



# ETU OHS NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2005

## MAIN STORY—The importance of site specific procedures. By Randall Lee

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OHS Reps Meetings 2005 10am—12pm

- 23rd June—Melbourne
- 21st July—Portland Trades Hall
- 25th August—Melbourne
- 22nd September—Shepparton Trades Hall
- 27th October—Melbourne
- 17th November—Geelong ETU Office
- 8th December—Melbourne

Most people would have been part of developing risk assessments or job safety analysis (JSA) at work. These activities are usually the basis for developing work procedures for performing tasks safely.

These procedures are developed by company safety personnel to form basic, generic work procedures used by the companies as their risk assessment documentation as obliged under the O.H & S Act.

Forwarded onto jobs, generic work procedures do not take into account the full range of environments and conditions that we must work under in the different industries that we are a part of.

Whenever a new site is established, care must be taken to

ensure that procedures which are supplied to the workforce directly relate to the specific tasks on that job. Company generic procedures on site can be reviewed with the workforce, but probably the best way to come up with ways of performing tasks safely on that job is to develop site specific procedures.

This is done with input from all those associated with the job, supervisors, safety personnel & workers who will actually carry out the work. This is the best way to ensure that all possible hazards associated with performing tasks on that specific site are identified and addressed.

### Editors Note.

There is plenty of information around in relation to risk management and the development of a JSA. The ETU OHS Manual covers Work Procedural Requirements (Page 173) and The JSA Process (starts Page 175).

### See also:

Standards Australia at [www.standards.com.au/catalogue/script/search.asp](http://www.standards.com.au/catalogue/script/search.asp) for AS/NZS 4360:2004 Risk Management;

Victorian Workcover Authority at [www.workcover.vic.gov.au/vwa/home.nsf/pages/so\\_construction\\_safety\\_jsa](http://www.workcover.vic.gov.au/vwa/home.nsf/pages/so_construction_safety_jsa)

For information relating to the JSA process and its application.

## The importance of working safely

**A maintenance worker was electrocuted while trying to replace a fluorescent lamp in a commercial signboard installation.** (See [www.eric.sa.gov.au/uploaded\\_files/72\\_replacing\\_fluorescent\\_lamps.pdf](http://www.eric.sa.gov.au/uploaded_files/72_replacing_fluorescent_lamps.pdf) for more details).

Whilst this incident happened in South Australia, the same work activity occurs here in Victoria. The issue comes

about when we attempt to perform electrical work whilst something is still energised.

The OHS Act requires the employer to provide and maintain a system of work that is safe and without risk to health so far as is practicable. This means that the work needs to be performed de-energised or adequate precautions taken to ensure that a worker can't be injured.

Whilst replacing a tube in a energised sign may not seem to be of an issue to some, remember this incident occurred because the sign was live. It has also come to light from a concerned ETU member that he replaced a bulb in a lamp holder only to find that when the lamp was turned on it blew the fuse. A subsequent investigation found that the bub was defective.

**OHS PERSON IN FOCUS— TIM STEPHENSON**

I have worked in the Construction Industry for the past 9 years and have been an E.T.U., O.H.&S. Representative for the last 3 years. Whilst as an apprentice, and working at different jobs around Victoria, I saw too many unsafe acts and work practices.

It was while working away on a job with one of these employers that I became a little more vocal than was good for me. This is what led me to meeting Shaun Leane; the rest is history.

I find most employers tend to

think that because they have always done things a certain way, that is the way it has to be done.

Employers and employees need to be educated in new techniques.

In my experience, I have found that around 80% of employers are only focused on production, even though they may have every J.S.A. and W.M.S. in place, they will attempt to cut corners if

not checked.

Employees feel intimidated into breaking procedures to get the job done. W.M.S.s and J.S.A.s, if correctly implemented and followed, would exterminate risk, and ensure that all workers return home in the same unharmed condition in which they came to work.

That's what being an OH&S Representative is all about - WORK SAFETY.



Tim Stephenson —OHS Committee member and OHS Rep

**NEW REGULATIONS COVERING ELECTRIC LINE CLEARANCES**

New regulations covering clearances between electricity lines and trees and other vegetation are about to be introduced.

The OCEI is in the process of visiting centres throughout the State explaining the proposed new regulations and seeking to put them in. The new Electricity Safety (Electric Line Clearance) Regulations 2005 and code must be in place before 30 June 2005. These visits are part of

the public consultation process on the standards and practices to be adopted and observed with tree pruning or clearing in the vicinity of electric lines.

The overall objective of the new Regulations and code is to make the requirement to meet Electric Line Clearance (Vegetation) legislation more workable for all parties involved, they will provide more innovative

solutions to the issues with trees and powerlines.

A major agenda item is to highlight the differences between the old and the new, for instance, whereas regulations and code were previously separate documents they have now been brought together as one with the code becoming the schedule to the regulations.

**OHS REPS @ WORK – THE NEW OHS WEBSITE FROM TRADES HALL**

On June 19, 2002, at the OHS Reps Conference, the VTHC OHS Unit launched its website for OHS reps and workers. While we were very proud of it and got lots of positive feedback, there were some problems with it - so, after having the site assessed by experts we followed their recommendations and redesigned the site. We can finally welcome reps to our new

look site: OHSReps @ Work (<http://www.ohsrep.org.au>). It's been a long time coming, so we hope you like it.

The new website looks very different from the old site, and while it provides much of the same information, there are new sections on 'Your Industry' and 'Training'. Users will still be able to send questions on



any OHS related matter - just 'Ask Renata' - and get a response usually by the end of the next working day.

As well as subscribing to SafetyNet, users will also be able to subscribe to two

other mailing lists: Training News and Media Releases. Look out for future campaigns and on-line surveys. So go to the site now, vote in our on-line poll and go into 'Your say' and tell us what you think.