

# A Word to the WISE...

Volume 3 Issue 1

## Women in Safety Engineering (WISE)



**Kelly Bernish**  
WISE Chair  
Manager, Safety & Health  
Operations  
Walt Disney World

*You can have it all. You just can't have it all at once.*  
—Oprah Winfrey

Baltimore—here we come! Yes, the planning is well underway for all of the PDC activities for WISE in Baltimore. As usual, we will kick it off with a Sunday evening networking event. Make your travels plans accordingly—you won't want to miss this amazing event. It's a great way to reconnect with all of your WISE compadres and to network with new members and welcome them into our group. Don't forget to bring (or buy, see p. 9) your WISE shirts to wear!

Speaking of new members, can you believe WISE is nearly 1,500 members strong? Now more than ever, members are actively involved, and I hope I can count on each and every one of you to support our WISE events at the PDC this year. Our LinkedIn network has become the most robust group I am involved with on this amazing professional networking site. Did I tell you we are about to record our 500<sup>th</sup> member on the WISE LinkedIn Group? Talk about a powerful network! Visit LinkedIn and search for WISE under the Groups tab or visit our website, <http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties/wise>, for more information.

Please read on to check out all the great things our members are doing and are involved with. The LA WISE Chapter had a great local networking event and even developed its own WISE hand sign (see photo on p. 2)! We also have a great summary of something many of us have been watching, the GHS initiative, our regular "You Go, Girl!" feature and much more.

As you might imagine, I am always on the lookout for women-focused initiatives and ran across one that I know is worth sharing with you all. The DailyWorth, self-described as "a free daily personal finance email for women" who "deliver practical tips, empowering ideas and the occasional kick in the pants." If you haven't checked it out or haven't subscribed, please do so. This is so important for all of us, especially in these challenging financial times. Ok—that's my advice for you for the day, now let me hear from you! Our next newsletter is just months away. I am already starting to compile articles and information, and of course, I want to hear about all of our accomplishments! Send me an e-mail or let's talk on LinkedIn. Don't forget to visit our website to make a donation for WISE PDC activities since WISE is completely self-funded. No donation is too small (or too big!)! — *Kelly*

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***A special thanks to everyone who contributed to this newsletter!***  
***(Next deadline is July 19, 2010)***

## Update on WISE Events at Safety 2010

Women in Safety Engineering (WISE) will hold its annual networking event during ASSE's [Safety 2010](#) in Baltimore, MD. The networking event will take place on Sunday, June 13, 2010 from 5:00-9:00 PM in Key Ballroom 4 at the Hilton Hotel. Discover new friends and contacts as you network with women from different professional backgrounds but with a common interest—safety, health and the environment. Bring a friend!

WISE still seeks sponsors to help make the WISE Lounge, Room 305 in the convention center, a success during Safety 2010. Time is running short to raise the needed funds. Sponsorship information is available at <http://www.asse.org/practicespecialties/wise/docs/2010WISEsponsorLtr-2-2-10.doc>.

We appreciate your support!

Thank you,  
WISE Leadership Team

## LA WISE Holds First Holiday Wine Tasting & Networking Event

The first LA WISE holiday wine tasting and networking event was held December 9, 2009 at the Wine Merchants in the Claremont Packing House District in Claremont, CA. This hip and quaint venue offered a great place for wine tasting, savory hors d'oeuvres, great conversation, terrific raffle prizes and making new friends in the safety industry. ASSE members brought their spouses, employees and customers and had a great time celebrating WISE and the holidays.

LA WISE hopes to make this a signature event and hopes to see you at the next one!

Many thanks to our sponsors:

- American Technologies, Inc.
- ASSE Los Angeles Chapter and Inland Empire Section
- Capital Safety, DBI Sala and Protecta Brands
- Flexible Lifeline Systems, Inc.

- Haley & Aldrich
- JoshuaCasey Corporate Training and Education

For more information about LA WISE, contact:  
**Melonee Cruse**, [melonee\\_cruse@hmc.edu](mailto:melonee_cruse@hmc.edu)  
**Kelley Connell**, [kelley.connell@flexiblelifeline.com](mailto:kelley.connell@flexiblelifeline.com)



*WISE members at the LA WISE Networking Event*

## Safety Equipment Still Largely Made for Men Only

*By Vicky Edwards, Special to the Tribune,  
December 4, 2009*

Despite the growing number of women in engineering, construction, science labs, police and fire departments, women still have to work to find safety clothing and equipment that fits properly or works well.

Women who are petite have difficulty finding well-fitted safety gloves, construction boots, tool belts and hardhats. Women who are pregnant can find it difficult or even impossible to wear protective vests or safety harnesses, particularly in the final months.

"Women don't want to be thought of as different or have people think they need special treatment," said Dianne Stilwell, communications consultant for the Women's Engineering Society, a British organization whose American counterpart is the Society of Women Engineers. "But if their clothing prevents them from being taken seriously—if they feel they look stupid—or if it prevents them from doing some aspects of the job, then the feeling of not belonging in the environment is perpetuated."



The Women's Engineering Society is sponsoring an online survey to discover the extent of the problem. In a workforce, that is no longer one-size-fits-all, they hope to raise awareness and to persuade manufacturers that a market exists for safety equipment in a variety of sizes and shapes.

Some of the problems noted in the survey were large hardhats that tilted and obstructed the view, safety trousers that posed a tripping hazard, safety boots that were too wide and caused pain and baggy lab coats that meant rolling up sleeves and leaving the arms unprotected.

