



# THE SHIELD

Professional Excavators L.P. Employee Newsletter

DECEMBER 2008

Our **MISSION** at Professional Excavators L.P. is to  
lead Calgary's construction industry by:

- Providing core services such as excavation, demolition, water and sewer installation, infrastructure, and site management
- Backing these services with our strength of experience, cooperation, supervision, and project scheduling
- Delivering these services with excellence that is rooted in our corporate values of safety, self-reliance, and honesty
- Celebrating our long-term commitment to this community and all our stakeholders, including our employees, clients and suppliers, by operating with integrity and honour

## NEW JOBS

- Group Germaine- Site Services
- Strategic Group- Site Services
- TFDL @ U of C- Site Services

## RECENTLY BID ON:

- Trico Family Wellness Centre
- Wal-Mart Balzac- Site Services
- Stonegate Development- Earthworks and Site Services
- Moxies Chinook Centre- Site Services
- Consolidated Compressions- Water Line
- Emergency Operations Centre- Earthworks



## Employee Christmas Party

December 20, 2008 @ 7:00

AUSSIE RULES  
1002- 37<sup>th</sup> Street S.W.

Please remember to RSVP by December 5<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

## December Birthdays:

- Troy Bell- December 2
- Dennis Litchfield- December 9
- Jason Collings- December 15
- Steve Follis- December 18
- Kamaldeep Sandhu- December 19
- Peter Hospodarec- December 24

## New Employees:

- Trevor Rayner
- Ron Boyce
- Brett Morin



## CUSTOMER APPRECIATION NIGHT @ THE GLENCOE CLUB



From left to right: Peter Zolotas, Jose Tolosa, Ron Claxton, Jan Gryckiewicz, Sean Murphy, Wayne Mullen.



From left to right: Tracy Cross, Lindsay Mason

### PLEASE NOTE:

Company jackets have been ordered, but will not be delivered until the beginning of January. They will be dispersed as soon as they arrive.



## VICE PRESIDENTS MESSAGE:

Well, Christmas is upon us once again, the last time I checked my kids still believed in Santa Claus, and they're in University!! I hope Santa can do something about our struggling economy. When I read the newspaper and listen to the news it reminds me of the 1980's. Professional Excavators rode out the storm then and will once again ride out the storm in the months to come. The job tendering process is slowing down which means the other excavating contractors will be hungry as well. We hope our solid client base along with the excellent work you guys have provided to them, will be the deciding factor in any jobs that come in the future. I wish you all a good Christmas and drive safely through the holidays.



*Ron Claxton*

## Storehouse 39-3-10

WILL BE RUNNING THEIR

## ANNUAL CHRISTMAS DINNER DELIVERIES

**December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2008 at 9:00am**

Let's do our part and give back to those in need over the Holidays this year.

Contact **Lindsay Mason** in the office if you are interested in volunteering!



# Merit News

## CLAIMS FORMS and ACCOUNT INFORMATION

Visit Mercon Benefit Services' website at [www.merconbenefits.com](http://www.merconbenefits.com). You can access and print off blank health or dental claim forms by clicking on the Claim Forms tab on the first page. By clicking on the Great-West Life logo on the bottom of the first screen you can also print off a personalized claim form (your name, policy number and ID number will be automatically input onto the form). You will have to register the first time you access the Great-West Life website.

If you are a member of the Hour Bank benefit plan, you can also access your personal information, such as your registered dependants and the number of hours you have in your Hour Bank account, by entering your Username and Password on the first screen of the Mercon website. You received your Username and Password when you first became eligible for benefits. If you have misplaced your information, call Mercon Benefit Services.

## TRAVEL INSURANCE

Your Global Medical Assistance benefit provides coverage for medical emergencies while you are out of the country on vacation or business. The Merit Benefit Plan provides up to 60 days of coverage and provides a maximum of \$2,000,000.00 per incident in the case of an out-of-country medical emergency. For more information, or to obtain a Global Medical Assistance card to bring with you while you are travelling, contact Mercon Benefit Services.

## TOP 4 CONSTRUCTION HAZARDS

### FALLS:

- Wear and use personal fall-arrest equipment when working in elevated locations
- Install and maintain perimeter protection
- Use ladders and scaffolds safely

### CRUSHING ACCIDENTS:

- Never position yourself between a moving object and a fixed one.
- Always wear high-visibility clothes near equipment and vehicles.

### TRENCH FAILURES:

- Never enter an unprotected trench or excavation five feet deep or deeper without adequate protective system in place. (Some trenches under five feet may also need such a system.)
- Make sure the trench or excavation is protected either by sloping, shoring, benching, or trench shield systems.

### ELECTROCUTIONS:

- Locate and identify utilities before starting work.
- Look for overhead power lines when operating any equipment.
- Maintain a safe distance from power lines; learn the safe distance requirements.
- Do not operate portable electric tools unless they are grounded or double insulated.
- Use ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) for protection.
- Be alert to electrical hazards when working with ladders, scaffolds, or other platforms.

