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EPA Decides Not to Impose Lead Clearance Testing and Dust Wipe Requirements:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) recently announced it will not expand its Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (LRRP) Rule to include dust wipe sampling and clearance testing requirements, which the agency proposed in May 2010. The proposed rule was vigorously opposed by NLBMDA and other building industry groups and had come under fire from a number of members of Congress.

EPA stated that "after carefully weighing all available information and considering the public comments, EPA has concluded it is not necessary to impose new lead-dust sampling and laboratory analysis, known as the clearance requirements, as part of the Lead Renovation, Repair and Painting (LRRP) rule. The Agency believes that the existing lead-safe work practices and clean up requirements -- which went into place in 2010 -- will protect people from lead dust hazards created during renovations jobs without the need for additional clearance requirements." In their announcement, EPA did say it was making some changes that "clarify and strengthen the current lead-safe work practices, including requiring that a vertical containment system or equivalent measures be used when outside renovations are performed within 10 feet of a property line, and that HEPA-vacuum filters be changed at regular intervals." A review of those changes is underway by NLBMDA.

Lumber mill fined more than \$150,000 after worker is killed by mechanical saw:

OSHA fined B&B Lumber Co. Inc. \$152,100 and cited it for 35 alleged serious violations of workplace safety standards following the Feb. 7 death of a worker at the company's Jamesville, N.Y., sawmill. The worker, who was changing the blades on an edging saw, was killed when another employee inadvertently started the saw. OSHA's inspection found that the saw's power source had not been locked out, as required by OSHA's hazardous energy control, or "lockout/tagout," standard. That standard mandates that machines be shut down and their power sources locked out before employees perform maintenance. OSHA's inspection also identified several other hazardous conditions at the mill that exposed employees to the hazards of falls, electrocution, lacerations, amputation, being caught in moving machine parts and being unable to exit the workplace swiftly in the event of an emergency.

Employer gets help from OSHA's free On-site Consultation Program: injuries and illnesses prevented :

With an injury and illness rate more than three times the national average for companies in its industry, the management of ALMACO, a family-run manufacturer of agricultural research equipment located in Nevada, Iowa, realized that something had to be done. The company contacted OSHA's free On-site Consultation Program, which inspects small business workplaces at the request of employers to help them identify and correct potential safety and health hazards.

By correcting serious hazards identified by OSHA consultants and by developing and implementing a safety management program, ALMACO was able to significantly improve protection for its employees and enhance the company's safety culture. ALMACO started with correcting fall hazards, unprotected machinery and electrical hazards. ALMACO also made design modifications to their products to allow for safer assembly. In addition, ALMACO addressed ergonomic issues and reduced sprains and strains by purchasing lifting equipment and improved safety and housekeeping.

OSHA posts new educational video on preventing fatal falls in residential construction:

OSHA's narrated Residential Fall Protection slide presentation is the latest compliance assistance tool available to help the residential construction industry comply with the requirements of the agency's Fall Protection standard. The presentation describes safety methods for preventing injuries and deaths from falls, and explains techniques currently used by employers during various stages of construction. These techniques include the use of bracket scaffolds, anchors, safety net systems, safety harnesses and lines, and guardrails for activities such as installing roof trusses and sheathing, decking, reroofing and installing walls, among others. Falls are the leading cause of death for workers involved in residential construction. Data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics' 2009 Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries showed that 78 workers died from falls while constructing residential buildings. OSHA hopes the presentation will help employers protect their workers and reverse this deadly trend.

NLBMDA announced that Ben Gann has been named NLBMDA's new Director of Legislative Affairs and Grassroots Activities. He started work on August 1 and will be responsible for coordinating NLBMDA's activities on Capitol Hill and managing the association's grassroots network. Gann previously served as Director of Government Relations for the National Utility Contractors Association and prior to that owned his own political consulting firm. He holds a master's degree in legislative affairs from The George Washington University in Washington, DC. He can be reached at (202) 367-2346 or ben@dealer.org

NTSB recommends ban on cell phones for commercial drivers!

Based largely on an investigation into a fatal crash in Kentucky that claimed the lives of 11 people, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) recently issued a recommendation that commercial drivers be forbidden to use cell phones, except in cases of emergencies. The US Department of Transportation is already considering issuing a ban on cell phone use for commercial drivers, who are already banned from texting while driving. The NTSB also recommended banning the use of cell phones by commercial operators of railroad and marine transportation equipment.

The possible ban could impact building material operations where commercial drivers - those who are required to possess a CDL - are out making deliveries. LAT recommends you have a policy in effect for all employees to not use cell phones while driving. Pull safely off the road to make or take any phone calls while driving. Fines are already in effect for community's school zones which already ban cell phone use.