

# SAFETY MATTERS

JULY/AUGUST 2024

## FULL STOP FOR SAFETY

### Standing firm when danger exists is always the right move

In mid-August, a customer had asked the GEM millwright team in Northeast Ohio to remove a series of cabinets from an elevated platform.

Before the GEM team began work, they inspected the work area and discussed their options for material rigging and staging once the cabinets were removed. Upon their inspection, the millwright team found a live 480v electrical panel below the elevated cabinets.

Foreman **Jeremy Rosen** stopped the work and contacted the customer's maintenance team about shutting down the 480v panel and locking it out.

But the customer had refused to shut down their main power source because it would shut down production.

The millwright team stood firm until the customer followed GEM's rules and regulations about controlling energized equipment.

The team conducted a group lock out/tag out with the customer's maintenance team to ensure the energy source was controlled until work was completed.

**'As a GEM associate, you have the responsibility and authority to STOP WORK IMMEDIATELY if you become aware of an unsafe act or condition that could place anyone in danger, or if you are not confident in the safety work plan.'**

— **Steve Johnson**  
GEM Inc. President

## RLI FIRST AID INSTRUCTION

### Associates learn what to do in common emergency situations

RLI associates are being instructed how to recognize medical emergencies such as heart attacks, issues affecting diabetics, allergic reactions, strokes and bleeding, among others.

Conducted by RLG Paramedic **Deb Gacsal**, the instruction focuses on what immediately needs to be done in an emergency.

First and foremost is the call to 911. But there are other things you can do to help people having a serious medical issue before professional help arrives.

"Calling 911 gets emergency responders on the way so it should be one of the first things done. The more quickly help reaches a person, the better chance of survival," Gacsal said.

Associates learned how to recognize the warning signs of a heart attack, which include discomfort or pain in the center or left side of the chest which spreads to the arms, shoulder, neck and jaw. Associates learned how to perform CPR and use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Fast recognition of the signs of a stroke can make the difference between recovery and life-altering disability or death. Look for signs including weakness of the face, arm or leg, especially on one side of the body. Look for difficulty speaking and ask the person if they have numbness anywhere.



Field associates **Ronnie Bielawski** and **Josh Emans** practice CPR. RLI associates also learned how to use an Automated External Defibrillator (AED).

Diabetics can exhibit low blood sugar symptoms if they have not had enough to eat. Ask them where they have their emergency sugar supply. Most Type 1 diabetics carry something sugary in case their blood sugar levels fall too low. In many cases, that's all that needs to be done. When in doubt, call 911.

Allergic reactions such as those from bee stings can be life-threatening. Signs include hives, swelling, itchiness, widespread redness and a constricted airway. Gacsal demonstrated the technique for using an auto-injector (Epi Pen) to administer epinephrine.

Each RLI associate completing the course is offered a Hepatitis B vaccine at no cost. Hepatitis B is an infection of the liver caused by a virus and transmitted through contact with an infected person's body fluids. In chronic cases, hepatitis B can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer or scarring.

## HIDDEN UTILITIES

### There are steps to take to avoid striking a utility line

Utility strikes can be deadly or cause serious injuries. Doing everything possible to prevent them is a company-wide priority.

RLI conducted a review of a recent incident where a water line was struck by a trade partner. There were no injuries and a fix was immediately made. Knowing what is underneath the work area is important to prevent a serious injury or incident. Utility strikes can also delay projects and add substantially to the cost.

Associates should follow the RLI Utility Locating Procedure. A Notice of Excavation and an Owner Utility Location Request letter must be completed before any digging, drilling for soil borings, or excavation occurs.

Associates should consider having utility locating contractors scan or hydro-excavate ("pot-holing") areas where there may be concerns.

## DWAYNE JENKINS JOINS RLI AS SAFETY DIRECTOR

**Dwayne Jenkins** has joined RLI and will be assigned as Safety Director based in Walbridge.



Jenkins, who has more than 17 years of safety experience in the construction industry, will initially engage with current Safety and Field Operations staff

to learn our safety systems, procedures and safety culture as an extended orientation through the end of the year.

Jenkins will work concurrently with RLI Safety Director **Mark Hoffman**. In the future, Jenkins will assume sole responsibility for managing and supporting our comprehensive safety programs.

## FIND-IT, FIX-IT: A VISIBLE COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

Here are the best FIFIs for May and June:

### **GEM June** (Two FIFIs/\$317 gift card each.)

- An associate saw a worker trying to use a makeshift fall arrest. The associate stopped work, informed the worker that it was insufficient and had the worker get a proper fall arrest system.
- An associate noticed an 80-pound section of decking plate ready to fall off a platform. The connecting hardware had broken free and the plate would have fallen about 8 feet into a walkway, potentially hitting a person or process equipment. The associate notified plant operations to put red tape around the area and submitted an emergency repair plan notification.

### **RLI June** (Two FIFIs/\$445 gift card each.)

- After assembling a solar panel lifter, an associate noticed two of the four legs that stabilize the rig when it is not in use were in the way of the skid steer tracks. The associate contacted the supplier and submitted a new design. The supplier modified and fabricated new legs. The new legs were installed and are no longer in the way of the skid steer tracks.
- A GEM associate at an RLI worksite noticed two workers who were not tied-off while working on top of a bathroom building about one foot from the leading edge. The associate stopped the work and asked them to come down. They discussed how to safely tie off and obtained the appropriate fall protection to complete their work.

### **GEM May** (Seven FIFIs/\$60 gift card each.)

- A worker was preparing to use a grinder without a face shield. An associate provided the worker with a face shield.
- A worker was standing on the top rung of a ladder. An associate instructed the

worker to come down and reminded the worker of the danger of standing on the top rung.

- An associate was using a cutting wheel without a face shield. Another associate reminded the worker of the danger and had the worker put on a face shield.
- A worker was 25 feet in the air on a lift without a harness. An associate explained that it was a major safety concern to be working at height without proper fall protection.
- An associate was running an aerial lift without a harness. Another associate stopped the work and instructed the worker about proper fall protection.
- A trade partner was using a boom lift without a harness. The associate stopped work and had the worker put on proper fall protection.
- A worker was in a lift using a Metabo and was not tied off or using a face shield. The associate stopped work and informed the worker of the need for a face shield and to be tied off when performing work.

### **RLI May**

(Two FIFIs/\$467 gift card each.)

- An associate noticed unprotected all-thread rod penetrating approximately 16 inches beyond the masonry wall at chest level. The associate wrapped tape around the ends to protect from an impalement hazard and hung caution tape ribbons so the all threads were visible.
- Two workers were working on a roof and were both tied off to a conduit. An associate asked them to come down to discuss safe tie-off points with the safety professional on-site.

## THANK YOU FOR WORKING SAFELY



GEM ironworkers cut diamond plate at the nearly completed Rolled Alloys facility in Monclova Township, Ohio. GEM millwrights are also busy moving machinery from the firm's Temperance, Michigan, facility to the new building.