



# The Net

C-NET

Issue 57  
February 2012

## The editors corner...

### *Inside this issue*

- The editors corner...page 1
- OH&S...page 2
- Upcoming c-net events...page 7
- The inside scoop...page 9

### About C-Net

C-Net is an Australian owned company that specialises in SAP based OH&S solutions.

SafetySuite provides rich functionality for Australian and NZ companies that require an integrated, legislatively compliant fully supported OH&S system to compliment their SAP infrastructure.

Summer break; a time for fun in the sun, catching up with friends and family, and getting some much needed rest and relaxation. Unfortunately with all that fun comes overeating and drinking, a lack of exercise and unhealthy habits creeping their way back in!

Never has there been a better time to get back in to the swing of living healthier. The weather has started to cool down making those evening walks/runs all the more enjoyable, fresh produce is coming in in bundles at your local markets and grocers and who doesn't love feeling better and having more energy?! This editorial will try and provide some hints and tips to get you back into that healthy living you dropped over summer and will leave you feeling refreshed, energised and feeling great about life!

- Doing at least thirty minutes of moderate intensity physical activity is all it takes to gain some big benefits. Every day is preferred, but finding thirty most days of the week is beneficial too.
- It is important to eat a variety

of nutrient-rich foods including whole grains, fruits and vegetables.

- Drink plenty of water
- Have a positive outlook. People who are positive tend to have better health and success in life then those who are negative



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# The Net

## Occupational health & safety news...

### **“WorkSafe to conduct Return to Work free workshop for employers”**

A free workshop which aims to give employers the tools they need to help injured workers back to work sooner will be conducted on February 16 in Melbourne's west.

Occupational Physiotherapist Nick Economos and psychologists Jacqui Stanford and Dr Peter Cotton will serve as speakers for this event. Each will share their industry experience and insight on improving return to work outcomes.

They will also help employers on how to support injured people who are at the highest risk of not returning to work, particularly those with a musculoskeletal and/or psychological injury.

Dr Cotton will assist employers in learning the skills to build resilience in injured workers to help guard against the onset of secondary psychological problems that commonly arise from prolonged work absences.

This workshop will be held from 9am to 11.30am at Sanctuary Lakes Resort in Sanctuary Lakes (Point Cook). To register for this event, please visit the 'Workshops and events' section at [www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/returntowork](http://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/returntowork).

Latest figures reveal that employers who attend WorkSafe's return to work events achieve return to work rates up to 3.4% better than employers who do not.

An estimated 29,000 Victorians suffer work-related injuries every year. Around 3,000 of these workers will be out of the workforce for more than six months.

According to WorkSafe, almost 18,000 injuries from businesses in Melbourne's west have been reported over the past five financial years. Treatment, rehabilitation, as well as compensation costs exceed \$366-million.





# The Net

WorkSafe's Return to Work Division Director, Dorothy Frost said that upholding the morale of injured workers was a key factor in achieving better return to work outcomes.

"No one wants to be hurt, and returning to work is an important part of the recovery process.

"The work needs to be safe for the injured person, but it does not always have to be their pre-injury job or even the old hours. Looking for opportunities is the key."

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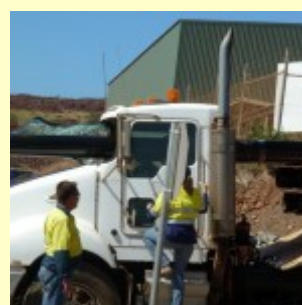
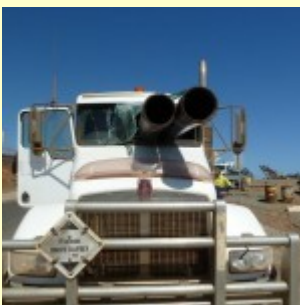
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## **"Work health and healthy life choices"**

According to one of our subscribers, a driver transporting 9.5/8 inch casing in Karatha, WA last Friday afternoon is lucky to be alive. Following inspection and re-coating, the pipes were being transported for storage. The driver, who according to our source, was not travelling very fast and was required to brake hard at an intersection. The load moved and the result was potentially catastrophic. The driver was lucky to escape with a little bruising and shock.

These pictures tell the story.....



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## “New fathers face greater work safety risk, study reveals”

A new study conducted by Gary Mellor, a senior lecturer in the school of health and human sciences at Southern Cross University revealed that many new fathers are suffering fatigue, and that it can have serious consequences on workplace safety, especially for those who are involved in physically demanding work or operating machineries.

Dr Mellor said that employers should be aware and be sympathetic to what their male workers are going through during early fatherhood and should help them during this time. He also said that fathers must consider negotiating different ways they can take a leave.

According to the Sydney Morning Herald, 241 fathers were studied at two points during their babies' first three months. The study reveals that the more fatigue they experience, the less they followed safety practices. Fathers experiencing fatigue were 36 percent more likely to have “near misses” at work.

Majority of the respondents had interrupted sleep when their babies were six weeks old. They would wake up two or three times a night, on average, and would only sleep for 5 ½ hours. They had more sleep at 12 weeks but felt worse. By that time, three-quarters suffered from fatigue at least “some of the time” compared with 65 percent at the six-week period. The study reveals that this rate is higher than for the general population, where fatigue is a problem for 20 to 30 percent of people.

“Fathers might benefit from using leave by working fewer days a week, having later start or earlier finish times, or long weekends,” said Dr Mellor.

