Safety Update

Rebuilt Machinery Opens Up New Concerns About Safety

(Provided by Anthony Rante, president and principle engineer for Artech Engineering Inc., Chicago, IL; www.artechengineering.com. Rante is a member of the ASME B5 Committee on Power Press Standards.)

With the current emphasis on refurbishing and re-use of existing metalforming and fabricating equipment, the need for thorough and detailed safety management takes on an even greater concern. With each equipment upgrade, metalformers must conduct a thorough safety evaluation of the primary equipment and its use in production.

Unfortunately, safety management often takes a back seat to production, and does not become a concern until an incident occurs.

In most cases, manufacturers will need to address the relevant OSHA requirements for safeguarding equipment; go to www.osha.gov for starters, to seek information about stopping times, palm-button locations, point-of-contact guarding, etc. Also, stay up to speed on advances in sensor technology—light curtains, coded proximity switches, safety mats and related products.

The name of the game: Identify all possible hazards in all possible scenarios. Management should include employees most knowledgeable about the equipment and process in safety-brainstorming sessions. Start with a list of the day-to-day uses of each machine or system to capture all uses and functions.

When possible, include outside help in conducting safety reviews. Getting a fresh set of eyes to review a process or machine can help identify hazards that might otherwise go unnoticed.

Press accidents often occur during die setting, a particularly dangerous process because it often requires a combination of power-on and power-off procedures. Requirements related to power-off and locking out the press are very clear. The critical question becomes how to safely set a die once power is restored. All hazards must be eliminated—look for creative uses of fixtures to eliminate the hazards. Regular preventive maintenance also falls into this category.

These items are just a few of the considerations to ensure a safe press shop. As everyone strives to be more competitive, we continue to do more with our existing equipment. Modernization of an older piece of equipment can turn it into a profit center. Complete the process with a thorough safety review on the front end of the project.

Artech Engineering Inc.: www.artechengineering.com

Lincoln Launches Hexavalent-Chromium Awareness Campaign

On May 31, 2010, new OSHA regulations take effect, including one containing new hexavalent-chromium standards. To help metalformers prepare for the new standards, Lincoln Electric, Cleveland, OH, has launched an awareness campaign dubbed, "Are You Ready?" The campaign, an interactive website at www.lincolnelectric.com/weld-fume-control, is designed to educate employers and the general welding community about effective fume-control practices. It offers a onestop shop for reference materials, interactive tools and product solutions—articles, white papers and videos.

Lincoln Electric Co.: www.lincolnelectric.com/safety

Wellness Programs Improve Employee Health and Welfare

Metal-fabrication job shop D&S Manufacturing, Black River Falls, WI, partnered with its insurance provider, Gundersen Lutheran Occupational Health, to offer its employees a series of wellness programs. The programs are designed to improve employee morale, reduce absenteeism and encourage lifestyle changes to positively impact employee health. The goal: Identify emerging health problems that might be avoided or minimized through minor changes in diet and exercise, according to D&S president Michael Dougherty.

D&S manufactures large-scale components and weldments for customers such as Caterpillar, Trane Co. and Parkson. D&S Manufacturing: 715/284-5376; www.dsmfg.com

Audible and Segmented Indicator Lights Clearly Convey Equipment Status

Banner Engineering Corp. Minneapolis, MN, has introduced EZ-Light audible and segmented indicator lights for operator guidance and indication of equipment status. The indicators feature multi-colored, long-lasting LEDs that allow for displaying the status of remote and inaccessible sensors while minimizing the need for bulb replacements. Models consist of a compact unit that replaces post and stack lights. Additionally, the indicators are available in multiple lowprofile design options for simple installation and are compatible with PLC or other logic-level control outputs.

For applications benefitting from sound indication, the indicators offer two decibel levels with steady or pulsed tones. In addition, audible indicators provide standard green/red/yellow lights and are available in two housing styles.