## SAFE WORK PROCEDURE- VEHICLE BOOSTING

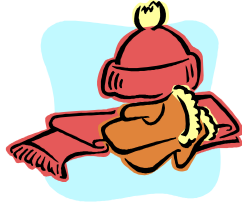
**PURPOSE:** The purpose of this practice is to establish the general requirements for protection of workers and equipment during vehicle boosting.

### **GENERAL:**

- Use extreme caution while boosting modern vehicles as damage to the computer control systems can occur. Check the vehicle owner's manual for specific instructions.
- Never smoke around batteries, as they produce hydrogen gas.
- Always attach the battery cable to the weak battery first.
- Never attempt to boost a frozen battery, it could explode.
- Never allow the opposite ends of the battery cables to touch when hooking up.
- Make the last connection to a ground, never to a battery.
- Disconnect the ground cable first when the engine starts.



# COLD WEATHER CONSTRUCTION



**A**lthough construction and cold weather aren't the best of companions, most projects don't stop in winter. The projects move ahead but often at a slower pace. Cold weather means adapting so work can go on.

Vehicles don't adapt well to winter, so we winterize them. Concrete work doesn't go well in winter, so we build protective shelters or enclose areas, heat the space, and then pour the concrete. Just as we winterize our equipment, machinery, and workspaces, we must winterize our employees. It is a mistake to assume your workers know the dangers of cold weather, and have the skills to protect themselves against it. The key is education.

## THE HAZARDS OF WINTER

Working in cold weather is a balancing act. Employees need to dress for the weather, have the dexterity to do their work, and do it safely. We must instruct our employees to recognize, eliminate, control, or avoid unsafe conditions. They must know and understand the OH&S and ALSA rules that apply to their work environment.

Most cold related injuries are a result of exposure to humidity, high winds, wet conditions, and inadequate clothing. When cold exposure lasts for more than an hour, cooling of the skin and reduced blood flow to the hands leads to blunted sensations of touch and pain, and loss of dexterity and agility. This can impair ability to perform manual tasks and lead to more severe cold injuries, since symptoms may go unnoticed.

Cold temperatures can also affect a worker's coordination and manual dexterity.

## DRESS FOR THE WEATHER

Water can conduct heat away from the body much faster than air of the same temperature. When clothing becomes wet due to rain, snow, slashing water, or accumulated sweat, the body's loss of heat accelerates. For example, when air temperature is 40 degrees Fahrenheit, heat loss in wet clothes is double what it is in dry clothes.

Cold weather clothing protection is based on the principles of insulation, layering, and ventilation. By understanding those principles, construction workers can vary their clothes to regulate protection and stay comfortable.

## SOME POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- ❖ Avoid tight clothes. They restrict the body's blood supply, and movements that warm the body.
- ❖ Don't overdress; keep the skin "a little cold all the time" to avoid overheating. Sweat reduces clothing insulation and cools down the body.
- ❖ Keeps hands covered. Mittens provide more insulation than gloves. To increase dexterity, wear gloves inside the mittens. Mittens can be removed and your hands are still protected.
- ❖ Keep the head covered. It loses up to 55 % of the body heat. Head protection conserves more body heat for hands and feet.
- ❖ Wear face protection only in extreme conditions. Temperature sensors on the face serve as thermostats that control the flow of blood to the hands and feet. A covered face inadvertently cuts down blood flow to extremities.
- ❖ Boots need to be large enough for insoles and heavy socks. The toecap should not pinch toes together inside the boot.

## PROPER FOOD AND CLOTHING

Although warm clothing and proper shelter are the first line of defense in protection against the effects of cold weather, adequate food and water consumption are next in importance. You must insist that employees eat on time, that the food is hot, and that it is preferably eaten in a heated room.

Inadequate nutrition compromises the body's response to cold and the ability to recognize and react appropriately to the symptoms of developing cold injury.

Dehydration is a serious problem for cold weather work. Five or six quarts of water should be consumed daily. Urine is a good indicator of dehydration. The lighter the color the better hydrated a worker is. Dark yellow urine is a sure sign indicator that fluid consumption should be increased.

## COLD INJURY RISK FACTORS

- ❖ **Poor Conditioning**-causes workers to tire more quickly and are unable to keep warm as long as fit workers.
- ❖ **Alcohol**-and to lesser extent caffeine, causes the blood vessels in the skin to open. This may accelerate body heat loss. Also alcohol and caffeine both increase urine formation, leading to dehydration. This can further degrade the body's defenses against cold. Most importantly, alcohol blunts the senses and impairs judgment. A person may not feel the signs and symptoms of developing cold injuries.
- ❖ **Nicotine**-decreases blood flow to the skin. Smoking or chewing tobacco can increase susceptibility to frostbite.