

## Facility Inspections: A Pro-active Tool

A visit by a safety inspection team, operating under the umbrella of the Safety Advisory Committee, followed with responsive action by management is a powerful message to the affected workers that safety is an essential element in their work environment. The question that should be asked is, "What are we communicating to our employees?" Many of the safety problems have evolved over the years into their present condition. Affected workers accept the conditions because no one has addressed them — they have become part of their working environment. The inspection process is a proactive tool to identify conditions, before someone is injured, and hopefully to change the work/safety culture to keep similar conditions from reappearing.

What kind of things can you expect to find? Recent YCPARMIA inspections of various member worksites identified issues that include:

- A wide variety of ergonomic problems;
- Respirators improperly stored;
- Emergency exits blocked by storage;
- Tripping hazards in hallways, walkways, stairwells, and around desks;
- Fire extinguishers blocked by storage, and expired inspection records;
- Emergency shower/eyewash stations blocked by storage, and expired inspection records;
- Fall arrest gear that no longer meets State standards;
- Safety guards modified or removed from power tools;
- Inadequately maintained forklifts;
- Damaged ladders;
- Unlabeled or poorly labeled electric panels, and panels blocked by storage;
- Uncovered electrical junction boxes, and uncovered electrical outlets;
- Outlets with evidence of heat/fire damage;
- Light fixtures with unprotected lamps/bulbs;
- HVAC units with damaged conduit, improperly wired and lacking effective grounding;
- Roof drains plugged with debris;
- Hazardous materials and hazardous wastes improperly stored;
- Compressed gas cylinders improperly stored;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) not maintained in a usable condition.

The Safety Advisory Committee should not be concerned about the "cause" of these conditions — "cause" is left for injury analysis — nor should it be concerned about the cost of repairs — that is a management issue. The function of the Committee, and its inspection team, is advisory.