

Cal/OSHA brings science, technology and problem-solving to workplace safety

Marilyn Wilson, SIA Project Specialist

Cal/OSHA is dedicated to protecting workers' health and safety in almost every workplace in California. It does this through a comprehensive program of research, standards, enforcement and consultation. In a recent meeting with Cal/OSHA Acting Chief Juliann Sum, SIA Executive Director Martin Brady had the opportunity to ask about Cal/OSHA's resources for schools and the agency's priorities going forward.

Sum explained that Cal/OSHA, a division of the state Department of Industrial Relations, is not just an enforcement agency, but a partner in achieving safe workplaces and healthy work environments as well. Cal/OSHA encourages employers at all levels to take the necessary steps to improve working conditions, and provides resources, education and training services to both employers and employees.

Cal/OSHA takes a proactive and problem-solving approach to preventing injuries and illnesses, offering on-site consultation visits to identify potential hazards, telephone support, outreach opportunities and partnership programs. It's also important to Cal/OSHA that its educational components remain relevant and useful for workplace communities. As one example, it makes available online tools for schools both to create new written Injury and Illness Prevention Plans (IIPP) and to upgrade existing ones. It also has an extensive library of downloadable materials for occupation-specific safety issues.

Cal/OSHA has a staff of engineers and industrial hygienists who stay current on the latest workplace standards, science and technology through ongoing training. Their experience and knowledge in these areas can benefit both employers and workers on a daily basis. Working closely with Fed OSHA, its federal counterpart, Cal/OSHA also ensures that the state plan satisfies federal law, while remaining accountable to the governor and legislature through regulatory reporting and implementation requirements.

Sum said that Cal/OSHA invites public input on best practices, educational materials, policy and procedures, and injury prevention-related issues. She highlighted a number of opportunities that SIA and member districts have to help develop resources and trainings that are useful and relevant to schools. Through participation on advisory committees, for example, resource materials could be identified and updated to improve district health and safety practices to reduce claims and costs.



Acting Cal/OSHA Chief Juliann Sum

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What are the keys to happy, productive and loyal employees?

One study presents some interesting findings

Michele Mariscal, SIA Prevention Specialist

A recent article about employee workplace satisfaction discussed one particular study, titled “The Energy Project,” which tracked four things that workers consistently look for in their jobs in order to feel productive and happy. The study evaluated the physical, emotional, mental and spiritual components of some 12,000 participants, and found that employees are considerably more productive and engaged when they have the opportunity to:

- **regularly renew and recharge at work;**
- **feel valued and appreciated for their contributions;**
- **focus in an absorbed way on their most important tasks; and**
- **do more of what they do best and feel connected to a higher purpose at work.**

For example, the employees studied reported a 50 percent greater capacity to think creatively and a 46 percent higher level of health and well-being when they took breaks. In fact, employees encouraged by



their supervisors to take breaks tended to stay with their companies longer.

Feeling appreciated by a supervisor was the one thing that appeared to have the biggest impact on job satisfaction. Employees who reported having supportive supervisors were 67 percent more engaged with their jobs and workplace environments than were counterparts who received no acknowledgement.

Being able to focus on one task at a time also ranked high on the work satisfaction list. The study found that those able to concentrate on one specific thing each day versus having to multi-task all day long reported being 50 percent more engaged and satisfied with their work than were the multi-taskers. And all of the study participants looked more favorably on their jobs overall even if only one of the core needs was met.

“Positive changes in employee engagement don’t necessarily happen from massive culture changes or vast implementation of new programs,” says China Gorman, CEO of Great Place to Work. “Baby steps are OK and the more that core needs are met, the more positive the impact.”

Anyone interested in learning more about available district training and workshops can contact Michele Mariscal at (916) 364-1281 or e-mail MMariscal@sia-jpa.org.

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Turn underperformers into winners

Turning an underperforming team into a success-oriented group that ultimately attains its goals requires a leadership strategy that integrates analysis, vision, patience and reward. Following are some ways that can help launch and sustain the process:

Educate team members so they understand how to do things. Convey the information in various ways, and include hands-on opportunities and role-playing when possible.

Point out poor behavior and habits that are no longer acceptable. Explain why certain actions don’t fit with the team’s

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When you see red, spend some time looking inward

Anger is one of our strongest emotions and it can also be the most difficult one to manage. People tend to deal with anger in the same ways their parents or families did, which may be entirely the wrong ways: 1) They keep it inside; 2) They blow up; 3) They become physically or verbally abusive; 4) They drink alcohol/use drugs to “control” it.

Unfortunately, all of these common responses to anger are largely self-destructive.

Unresolved anger at its core is unhealthy, as it can raise blood pressure and increase the risk of ulcers and heart attacks. Unchecked anger can irreparably alienate others if it leads to verbal or physical abuse. And if alcohol and/or drugs are used to try to control or escape anger, the results can be devastating to families, jobs and lives.

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So, instead of letting anger hurt you and those around you, learn healthy techniques for dealing with it. Start by recognizing your typical responses to this red-flag emotion, then actively strive to understand its roots. Learn your anger triggers and practice some positive ways of reacting to them.

Step 1: CONFRONT/EVALUATE

Anger is a natural emotion and it’s OK to feel angry sometimes. It doesn’t have to be justified or rationalized. Anger can result from something as basic as being hungry, tired or physically unwell. It can also be triggered by rational/irrational perceptions and expectations of others. For example, if someone didn’t act the way you thought they “should” have, anger can result. Therefore, it’s important to confront and evaluate the

underlying causes of specific feelings of anger, then take measures to deal with them.

