

Mine Mill Health & Safety Committees



Local 598/CAW Newsletter

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Cat-Hare

By: Wayne Nitchie,
Compensation, Health & Welfare Officer

Animals are common in the majority of households. Just so happens that bunnies and cats inhabit this particular abode. Pets can teach us a lot about life.

It seems that no matter what happens in your day, be it good or bad, animals have that distinct instinct to approach you and without a word being spoken, sense how you feel.

I grant you that some of you may not equate that same bonding from a cat, much less a bunny, to a dog. For as we all know, dogs show their feelings in a most enthusiastic way. No further explanation is needed.

I've watched my bunnies and they stay together (at this point, I should point out that there are three female bunnies in a double cage), but they watch out for one another. One is always aware of what its' surroundings are – more of a health and safety trait – looking out for one another.

In another two section cage, belong two male bunnies. These two are buds. They practice the buddy system – true friends who came together from different places; one from a pet store, the other from the SPCA (Humane Society) much like we all come from different places and backgrounds.

When “Reddie-Red” has a chance to go out of his cage, he goes wandering over to the cat's dry food bowl and munches away. One day the cat was also eating, but paid no attention to letting Reddie-Red share her food. What a nice gesture. Animals – they've got their act together, getting along with one another.

Every night someone is assigned to clean the cages of the bunnies. Yes, I take that responsibility. I call it “poopie patrol”. Someone has to do it and since there is no one else, I'm it. I know the bunnies and cats (I also clean the kitty litter) appreciate this.

For as we all know, a clean area makes for a better environment - sort of like housekeeping in your work site. Nobody laughs at me cleaning and removing the bunny and kitty litter. It's too bad that I can't say this about what is happening at some sites, which brings forth what the moral of this story is about.

It's about getting along and treating others as you would like to be treated. It's about harassment in the workplace. It's about how we can learn from bunnies and cats.



Smelter Health & Safety News

By: Raz Del Mastro

How can you measure the Health and Safety within our workplace? Is this something that is measured each and every time you go to work and return home? Perhaps, but during the time we spend on the job, how do we conduct ourselves towards H&S from the unknown exposures?

These silent exposures for some reason seem to show up in our later years, after retirement. I realize that this is not something that has not been said before. The unfortunate thing is that because there is no immediate accident or illness from this, nothing is said. It is not an acceptable practice to allow workers to be treated in such a manner.

The wearing of PPE, at times, can be the only defense we have from workplace hazards. The proper use and maintenance of our respirator is vital link to protecting one's health and safety.

They say that a clean-shaven facial contact area for your respirator is required for sealing is essential. Also, you should be refitted every couple years. The cleaning with soap and warm water is time well spent.

The dismantling of the respirator during the cleaning, will give you a good opportunity of a close inspection. Knowing the work to be conducted may give you a heads up to which proper respirator to use, half, full face or supplied air (I am not promoting the use of a respirator to mitigate exposures).

February 13th, 2008 was a "down day" that I wish we could take back, from the F.A. and near misses. The amount of SIR'S which came out of this day you would think that we came to the end of a major shutdown.

What are some of the contributing factors: they could be poor planning, too busy, and a lack of communications. We got away lucky this time and luck is not something that I am comfortable with when it comes to the H&S in our workplace.

Thayer/Lindsley JHSC Report

First I'd like to salute all of the employees at T/L for the continuous efforts in working safe and making T/L go beyond 400 days without a lost time. We had one involving a contractor that put a damper on the stats, but let us not forget that we, as the Xstrata Nickel employees, are still going without a lost time exceeding 500 days.

We are receiving new equipment that is finally on site and more to come in the following months. This will surely boost the safety and production here at the site, not forgetting a moral booster. We have had our share of issues and have dealt with a lot. Some are still pending but, we are still working at resolving them.

Nickel Rim will be receiving their employees from Xstrata Nickel on the first of June 2008 and that will mean some of our co-workers will leave T/L. I would like to wish them well and point out that Mike Dahlvik will need a replacement as a Bonus Steward and JHSC member and Jan Romo as Chief Steward is also in need of a replacement. Thank you both for your continuous commitments.

There are a lot of things happening here at the site - a new ore pass soon to be in use, a truck chute and dump will soon be in place and looking forward to a new Dry later in the year and an underground warehouse; also a welding bay on 855.

We can also enjoy material storages, auger system for anfo loading and better road bed material to name a few. T/L has gone through a lot of transitions and hopefully we will have a better workplace and a brighter future.

We have been told there will be a Family Day again this year. All in all, respect co-worker's wishes; don't do to someone what you would not like someone to do to you.

Thank you
Co-Chair Ray Romain, Mike Dahlvik and Moe Vachon