

# Compliance Headliner

## Anthrax Sounds Pretty Scary, But Let's Put Things In Perspective...

With all of the hype surrounding Anthrax and “biological warfare”, it may be perceived as a leading health threat in our country. To the contrary, you may be surprised at some facts. The U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention reported in November, 2001 that Chlamydia is the leading cause of infectious diseases, with approximately 580,000 cases in the United States and more than 9,000 cases in S.C. There are a total of 29,580 cases of AIDS in the U.S., 577 cases in S.C. and more than 10,000 current cases of Tuberculosis in the U.S., an airborne disease that is not generally thought by Americans to be a potential health threat anymore. There are also more than 8,000 cases of Hepatitis A in the U.S. and 65 in S.C., most often contracted through the ingestion of contaminated shellfish. There are 5,286 cases of acute Hepatitis B, an incurable liver disease that causes inflammation, jaundice and eventually death. Here's an amazing statistic – there are 6 times more cases of Leprosy in the U.S. than Anthrax. (I thought Leprosy was a Biblical disease that didn't even exist anymore.)

Another startling fact that has been overlooked in recent months is that the most common diseases in the U.S. are communicable – meaning they can be spread from one person to another through the direct contact (mucous membrane, non-intact skin, etc.) with blood or other bodily fluids (vomit, urine, etc.). And guess what? Anthrax is not



Fear from “the unknown” catches attention, while many obvious risks go unregarded...

communicable and can not be transmitted from person to person. Most communicable diseases are contracted through the sharing of infected needles and unprotected sex with a partner who is infectious... So, maybe this gives us a sense of control by knowing the routes of exposure and methods of prevention. In contrast, anthrax is a recently publicized virus that most Americans are not familiar with... specifically, it's cause, the routes and risks of exposure, signs of exposure and symptoms of infection. And we've witnessed cases where the infected person was completely innocent of knowledge of its presence. It even has a scary name – something about the “x” just gives a notation of “forbidden and dangerous”.

But what about cancer? Most of us have suffered after discovering a friend or family member developed organ cancer that can't be explained. Or even more likely, one that *can* be explained and attributed to a voluntary habit or lifestyle, such as smoking. Why does anthrax strike fear in our hearts when the chances of contracting such an exotic disease are less than those of winning a million dollar lottery?

And when we think about workplace hazards, why does the obvious seem to get lost? Fires are very high on the list for causes of death, locally and nationally. It has been reported by the NFPA that a U.S. fire department responds to a fire every 17 seconds. Although the number of injuries and fatalities have decreased dramatically in recent years, they remain noteworthy. In SC, fire fatalities fell 24% in 2001 from the previous year.

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## What's in the News?

### *Occupational, Health and Safety Regulatory Developments*

#### Hazardous Waste Reporting Forms Changed

– To improve reporting efficiency and coordinate with federal efforts, SC DHEC has changed Forms 1961, 1962, 1963, 1964, 1965 and 2701. Each generator, transporter and processor of hazardous waste was sent a notification, along with a new set of forms. These changes will be effective during the first reporting quarter of 2002 (for Large Quantity Generators).

#### Consent Order Sent to More than 2,000 Potentially Responsible Parties

–The Georgia Environmental Protection Division recently sent notification to more than 2000 entities identifying them as a responsible party under the Hazardous Site Response Act (HSRA) for the M&J Solvents Company Site. The Site began operation in 1967 as a solvent recycling/reclamation facility. In 1994, the business closed and the Site was abandoned, leaving drums, tanks, and secondary containment devices with hazardous waste. The Site is currently under investigation to determine the presence, source and extent of contamination caused by activities conducted during its 27 years of operation. All entities identified from records taken by Georgia EPD from the Site were asked to pay \$400 for the cost of the initial investigation. This investigation will also include an electronic database of information that will describe each entity who sent wastes to the Site, the types of waste, the amount of waste and the dates sent. In order to satisfy individual responsibility for completing the initial investigation without being sued by GA EPD, responsible parties were required to sign the Consent Order and pay the fee by February 28, 2002. Following the investigation, individual responsibility will be assigned for cleanup costs.