Step 2: DETACH, BREATHE, TALK

Try to practice one or more of the following anger-management techniques the next time you see red:

- **Detach yourself from the situation.**
- **Breathe** – try breathing exercises to calm yourself down.
- **Relax** – then look at the problem again.
- **Concentrate** on replacing irrational, angry thoughts with reasonable ones.
- **Take a walk** or do something to physically release your anger.
- **Smile or laugh** – it’s hard to stay angry when doing either.
- **Be more forgiving.**
- **Focus on problem-solving and solutions.** Don’t waste your energy on rage.
- **Try to see things** from the other person’s point of view, instead of judging.
- **Talk to someone about your anger.**
- **If you find it difficult** to talk about your anger, or are having problems pinpointing the cause of your anger, write it down. Putting pen to paper can help to clarify your feelings.



Source: *Managed Health Network*

Winners (continued from page 2)

vision of success. Expect some missteps along the way, but adopt the attitude that an action isn’t a mistake until the person does it twice. View first occurrences as teachable moments.

Enforce standards of behavior, no matter who violates them. Consistent discipline demonstrates a commitment to higher standards.

Model the values and attitudes that you expect from all employees. Remaining calm in a crisis and treating employees and customers with respect will leave a lasting impression on team members.

Celebrate successes along the way. Set a series of goals so that team members can measure progress and stay motivated along the path to change.

Source: *Communication Briefings*

Designed with school district leaders in mind.





A WeTip school partnership has many resources and benefits

SIA member districts are urged to use the free WeTip anonymous crime-reporting hotline as a prevention tool to reduce losses from theft, vandalism or other mischief. By notifying all campus visitors that any crime will be reported, potential criminals may think twice before targeting school properties.

Part of the WeTip challenge is to keep the message fresh. SIA has materials, including a variety of posters, wallet cards, magnets and brochures, that can be used to get the word out. And these materials are all free of charge. School sites can create their own changeable WeTip posters to reflect a particular theme and in the process raise awareness about such things as:

- copper theft
- arson
- computer theft
- graffiti
- bullying
- vandalism

Students and staff can call the WeTip hotline anytime with the confidence that their identities are safe. This can be especially important for students who fear retaliation. There is no tracing of calls or any way to identify callers. For many crimes, a reward of up to \$1,000 per crime is offered, and a system has been established to pay rewards anonymously. The hotline is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week, all year round.

Each district has a liaison for the WeTip program and is encouraged to contact that individual to request materials, arrange a school presentation on the program or to learn more about the program in general. For liaison contact or general information, contact Teresa Franco at tfranco@sia-jpa.org or 916-364-1281, ext. 256.



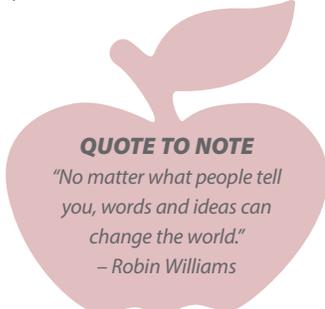
Cal/OSHA

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“SIA looks forward to working with Juliann Sum and Cal/OSHA to help ensure good safety and health practices in our districts,” said Brady.

Visit Cal/OSHA’s website, www.dir.ca.gov/dosh, for more information about available programs, including its consultation services and safety materials useful for member districts.

Juliann Sum was selected to serve as Acting Chief of Cal/OSHA in September 2013, after joining the Department of Industrial Relations in May 2012 as special advisor to Director Christine Baker. She served as project director with the Institute for Research on Labor and Employment, as well as consulting attorney and industrial hygienist with the Labor Occupational Health Program at UC Berkeley from 1994 to 2012. She has a Juris Doctor degree (with honors) from the University of California’s Hastings College of the Law, a Master of Science degree in environmental health sciences from Harvard University’s School of Public Health and a Bachelor of Science degree in biophysics from Brown University.



QUOTE TO NOTE

“No matter what people tell you, words and ideas can change the world.”
– Robin Williams

The material in this newsletter should be part of your Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP). Keep a copy of this newsletter in your IIPP binder.



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RISK REVIEW is published by the Schools Insurance Authority, P.O. Box 276710, Sacramento, CA 95827-6710, (916) 364-1281, 1-877-SIA-KIDS. The SIA is a joint powers authority, composed of 35 members, that collectively provides workers’ compensation, liability, property, and health benefit insurance coverage on behalf of its member districts. The SIA school districts are: Arcohe, Atwater, Buckeye, Camino, Center, Central Sierra ROP, El Dorado Co. Off. Ed., El Dorado High, Elk Grove, Elverta, Folsom-Cordova, Galt Elem., Galt High, Gold Oak, Gold Trail, Hayward, Indian Diggings, Latrobe, Merced City, Mother Lode, Natomas, North Bay SIA, Pioneer, Placerville, Pollock Pines, Rescue, River Delta, Robla, Sac. City, Sac. Co. Off. Ed., San Juan, Shasta-Trinity SIG, Silver Fork, Twin Rivers, and Woodland. SIA Officers: Executive Director — Martin Brady; President – Tamara Sanchez, Sacramento County Office of Education; Vice President – Baldev Johal, El Dorado Union HSD; Secretary – David Roth, Buckeye Union SD; Prevention Services Manager/Communications — Lisa Tremewan-Konarski; Newsletter: Vitali-Gage Communications, Inc.