

WM2008 Conference Panel Reports

Session 24

Panel: Working Safely in Hazardous Environments

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The purpose of this panel was to share lessons learned in ways to improve worker safety. Panelists represented a cross-section of industry experts including representatives from the Department of Energy as well as contractors – from managers of programs to workers in the field.

The following individuals participated in the panel:

- Robert Goldsmith, Director of Operations Oversight, DOE EM/HQ
- Arnold Guevara, Director of the Office of Enforcement, Office of Health, Safety and Security, DOE EM/HQ
- Lee Fox, TRU Waste Manager, Westinghouse Savannah River/URS
- Beth Bilson, VP, Environment, Safety, Health and Quality, Fluor Hanford
- Bobby Gray, Safety Working Group, Energy Facility Contractors Group (EFCOG)
- Ken Gray, Safety Representative, Hanford Atomic Metal Trades Council, Hanford

Topics/issues that were discussed included the following:

Contractors' safety/assurance programs should make every effort to self-identify problems: penalties can usually be mitigated by 50% if this practice is followed. Most violations are not self-identified and are caused by lapses in work processes.

- Problems related to safety usually result from a combination of things: disciplines plus experience
- Typically, there have been ten enforcement actions a year. That number, however, will probably increase due to new regulations.
- Weakness/trends perceived:
 - Personnel do perfunctory checks and adopt a “list” approach
 - Inconsistent terminology
 - Lack of strong and consistent management attention
- Multiple “little” events can lead to larger problems
- Mitigate hazards BEFORE you start the work. Make the safety plan tangible AND visible.
- Integrate safety programs at the individual worker level
- The union safety-representative program introduced by Fluor Hanford has dramatically decreased OSHA-recordable-injuries – 80% reduction. Worker involvement in planning work activities is a key element of the program that also embraces the principles of Human Performance Improvement (INPO-developed program).
- Through its Electrical Safety working committee, EFCOG has developed tools for electrical safety performance tracking/ hazard analysis and produced an electrical safety severity index tool to provide accurate trending and occurrence reporting criteria.