a trench.
5. Consider potential hazards, such as secondary shut off BEFORE entering a trench.

Adapted from July/August 2003
MIRMA Newsletter

Who's Who!



John Tadlock is a Field Tech and Safety Coordinator for the Sammamish Plateau Water & Sewer District. He replaced Clint Vanderkooi as

the Safety Coordinator and SORT representative in 2002. John has lived and worked in the Puget Sound area since 1995. Before that he worked in the water quality field in California.

John lives in Mukilteo with his wife Chantal, and daughters Lindsey and Sierra. His interests are mountain biking, fishing and backpacking. John enjoys his safety responsibilities at the district and the opportunity to network with other SORT members.

While most people are looking at ways to reduce their commute, John has the opposite in mind. He would like to combine his love for the outdoors with "getting away from it all." John has his eye on a sweet little mountain peak in the Cascades that he would like to call home. His wife is already considering the variety of ways to cook raccoon. "The only drawback," says John, "is that I would have to start my commute into work at about 2:00am."

I Chose to Look the Other Way

I could have saved a life that day,
But I chose to look the other way.
It wasn't that I didn't care,
I had the time, and I was there.

But I didn't want to seem a fool,
Or argue over a safety rule.
I knew he'd done the job before,
If I called it wrong, he might get sore.

The chances didn't seem that bad,
I've done the same, He knew I had.
So I shook my head and walked on by,
He knew the risk as well as I.

He took the chance, I closed an eye,
And with that act, I let him die.
I could have saved a life that day,
But I chose to look the other way.

Now every time I see his wife,
I'll know I should have saved his life.
That guilt is something I must bear,
But it isn't something you need to share.

If you see a risk that others take,
That puts their health or life at stake.
The question asked or thing you say,
Could help them live another day.

If you see a risk and walk away,
Then hope you never have to say
I could have saved a life that day,
But I chose to look the other way.

Don Merrell