Stilwell says so far 80% of the female respondents said they are wearing clothing designed for men, and nearly all have problems with clothing that does not fit. Jackets, gloves and shoes or boots are the most-often cited problem equipment so far.

Kate Jakubas, an engineer at Elkay in Broadview, IL, which manufactures sinks, faucets and water coolers, says workers at that plant have to wear special safety gloves.

"A good rule is that you have to treat all of the sheet metal as if it is razor blades," she says.

Even some men wearing the cut-resistant gloves provided found them too large, Jakubas says, but everyone simply thought of it as an unavoidable problem until Jakubas visited the company's plant in Savanna, IL.

"Their workforce is mostly female," says Jakubas, who found employees wearing smaller gloves. She brought a pair back to Broadview with her, talked with her colleagues and had the company order gloves in the smaller size for her location.

"When I was at Caterpillar, one of the jobs was fire brigade training once a month," says Amy Pavnica, a safety officer at Fermi National Accelerator Laboratory, near Batavia, IL. "The smallest boot was a size 10 men's, and I had to be careful. At Fermilab, we try to get smaller sizes for women, but it is hard. And pregnancy? Forget it."

Despite these gaps, she says the situation has improved somewhat. But she says the thing that

helps women the most is "a good sense of humor."

In some cases, women wear clothing designed for men even when women's clothing is available. That is the case at Argonne National Laboratory, near Lemont, IL, where firefighter/paramedics Niki Zubaty and Liz Stennett prefer to alter the men's clothing because they think it is designed better.

"Every woman I know in the firefighter service wears the men's pants," Zubaty says. "They are more comfortable," Stennett says, "so we just take them in and fix the zipper ratio."

Rafael Coll, a safety engineer at Fermilab who advises divisions on personal protective equipment, noted that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration requires protective equipment wherever a hazard is recognized, whether it be earplugs for noise or protective equipment to absorb energy from a potential fall. Most of the fall protection equipment is designed for people weighing 130 to 310 pounds, he notes.

"We had a lady whose feet were very small," Coll says. "I shopped around and finally found a pair of safety shoes, but they were very, very expensive."

When safety equipment does not fit a worker at Fermilab, including women who can no longer fit while pregnant, the employee continues to work but simply cannot go on the duty requiring that equipment.

Stilwell says there has to be a better answer.

## Join WISE on LinkedIn

See what your fellow WISE members are saying on LinkedIn. Please join us if you have not already. It is another great way to network with your SH&E peers!

### Jan Stockton, Construction Professional:

"I have been a safety professional for over 30 years. I was the 'token woman' in a man's field, beginning as the first woman as a Loss Control Consultant for a large insurer. I have had an awesome career in the construction safety field,

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mostly with large construction management companies. I am so very excited to be a part of this group and thank you for creating WISE!”

**Kristin Hoffman, Environmental Health & Safety Leader:**

“Twenty years ago, I recall being the only woman at local chapter meetings. I am pleased to see more women entering this field, where some of a woman’s innate talents can best be put to use. Great work creating this group, WISE team!”

## **Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS)**

*By Anne M. Kogut CIH, CSP, MS*

OSHA proposes to modify the current Hazard Communication Standard (HCS) to align with the provisions of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS). The adoption of GHS by OSHA will require OSHA to propose changes to the Hazard Communication Standard (20 CFR 1910.1200). GHS’s primary benefit is to increase the quality and consistency of information provided to workers, employers and chemical users by adopting a standardized approach to hazard classification, labels and safety data. GHS provides a single set of harmonized criteria for classifying chemicals according to their health and physical hazards and specifies hazard communication elements for labeling and safety data sheets. Under GHS, labels would include signal words, pictograms and hazard and precautionary statements, and safety data sheets would have standardized format.

GHS is not a regulation or standard but is a system for standardizing and harmonizing the classification of chemicals internationally. Its purposes are to create a logical and comprehensive approach to defining health, physical and environmental hazards; to create a classification process that uses data on chemicals with comparison with the define hazards criteria; and to standardize the communication of those hazards.

OSHA’s proposal to adopt GHS will not change the framework and scope of the current HCS but will

improve quality and consistency in the classification and labeling of all chemicals. The harmonized format of the safety data sheets will enable workers to access the information more efficiently. In addition, currently multiple labels and safety data sheets must often be developed for the same product when shipped to different countries. GHS also impacts other agencies, such as the Department of Transportation (DOT), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), which were actively involved in developing GHS. DOT has already modified its requirements for classification and labeling to make it consistent with international UN transport requirements and GHS.

### **Major Proposed Changes to HCS**

#### **Hazard Classification**

The proposed rule to the Hazard Communication Standard will address changes to the Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) and product labeling. GHS label elements are Symbols (hazard pictograms) that show health, physical and environmental hazards; Signal Words, such as “Danger” or “Warning”; and Hazard Statements that would include standard phrases assigned to a hazard class and category. All symbols, signal words and hazard statements have been standardized and assigned to a specific hazard category and class. Criteria for classification of hazards and their signal words and precautionary statements and the classification of mixtures are described in the following appendices to the revised standard:

- Appendix A—Health Hazard Criteria for classification (MANDATORY)
- Appendix B—Physical Hazard Criteria for classification (MANDATORY)
- Appendix F—Guidance for Classification RE carcinogenicity (Non-MANDATORY)

#### **Labels**

Chemical manufacturers and importers will be required to provide a label that includes a harmonized signal word, pictogram and hazard statement for each hazard class and category. Precautionary statements must also be provided. A summary of the elements of the new label











