

SAFETY MATTERS

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2024

RLI SAFETY STANDDOWN

Maintain situational awareness as you go about your tasks

RLI proactively holds standdowns to bring awareness to current safety issues.

Standdowns are designed to stop all work and discuss current safety topics and how we can improve. Situational awareness essentially is being aware of what you're doing, the conditions around you and being aware of what others are doing around you. Of particular concern were recent incidents of property damage that could have been avoided had more situational awareness been used.

RLI recently held a standdown to discuss ways to maintain situational awareness such as:

- Recognizing and eliminating safety hazards.
- Communicating with fellow workers.
- Appropriate training on equipment.
- Adjusting work plans as conditions change.
- Not allowing distractions such as the upcoming holidays or personal issues to impact your focus on work.

"Improved situational awareness by everyone can make the difference between a safe worksite and one that experiences a serious safety incident," said RLI Health and Safety Director **Mark Hoffman**.

Associates and trade partners discussed



Workers discuss situational awareness at Project Accordion in Wood County.

ways situational awareness can be impacted, including through mental or physical fatigue or stress, as well as complacency.

During this holiday season — and all year 'round — safety remains a core value at RLG. We want all workers to return home safely to their families every day.

WHEN JOBSITE CONDITIONS CHANGE, REASSESS THE WORK PLAN

Re-evaluation of worksite keeps safety the main priority

Woodville, Ohio — Weather in the Midwest is fickle. What seems like a calm morning at the Martin Marietta quarry can change into a blizzard of lime dust at any time.

That's why it's important for the ironworkers, millwrights and electricians working at the Stony Ridge, Ohio, jobsite to reassess working conditions as the day progresses. If the wind is calm, the lime dust stays on the ground. If the wind kicks up, the potential for eye injuries, chemical skin burns, and respiratory problems increases.

"Conditions change on the hour out here," GEM Safety Specialist **Jason Scott** said. "It's a constant evaluation of conditions and using control measures to accurately solve the problem."



Working conditions continually change at the Martin Marietta quarry.

Crews will swap regular safety glasses for "spoggles" and don Tyvek suits to protect their skin from the caustic lime dust. In extreme cases, they will tape their gloves to their suits to prevent the dust from entering through sleeves. Powered Air Purifying Respirator. Respirators (PAPRs) may also be used.

Workers must complete 24 hours of

Mine Safety and Health Administration-approved training before working at the site, plus another eight hours annually to maintain their MSHA status. GEM has conducted MSHA training for more than 100 associates.

Training and constant collaboration among crafts, craft supervision, project management and GEM safety combined with thinking about new and safer ways to accomplish the tasks at hand — including re-evaluating working conditions — helps provide a safe working environment.

"Everyone involved has put in a massive effort to ensure everything is done in a safe manner and in compliance with MSHA standards," Scott said. "The craft leads have really stepped up to do all the extra work required on MSHA sites, including extensive task training, recordkeeping and inspections."



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TOOLS: NEW NAILER SAFER, CAUSES LESS FATIGUE

No need to expose hand holding nail to being hit with a hammer

Double-head nails are used when the nail needs to be removed at some point, such as when working with beam sides for concrete forms.

The carpenter would use a hammer to hand-drive the nail, leaving the hand holding the nail vulnerable to being hit.

RLI recently purchased six Milwaukee battery-operated M18 FUEL™ Duplex Nailers and initial reports from the field are positive, RLI Superintendent **Montana Oberwegner** said. The nailer

eliminates the need to hold a nail, is faster, and drastically reduces the effort needed to get the job done.

“It mainly benefits the wrist, elbow and shoulder — all common issues for carpenters as we age,” Oberwegner said. “An individual could shoot a rack of nails with probably one tenth of the motion required by hand driving, substantially reducing fatigue and speeding up production.”

The tool was recently used at the Ford



In addition to improving safety, the duplex nailer improves efficiency.

OHAP project with great results, said Carpenter Foreman **Brent Racheter**.

“Using this nail gun is almost effortless and I would recommend having one on any job where there is a need for a large quantity of double-head nails,” he said.

NEARLY \$3K IN FIFI GIFT CARDS AWARDED TO SAFETY-CONSCIOUS WORKERS

Here are the best FIFIs for September and October:

RLI October

(Two FIFIs/\$403 gift card each.)

- An associate witnessed a worker ripping 2-inch foam with a table saw with the guard up and his hooded sweatshirt strings hanging close to the blade. The associate advised the worker to get rid of his sweatshirt strings and raise the blade so he could cut the foam using the guard properly.
- While working to remove a temporary feed from a 480-volt bus plug on a 1600-amp bus, a GEM associate noticed the bus plug was not securely attached and had begun to pull away from the bus. The associate stopped work and notified our safety team and plant safety. The plant shut down the machines being fed by the bus; the team locked out the feed to the bus and safely removed the temporary cable as well as the bus plug.

GEM October *(Three FIFIs/\$198 gift card each.)*

- A contractor had an argon bottle on its side in bed of pickup truck. The valve head was sticking out past the tailgate in the traffic path of mobile equipment and vehicles in a very busy area. The associate called Safety to have the bottle moved to a cart closer to the work area.
- A worker without fall protection was on an unsecured ladder. The associate told the worker to step down, explained what the danger was, and sent the worker to get a harness and tie off the ladder.
- A contractor crossed red danger tape

during a “fresh air” job. An associate told the contractor to leave the exclusion zone and explained why it was hazardous.

RLI September *(Two FIFIs/\$513 gift card each.)*

- Prior to helicopter lifts, a GEM associate noticed a large piece of plastic in the middle of the staging area that could be pulled into the helicopter blades. The associate picked up the plastic and re-inspected the area before the lifts began.
- An associate noticed the crane that arrived on the jobsite was not the same crane used a day prior. The associate told the operator and project manager the crane could not be used until the crew reviewed the new crane’s paperwork and held a crane meeting with the crew.

GEM September

(Seven FIFIs/\$92 gift card each.)

- A worker was grinding without a face shield and a handle on grinder. The associate stopped work and had the worker get a face shield and handle.
- A drive door was not backfilled all the way and barricades were down, causing an opportunity for a vehicle to drive into a two-foot drop down. The associate immediately barricaded the hazard.
- An associate noticed a furnace gas leak due to an incorrect gasket. The associate notified operations of the leak.
- Oxygen and acetylene bottles were right below where demolition work was being performed, with sparks and hot metal slag falling on the bottles. The associate stopped work and informed the crew what was happening. The bottles were

moved, and a fire blanket was put on top of them.

- An associate noticed an inattentive worker talking on the phone while walking into the roadway. The associate stopped the worker on the phone and explained the danger.
- While working on a locked-out steam line, the line started to rumble. The crew was removed from the area and the steam bled past the locked-out valve and was released right into the area where the crew had been working.
- An associate noticed another worker’s shortness of breath, sweating, high heart rate, and difficulty standing. The associate had the worker sit down and called the onsite paramedic. The worker’s blood sugar was at a high level. The associate drove the worker to the ER to be evaluated and then picked up the worker later that afternoon.

THANK YOU FOR WORKING SAFELY



*Third-year GEM apprentice pipefitter **Skylar Hartbarger** uses a level to check pipe at the Walbridge fabrication shop.*