

SAFETY MATTERS

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2024

EXCELLENT PRE-TASK PLANNING SHINES AT OHAP

Helicopter lifts of machinery conducted without a hitch

The GEM Mechanical Team that set 86 exhaust fan units weighing a half ton each on the rooftop of the under-construction electric vehicle facility at Ford Motor Co.'s Ohio Assembly Plant made it look easy.

"It took a team effort and many meetings among the GEM team, RLI safety, Ford and Midwest Helicopter Airways to make the lift a success," said Regional Safety Manager **Aaron Sarkozi**. "Our pre-task planning was well-thought out, addressed all the known and potential safety issues, and helped maintain focus throughout the lift. Our team was dedicated to a safe operation, and we succeeded."

The job also included lifting two rooftop HVAC units weighing over 1 ton each. The helicopter took one pause to refuel and finished the job in less than 3 ½



The GEM Mechanical Team set 86 exhaust fans plus two HVAC units on the roof of Ford Motor Co.'s under-construction electric vehicle facility in Northeast Ohio.

hours. Had a ground crane been used for areas of the roof it could reach, each lift would have taken about 30 minutes, as compared to the 2-to-3 minute per-unit lift time of the helicopter.

Among the task requirements listed in pre-task planning were that the team had to ensure there was no loose material in the area that could become airborne once the helicopter was operating. The site needed pre-inspection to ensure no unauthorized

workers were in the building prior to the lift. The GEM ground crew and the crews on the roof were not permitted to be under the load at any time and not within 15 feet of it until the load was within one foot of where it was to be placed. All signaling to the pilot was handled by Midwest.

Site access was reopened only after the helicopter was gone, fall protection hazards eliminated and warning lines back in place.

POWERED AIR PURIFYING RESPIRATORS A HIT WITH GEM ASSOCIATES

PAPRs provide great protection from airborne contaminants

OSHA requires absolute protection from respirable contaminants. Silica dust exposure causes silicosis, a chronic incurable lung disease. Poisoning from lead dust can affect almost every system in the body, including the brain, kidneys, nerves and blood.

The most commonly available protection is generally a tight-fitting half mask that draws in air through filters when the user breathes, trapping the contaminants before they can reach the lungs.

During Covid, more workers began using PAPRs, short for Powered Air

Purifying Respirator. GEM associates favor PAPRs over the half mask for many reasons, GEM Director of Safety and Field Operations **Bill Cornett** said.

The system features an enclosed helmet that is connected by a hose to a small battery-powered unit that users wear around the waist. It pulls in air through its filters and pushes it up the hose to the helmet, which causes far less fatigue than the half mask.

PAPRs also have somewhat of a cooling effect because of the positive air flow in the helmet. The tight-fitting half mask can be uncomfortable, particularly during 10-hour shifts on hot days.



PAPRs are more comfortable than half masks.

PAPRs are expensive: The PAPRs that GEM supplies can cost up to \$2,500 while a typical half mask costs about \$35. GEM has about 70 PAPRs in stock. RLI also stocks PAPRs for use at job sites where the task requires their use.

Supply issues have surfaced, something the GEM safety team is working through. Not every job requires PAPRs, and the half masks remain in use and are effective, Cornett said.



CRISIS MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Consider all that must be done during a serious jobsite incident

Being prepared when a serious incident happens on a jobsite can mean the difference between managing it effectively and negative consequences.

A serious incident is defined as one that can focus negative attention on our company and have an adverse effect on our overall financial condition and our relationship and reputation within the marketplace.

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effect on the customer's operations gave the class of field and office personnel a great deal to consider such as:

- Who needs to be notified?
- How do we deal with media on the scene?
- What do we do to ensure minimal disruption to the customer?
- How do we keep curious onlookers and media away from a dangerous scene?

Tim Mack, a cement mason with 28 years of experience, said the training is a good reminder not to be

Participants in a crisis management training class considered different serious situations and what proper action to take. An exercise in which a crane toppled while lifting a steel beam at a local jobsite that resulted in fatalities, injuries, utility disruption, a rescue, media attention and a negative

"loose-lipped" in discussing serious incidents with the media. Project Engineer **Gino Lucarelli** said the training provides structure for jobsite teams to handle serious incidents. Both associates said it was beneficial to know the roles of everyone during a serious incident and put names with faces.

THANK YOU FOR WORKING SAFELY

A GEM electrician installs conduit at the new headquarters for Jones-Hamilton Co. in Maumee, Ohio. An RLI crew is also onsite performing demolition work on the 17,000-square-foot building's interior and getting it ready for remodeling.

MAINTAIN EXCELLENT JOBSITE SAFETY BY CONTINUING TO REPORT FIFIS

Here are the best FIFIs for July and August:

RLI August

(Two FIFIs/\$535 gift card each.)

- A transformer was loaded on a semi-trailer for Georgia. After it was chained down and ready to leave, a GEM associate at an RLI worksite noticed it looked a little tall. The associate decided to measure it and found the load to be 13'11" in height, which is over the legal limit. The associate unloaded the transformer and loaded it onto a lower trailer.
- An associate noticed a worker from another trade partner using an 8-foot step ladder right next to the parapet wall and within 5 feet of an overhead power line. The associate asked the worker to get down and notified their onsite safety representative.

GEM August

(One FIFI/\$642 gift card.)

- An associate was welding without a welding jacket and without a fire

extinguisher nearby. The associate also had no fire watch while welding. Another associate informed him of all these issues and the dangers that could happen if something were to go wrong.

RLI July

(Two FIFIs/\$426 gift card each.)

- The landscape contractor was laying out auger locations for trees. An associate noticed the drawings did not have the updated underground gas line locations. The associate spoke with the foreman, who adjusted the tree locations.
- A GEM associate working at an RLI jobsite noticed an associate working in a boom lift overtop the crane lift swing radius exclusion zone. The GEM associate asked the associate to come down and explained why they cannot work in that area.

GEM July *(Four FIFIs/\$166 gift card each.)*

- An associate was grinding without a

face shield or hard hat. The associate reporting the FIFI stopped the work and had the associate put on a face shield and a hard hat.

- An associate discovered wire conductors that were coming from a flex in the wall and laying on the floor under a dishwasher that was leaking. The wires had the potential to be pinched or crushed, causing someone to be electrocuted. It is also a fire hazard. Also, the current dishwasher was single phase 40A but the wires were landed on a 30A 3-pole breaker that was undersized for the load of that unit.

The associate shut off power and locked out unit. The associate then installed a junction box and ran wires in sealtight between the junction box and dishwasher. The associate capped off unused wires and landed the wires on the dishwasher lugs. The correct breaker was installed, the power turned back on to the unit, and was confirmed.