**Preparedness Month - was BP prepared?**

Probably the most dramatic story at present that involves workplace safety and preparedness is the explosion of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig and the resulting oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. The television news program "60 Minutes" published an extensive story in May on the "The Deepwater Horizon Disaster," which was updated in August. Reporter Scott Pelley interviewed the oil rig's chief electronics technician, Mike Williams, who described some of the safety decision making.

According to an expert on off-shore rig disasters, a key problem may have occurred a month before the explosion, when a rubber gasket on the "blowout preventer" was damaged during a test. But a supervisor in the driller shack considered it "no big deal." In addition, one of the blowout preventer's two control pods (the system included a back-up pod) was not fully functioning. Finally, the procedure chosen for closing the well at the end of drilling appears to have been based more on a desire for speed than safety.

Specific causes and responsibility for the explosion may never be completely clear, but a lesson on preparedness should be. A final irony: at the time of the explosion, a ceremony was taking place to congratulate the crew for seven years without an injury.

**CBS News (Blowout: The Deepwater Horizon Disaster) -**
www.cbsnews.com/stories/2010/08/19/60minutes/main6787685.shtml?tag=mncol;lst;1

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**Pop Quiz: What does FEMA stand for?**

FEMA recommends, "Every business should have an emergency plan. It can save lives, company assets, and your entire business." A FEMA website provides suggestions for comprehensive emergency planning, communications strategies, and ways to secure your business's physical assets.

**FEMA (Ready Business) –** www.ready.gov/business/index.html

**Federal Emergency Management Agency, the beginnings of which can be traced to a piece of congressional legislation in 1803 that gave assistance to a town in New Hampshire after a large fire.**

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**New OSHA rule on cranes and derricks**

The use of cranes and derricks in construction is addressed by a new OSHA rule that takes effect Nov. 8. The new rule, which was published in the Federal Register Aug. 9, incorporates technological advances that will provide improved protection for about 4.8 million workers employed in the construction field.


**Industry Market Trends (OSHA Publishes Cranes and Derricks Final Rule) -**

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**Successful incentives**

Incentives or rewards for safety should be linked with behaviors that build a safety culture, rather than the number of accidents. Examples might be participating in the safety committee or new employee orientations, or conducting equipment inspections. But desired outcomes, for both employees and management, should be tailored to the company.

**safetyXchange (How to Make Safety Incentive Programs Successful) -** www.safetyxchange.org/newsletter.php?id=641

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UI HealthWorks is a member of the WORKSAFE IOWA Occupational Medicine Associate Network, the only university-affiliated network of occupational health providers. WORKSAFE IOWA is an outreach program of the Department of Occupational and Environmental Health in the College of Public Health at the University of Iowa (www.public-health.uiowa.edu/worksafe).