Groundwater Conservation - The SC Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) released a notice on February 25, 2002 that they will be considering the Trident region of the State as a Capacity Use Area. A public meeting will be held on March 14 at 6 p.m. at Mount Pleasant Waterworks to discuss groundwater conditions in the Trident region and the Capacity Use Program.

This consideration has been prompted by declining groundwater levels in Charleston, Berkeley and Dorchester counties, due in some part to the extreme commercial and

industrial growth in the areas. DHEC states that in one aquifer, the levels are more than 180 feet below the pre-development level. Restrictions on groundwater use would generally affect large water users (who plan to pump more than 3 million gallons a month) and are intended to allow DHEC to work with new users to help ensure best management practices are used and that only necessary amounts of water are removed from the resource. For more information, contact the Division of Media Relations, 2600 Bull Street, Columbia, S.C. 29201, or call David Baize at (803) 898-4272 or click [www.scdhec.net/news](http://www.scdhec.net/news).

Solid Waste Reduction – A free, non-regulatory comprehensive technical assistance program has been established to assist businesses, industry, organizations and state agencies interested in reducing costs associated with solid waste management. The program was established in 1990, and offers confidential assistance on reducing the environmental impact of their waste as well as how to preserve and efficiently use natural resources.

The Director of DHEC's Office of Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling stated that the purpose of the program is to cushion the blow of the slowing economy by helping businesses save money, improve solid waste purchasing and disposal practices and help protect the natural resources in our State. For more information, contact Karen Owens at (803) 896-4238 or click [www.scdhec.net/brap](http://www.scdhec.net/brap).

Proposed Tuberculosis Ruling - The Occupational Safety and Health Administration announced it is extending the period for comments on the tuberculosis (TB) rulemaking record until May 24, 2002, largely due to requests made by the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, the American Health Care Association, and the American Society for Microbiology. OSHA first published a proposed TB standard in October, 1997 to control occupational exposure to tuberculosis. The agency estimated that the standard will help protect 5.3 million workers in more than 100,000 hospitals, nursing homes, hospices, correctional facilities, homeless shelters, and other work settings with a significant risk of TB infection. For more information, click <http://www.osha.gov>.

Hispanic Construction Workers to Receive Improved OSHA Training - OSHA and the Hispanic Contractors of America, Inc. (HCA) signed an agreement on March 5, 2002 to promote safe and healthful working conditions for Hispanic construction workers through effective safety and health training and increased access to safety and health resources in Spanish.

## Hundreds Killed Every Year by Forklift Accidents...

**Y**ou may remember the revision to OSHA's Industrial Truck standard in March, 1999. Implications of the changes include operator authorization and pre-operational inspections of equipment. Classroom and operational instruction must be addressed for each driver prior to operation and at least every 3 years following. For the benefit of those of you who think the government interferes too much and just creates more "red tape", take a look at the following scenarios:

**Case 1** – An employee was killed while working in a three-sided building approximately 100 ft from an anhydrous ammonia tank filling station. A co-worker, driving a forklift, was off-loading a flatbed trailer when the forklift struck a section of the pipe for the filling station. The pipe blew, releasing an anhydrous ammonia plume that apparently either succumbed the employee in the three-sided building or blinded him, preventing escape.

**Case 2** – A 20 year old worker was crushed and killed by a forklift when it fell off of a 30 ½ inch landing dock. The worker drove the forklift up a ramp and started to turn into the warehouse when he stopped and got out to help a co-worker. He did not set the brake and accidentally hit the gearshift as he dismounted, putting the truck in reverse. He took several steps, noticed the forklift moving backward, and ran to get in and stop it. He jumped onto its left side just as the left rear tire slipped off the landing dock. The forklift rolled to the left, preventing him from getting inside. He was trapped, hanging outside the forklift when it fell to the ground.

**Case 3** – A forklift was being used to pick bales of hay from the fields and load them onto a tractor trailer. The forklift operator was approaching the trailer when he lost sight of the driver of the truck. He inadvertently struck the driver and pinned him between the forklift and the trailer. The driver suffered serious injuries, including two punctured lungs and broken ribs.