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## **“Make safety improvements today, because tomorrow may be too late”**

The death of a man at Mulgrave as a result of an explosion outside his home this morning should shock all Victorians into taking immediate action to make their workplaces and equipment as safe as possible.

WorkSafe is investigating the incident which claimed the eighth life in three weeks, General Manager for Operations, Lisa Sturzenegger said.

"Gas bottles stored in a vehicle appear to have exploded, but at this stage why that has happened is not clear," Ms Sturzenegger said.

"WorkSafe will try and determine which product has exploded and whether the van had a special box in which products like acetylene, refrigerant and LPG can be stored safely.

"Our deepest condolences go out to this young man's family and friends, but also to others who, as a result of this incident, are remembering loved ones who did not come home from work."

It's the third major incident in Melbourne in five days.

Early yesterday, fuel which escaped from a tanker at a Rowville service station was ignited and threatened a neighbouring hotel before igniting the truck which also exploded, blowing a huge hole in the side of the vehicle. The driver suffered burns and is in hospital.

Last Thursday, a 100m long awning which was 15m across fell from an uncompleted warehouse at Keysborough just after workers went to lunch. No one was hurt.

"In each of these incidents there was the potential for multiple injuries if not deaths," Ms Sturzenegger said.

# The Net

"The entire community must not only reflect on these incidents but take immediate action to ensure the workplaces they control or work in are as safe as reasonably practicable. Do it today because tomorrow might be too late.

"When something goes wrong with even routine aspects of work, the consequences are often immediate and can be dreadful.

"For those working with, or transporting dangerous goods, ensure they are properly secured and that those who use them know how to secure them.

"For tradespeople, gas products must be stored in a sealed box which vents outside the vehicle if there is a leak or failure of a valve.

"Thankfully incidents like today's and yesterday's are rare but they are a sign that routine tasks can go wrong.

"In what is the busiest time of year for many businesses and workers and with the added distractions of approaching Christmas, holidays and the organisation of all the activities around that, there is a particular need for a high focus on safety in the last few weeks of the year.

"Everyone is entitled to go to work and come home."

## **Past incidents involving tradepeople and acetylene gas.**

WorkSafe has prosecuted two serious incident involving acetylene explosions this year.

Plumber Michael Ponton was convicted and fined \$25,000 at the Frankston Magistrates' Court in May. He pleaded guilty to failing to provide a safe workplace and putting people other than employees at risk under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

# The Net

The court was told his van was parked outside his Chelsea Heights home when a build up of acetylene gas was ignited when the central locking was activated around 6am on October 22, 2009.

Kyabram company, Kanga Coolers, was convicted and fined \$45,000 in October after an explosion left an apprentice with third degree burns to 35 per cent of his body.

He was performing a service check on a commercial refrigerator in the cellar of Echuca's Bridge Hotel when the explosion happened on 7 July, 2009.

He suffered third degree burns to his arms, face, back and hands and was flown to the Alfred Hospital where he was in a coma for eight days.

WorkSafe's investigation found there was a leak in an acetylene gas torch which resulted in a build up of gas, which could not disperse in the poorly ventilated cellar. The gas bubble erupted when the worker lit the torch.

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## Upcoming C-Net Events

21-22 March 2012  
SAUG 39th Plenary  
The Hilton Hotel, Brisbane



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## “Workplace Myths: 3 warnings before dismissal?”

There is no specific requirement under legislation to give employees 3 warnings before going through a termination. However, employers should ensure they follow the law.

Employers must ensure that when it comes to termination:

the employee receives the amount of notice they are entitled to

the dismissal is fair (i.e. not harsh, unjust or unreasonable)

the dismissal is lawful (i.e. the employee has not been dismissed for a discriminatory reason).

While there is no specific number of warnings under legislation, when it comes to unfair dismissal what may be taken into consideration is whether an employee has been **sufficiently** warned that their employment may not continue because of poor performance. They should also be given an opportunity to fix the problem.



Managing employee underperformance is important in any business. Failure to manage underperformance effectively, appropriately and sensitively is likely to have consequences for the employer, the underperforming employee, and the rest of the workplace. Take a look at our best practice guide for information on how to manage underperformance.

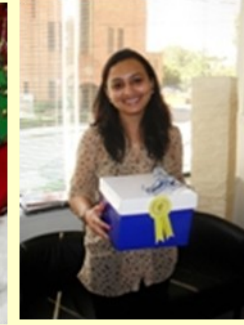
# The Net

## The inside scoop...

### C-Net's Christmas Festivities!



This festive season we decided to try something new at C-Net – 12 Day's of C-Net Christmas! Where each staff member would have the chance to show off their cooking skills. For 12 working days, we took our turns to bring in a morning tea to share. It is fair to say that by the end of the 12 days we didn't feel like anymore cake or sweets! If that wasn't enough, there was also a competition of who could decorate their desk in the most Christmassy imaginative way.



# The Net

With another working year coming to an end, another C-Net Christmas party was on the cards. In keeping with tradition, this years celebration did not disappoint. This year, the annual Christmas party took more of a classy approach with everyone being treated to a lovely lunch at The Langham Hotel on South Bank. The all-you-can-eat style restaurant made our eyes bigger than our stomachs. Of course there were plenty of fun games played in between servings, with the overall day being a great success.



THE LANGHAM  
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