

# ***Leadership in Safety Exercise Phase Two***

## ***The Investigation***

**VOSHA Investigation:** VOSHA was called to investigate the incident, since the injury was the result of a fall. Upon arrival and opening conference, the Compliance Safety and Health Officer (CSHO) requested various types of evidence such as safety procedures for this job site, a list of witnesses to interview, a copy of the OSHA 300 logs as well as the 301 log for this injury, a look at the area in question and asked where the victim was for the purposes of interview.

The VOSHA investigation found that John had indeed gone through an OSHA 10 hour training. Additionally, John was a long term employee and considered one of the leaders of the crew. John had attended all the jobsite meetings of both the weekly and daily briefing variety.

The employer provided safety and health records to VOSHA reflected good training and a track record of discipline. However curiously enough the records did not include discipline at this site. Jobsite meetings were documented and sign in sheets were kept.

The GC was found to require site safety meetings and kept documents of those. In addition, the GC required that all site specific safety protocols be submitted by each contractor, including HAZCOM programs. In addition, the GC kept a spreadsheet of various safety/health related issues that were followed up weekly with each subcontractor on site.

**Investigative Findings:** Though it seemed that the site safety and health procedures were well thought out and planned, there were several issues that the VOSHA investigation found, which were not addressed in the original investigation.

1. The injured employee (John) in fact was not using the proper lanyard. John had forgotten his lanyard at home that morning. Since John lived two hours away from the job, he was told to go to the job trailer and get one from there. There were different styles available, but John chose the single tie off lanyard.
2. Prior to the incident a job briefing was held, in which Johns Supervisor noticed the wrong lanyard. Johns Supervisor told John to go get the right lanyard. However, Johns supervisor did not follow-up with John and make sure he carried out the order.
3. Once worked commenced an employee of the GC noticed John had the wrong lanyard. The employee told John he should change his lanyard and then informed the GC's site supervisor. The site supervisor then called John's supervisor to the trailer and informed him of the infraction.
4. About an hour after John was spoken to by the employee of the GC, he fell.
5. It was found that John fell after he unclipped from the horizontal lifeline to "move beyond" a stanchion in place to keep the horizontal lifeline taught. John was also carrying his impact hammer with attached hose. The hose became stuck on projecting steel and contributed to John losing his balance.

## Interviews:

Injured Employee (John): John was an evasive interview. He was very hesitant to answer questions. Very uncooperative with the investigator. However, John did identify that this was not the first time this type of thing had happened. In fact, just a couple of weeks before, he had forgotten his fall gear at home. John said he did not like the system that was being used. He thought it was “over the top.” When asked if he had been disciplined in the past for violating rules. He answered that he had, but nothing came of it. “I’m the best worker and highest skill they have. They don’t want to lose me.” When asked about his tenure and the possibility of being a bad example for new employees, John just shrugs. “Listen, I have a job to do and I get it done. This ain’t no place for little boys!”

Site Superintendent for Do It All Inc. (GC): The Superintendent expresses some frustration with the fall incident. He produces the “spreadsheet” record of safety violations. Some of the violations are for AJAX Iron Workers. And more to the point some are directly related to John’s activities. The superintendent says that John is a good worker, but is prone to shortcuts. He tries to give feedback to AJAX, but admits, this late in the process, any discipline to the subcontractor is likely not going to happen, as there just aren’t that many other entities that can do the job.

John Supervisor: John’s supervisor proved to be an interesting interview. He was clearly frustrated with John’s behavior. “He has gotten me in more hot water than you could shake a stick at!” he says, while wringing his hands. I wanted to fire him but the boss wouldn’t do it. It seems that he (John) will do what he wants to do but the boss just steps in when I want to do something.”

Owner of AJAX Iron Workers “the boss”: AJAX Iron Workers owner is not on site a lot. However he is aware of the things that go on there, either through the GC or John’s supervisor. It’s very clear that no management decision is made without his input, including disciplinary actions for employees. It also becomes very clear that as a former Iron Worker himself, he has real difficulty seeing discipline meted on any of his sites. When he does visit a site he always meets with his employees first and everyone else second. He says he values his employees above all and unequivocally believes they are good people “if sometimes misunderstood.”