**Case 4** – Five temporary employees were hospitalized after being overcome by carbon monoxide, produced by an LP powered forklift. The forklift had a non-functioning exhaust purifier that had been installed in 1993 and poor ventilation inside the building escalated the event.

**Case 5** – An employee was run over and killed by a forklift when he walked out of a freezer onto the fishing dock. Witnesses claim that he was wiping his brow with his left shoulder and apparently did not see the forklift. The right frame of the truck struck the worker and he fell in front of the truck. The right front wheel ran over his neck, chest, and leg. He died almost instantly. The driver, who admitted to not watching where he was going, did not realize he had struck and run over the employee until he heard the witnesses shouting.

**Case 6** – An employee working atop a platform elevated approximately 10 ft by a forklift suffered a fractured skull and was pronounced dead at the scene after the unsecured platform came off the forklift, causing him to fall.



When reading about these accidents, did it make you think about the dangers that are posed by unsafe behavior or unsafe equipment in regards to forklifts? The average counter-balanced industry-use forklift can move 3,000 pounds at its maximum load center rating. This type of forklift weighs about 6,000 pounds, which is more than twice the weight of a car. Remember, if employees don't feel obligated to follow safe operating procedures or they feel like they may be ridiculed for taking such precautions, they aren't going to do it...and all it takes is an instant...

If you are interested in scheduling a training class for operators at your company, contact Crandall at 800-248-4801...our training includes classroom discussion, a written exam and a driving evaluation.

**Whether driving a forklift or welding sheet metal, workers must be trained on safety and health hazards of the job...and should feel obligated to follow such procedures, including the use of appropriate protective equipment and vehicle safety restraints.**

## Anthrax – Let’s Put Things In Perspective...

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One of the leading causes of commercial fires is electrical sources (faulty wiring, damaged equipment, old ventilation systems, etc.). Here’s another risk to consider. Motor vehicle accidents are the leading cause of workplace fatalities year after year after year...The State® recently informed its readers that traffic fatalities in South Carolina will exceed 1,000 for the fourth year in a row, with the state suffering the third highest highway fatality rate in the nation, behind Wyoming and Mississippi. Extrapolated nationwide, the carnage is roughly the equivalent of 15 Sept. 11 terrorist attacks per year. And unlike the occasional terrorist attack, this occurs relentlessly.

Everytime we get behind the wheel or ride in a vehicle with someone, we are putting ourselves in danger...and for most of us, this activity is our highest risk in life! That statement may be a little depressing for the adventurous, but it should also be awakening and encourage safer driving skills.

## OSHA Citations

Reported by the SC OSHA office, compliance officers completed 2,177 inspections during the fiscal year 2000-2001. Of these, safety inspections numbered 1,857, or 85.3 percent and Health inspections numbered 320, or 14.7 percent of total inspections. The types/causes of inspections are as follows:

- 1,471 were planned inspections
- 243 were a result of an employee complaint
- 83 accident and fatality investigations were conducted (involving 25 fatalities)
- 44 were referral inspections
- 95 were unprogrammed-related inspections
- 108 were follow-up inspections
- 97 were programmed-related inspections
- 36 were monitoring inspections



Regulation of health and safety in Construction, General Industry and Maritime workplaces fall under the responsibility of South Carolina’s Office of Occupational Safety and Health Administration. A total of 5,192 violations were cited in SC. Approximately 37% were serious and 62% were other-than-serious violations. Repeat violations accounted for the remaining 1% of the total violations. There were 6 willful violations recorded. The adjusted penalties for these violations amounted to \$900,530. Deficiencies found in the following areas resulted in most of SC and Federal OSHA’s citations:

1. *Respiratory Protection*
2. *Powered Industrial Trucks*
3. *Permit-Required Confined Spaces*
4. *Process Safety Management of Highly Hazardous Chemicals*
5. *Control of Hazardous Energy, Lockout/Tagout*
6. *Hazard Communication*
7. *Guarding Floor and Wall Openings*

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