

When I last wrote, we were about to embark on two drains simultaneously in Texas. As you should all know by now, there were some issues. On the one job, the client had the frit pit lined with timber and the backhoe ended up digging into the timber. Wood splinters entered the recycle system and eventually clogged pumps causing shutdowns. After several stops to address clogging and pump changes, a serious injury occurred to Ryan Nelson when a fitting failed on a hose. I just saw Ryan today and he is recovering nicely. Ultimately, that drain was aborted when the furnace bottom failed resulting in major glass leaks to the basement. The details of the accident and the drain issues will be discussed tomorrow in a drain improvement meeting here in Lexington. The accident report is in the log-in section of the website.

In addition to that accident, we had another injury on a steel job when a Tech jumped down from a truck bed and rolled his ankle. He eventually ended up getting an x-ray and learned that he had a broken bone.

Hotwork went 11.5 months injury free in 2013 but we ended up with two recordable injuries (one lost time, one restricted work). We need to learn from these incidents in order to prevent similar events in the future. Corrective actions are implemented for the hose fitting issue. Individual behavior (step vs jump) and fitness are the main countermeasures for the broken ankle event.

Prior to the drains, Larry was able to enjoy a holiday meal with each of the crews. Here are a couple of photos from those events. I hope that everyone had a good holiday season and I wish you a Happy New Year.





Also toward year end we had an unfortunate replay of a “fitness for work” incident at the same location as a previous incident. A Tech showed up for an announced morning drug/alcohol test and failed to meet standard. When incidents like this happen, one has to wonder about mornings when a test isn’t expected.

Another incident that occurred recently luckily resulted in neither injury nor significant property damage. Our crew set up a burner in an aluminum furnace door and asked the client about lockout for the door movement. The client said that it was not necessary to lock out the door function. While firing, a fork truck driver hit a remote control button and caused the door to stroke. Our burner was dislodged and it stayed lit while being redirected outside the furnace. Quick action by the crew prevented a more significant event. The crew’s instincts were right in pursuing a lockout on the door movement. In the case of a client who doesn’t see the hazard, I think we have no choice but to be more insistent while pointing out the safety hazard.

Most of our Technicians develop good relationships with other project participants while working onsite with them for a period. Our sales force is always trying to find “the right guy” to contact for information about some future projects. Is there a way for the network of field people known to our Techs to be made available to our sales people who are often hitting a brick wall trying to get to “the right guy”? We are often successful if we can get to just one of the key participants in a major project – furnace designer, general contractor, refractory installer, refractory inspector, etc. If you’re hearing about a future project from somebody in

the field, don't hesitate to give the info to the Industry Manager or sales person. The contact you make could be important.

Finally, I wanted to make everyone aware of the Hotwork Mission Statement. This statement was derived from a brainstorming session at a recent management meeting. You can find this statement in the public portion of our website under "About Us". Hotwork's Mission is:

- ***To meet or exceed client expectations while providing specialized services in support of their operations, and to exhibit dedication, integrity and safe practices as we pursue excellence in our chosen fields.***

2014 is starting off with fairly brisk sales activity. Let's hope that it continues. We need to redouble our efforts on safety in order to achieve our goal of working injury free this year.

Tom