

Don't forget about occupational safety!

March 2014

The Incident

A Beacon reader recently sent an incident description and thought it might make a good Beacon topic. In a facility, there was a safety rule prohibiting wearing jewelry. One worker continued to wear a ring on his finger. As he got out of a truck, the ring caught on something and his little finger was amputated.

While the injury was serious and will impact the worker for the rest of his life, the incident is not a typical Beacon topic because it was not process related. However, this incident reminds us that we must pay attention to all aspects of safety, including process safety and occupational safety. People fall from heights, fall down steps, cut themselves with sharp objects, are hit by falling objects, and many other types of incidents that have nothing to do with the process technology in the facility. These people are hurt and affected just as much as those injured in process related incidents.

While the Beacon focuses on process related incidents, never forget that occupational safety is also important. For a safe workplace, we need to have effective programs for both process and occupational safety.

The picture is particularly appropriate to the incident described above. Harold Lloyd performed most of the stunts in this classic film himself, despite losing a thumb and part of a finger in an accident while filming a movie four years earlier!



Harold Lloyd hangs above the streets of Los Angeles in a famous scene from the 1923 silent film comedy classic "Safety Last"

Do you know?

- ➔ Occupational safety focuses on accident prevention through work systems aimed at minimizing risk of personal injury.
- ➔ Process safety focuses on prevention and mitigation of fires, explosions, hazardous material releases, and other potentially large incidents associated with the chemistry and physics of the manufacturing process.
- ➔ Process safety incidents have the potential to be very large and affect many people, as well as the environment and property. A large process safety incident can impact the community outside your plant.
- ➔ Some incidents have both occupational and process safety characteristics. For example, opening a pipe containing a hot flammable material can injure the pipefitter doing the work, from exposure to the material. It can also result in a fire or explosion.

What can you do?

- ➔ Never forget that a safe workplace requires that everyone in the facility pay attention to ***both*** process and occupational safety.
- ➔ Recognize that safety culture and attitude, operating discipline, safe work practices, and other elements of a good safety program are essential to success in both process and occupational safety.
- ➔ Understand your plant's process safety ***and*** occupational safety programs, and your role in making them successful.
- ➔ Actively participate in all of your plant's safety activities and encourage your co-workers to participate as well.

Occupational safety and process safety – you need both!