

Safety Toolbox Talks

BRIESER CONSTRUCTION COMPANY SITE SAFETY MEETING - TOOL BOX

Hazards from Unsuspecting Places

With most of Brieser Construction Companies work being done at various plants across the area, we are around many different chemicals throughout the day. There can be minor leaks, maybe just a drip, in the area you are working. If operations knows about it they will have the area cautioned off, but what if they haven't discovered it yet or maybe a past leak with some sort of contamination remaining.

Let me give you some examples. Recently we were moving some blinds that were in our way for a concrete pour. We had given some thought to the systems that these blinds could have been in recently. Maybe they had been in contact with acid or some other hazardous chemical materials. If they were not cleaned properly the hazard could easily transfer to our gloves or clothing.

Many years ago I was an operator at one of the local chemical plants. There was a large valve in a caustic system that had dripped from the packing. The valve was approximately 10 feet overhead and had a chain and sprocket attached to the handle for operating the valve. There was caution tape around the immediate area, but occasionally operations still had to cross the line to turn the valve.

One day I had to turn this valve. I followed proper procedures, and everything went fine, and I went and I went on with the rest of my day. Two or three hours later I had a small itch on the top of my head. The itching became more irritating and then a small amount of hair fell out of my head from the irritation.

After that, I immediately notified my Supervisor and we made a trip to the plants First Aid station where the nurse examined me and washed off the area of my head which was irritated and went back to work. My supervisor and I retraced my steps that day and after a few hours, had determined that I had a minor caustic burn. Apparently, when I operated the valve early in the day, either a fresh drip or dried caustic got on my gloves. Whenever I entered the control room, I put my hard hat on a shelf along with my glasses and gloves. The caustic material must have transferred onto the support webbing of my hard hat, and then later onto my head. The webbing in my hat was ruined by the caustic material.

Don't put your gloves in your Hard Hat.....!

