

Safety – A Short Quiz

By Jim Walsh, Vineland Tree Care

MNLA COMMERCIAL ARBORISTS COMMITTEE

Mix and Match Quotes

- | | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| 1. "Knowledge is good" | A. Faber College (Animal House) |
| 2. "Safety, a benefit you give yourself" | B. One of my former employers. |
| 3. "Who you gonna call" | C. Ghostbusters |
| 4. "When you get to the fork in the road take it" | D. Yogi Bera |



Jim Walsh

Even though some quotes stick with us, thinking about safety planning as posting a banner on the wall in the shop is a lame attempt at a very serious issue for all green industry business owners. Quote-filled banners are not enough to drive the safety message home. Any real safety initiative requires a written plan and most importantly follow through.

For years the words, "Safety, a benefit you give yourself" greeted me from a banner hung on the wall at the entrance of my employer's work place. I have no idea how long that banner hung on the wall until I read it, or how many times I read it before it registered with me. After awhile, a long while, the phrase sank in as a simple basic truth. If I worked safely, I returned home uninjured, a benefit to me.

As a business owner, I still think safety is a benefit you give yourself. However I am unwilling to hang a banner on the wall and think the job is done. The job is done when the crew knows that there is always a better way to make the job site safer, even if there were no accidents. Lack of accidents does not mean we are working safely enough.

A common theme for most small companies is musing about how the big

companies handle every business issue. My experience is that the small companies handle most issues better than larger ones. The glaring exception is safety and more specifically safety planning. It seems safety planning requires that one more person who is never hired or assigned to create the safety plan, and more importantly make the plan live in the organization. For the past 17 years, Minnesota law has required every company in our industry to have a safety plan, and yet many of us still do not have an active safety plan.

To address this issue, all MNLA members are invited to join the MNLA Commercial Arborist Committee and the Minnesota Safety Council, and to attend the AWAIR (A Workplace Accident and Injury Reduction)

program meeting March 6th, 2008. In this short half day seminar your company will walk away with an actual written accident policy. Along the way you can comply with Minnesota law passed some 17 years ago requiring companies in our industry to have a written safety plan that addresses accident reduction.

Remember, "Safety First." □



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