News Information

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**IGMA Glass Safety Awareness Council Shares Best Practices, Guidance for Preventing Workplace Injuries**

SCHAUMBURG, IL— Mike Burk ([Sparklike](https://www.sparklike.com/en/)) gave a presentation on workplace safety at the 2019 Joint American Architectural Manufacturers Association (AAMA) and Insulating Glass Manufacturers Alliance (IGMA) Summer Conferences in Victoria, BC (June 17-20). Burk is the Chair of the IGMA Glass Safety Awareness Council and has worked in the technical and training areas of the insulating glass industry for over 25 years.

While refraining from offering any identifying details in terms of individuals or companies, Burk described recent workplace fatalities and offered suggestions for preventing similar incidents. This past April, an Ontario worker was crushed after entering the barrier enclosure to troubleshoot a machine. In May 2019, a 24-year-old in Virginia was loading glass onto a truck and was killed after several hundred pounds of glass fell on him. In each of these examples, safety protocols were not followed.

“A 24-year-old shouldn't go to work in the morning and not come home at night,” said Burk. “No one should die at work in this day and age. It shouldn’t happen anymore.”

To this end, Burk stressed the importance of having written policies for safety and enforcing them diligently across all levels of the company. He also offered clarification related to OSHA safety incentive programs, warning that if the incentive is great enough that the prospect of losing it dissuades reasonable workers from reporting injuries, the program could backfire.

“Reward improvements, not cover-ups,” said Burk.

Other tips Burk offered included:

* Ensure that personal protective equipment (PPE) not only fits properly (especially for women who may have smaller frames) but is used.
* Define the company’s cell phone policy - make it fair and equitable. If phones are not allowed on the factory floor, that rule should be applied universally, from factory workers to management.
* Train maintenance employees on how all machines operate, including the related software.
* Look out constantly for unauthorized equipment alterations. If a machine has duct tape, rope or wire on it, it is broken and must be fixed.
* Have a policy for drug and alcohol use and enforce it consistently for everyone.

Having a workforce that believes in safety and prioritizes it is crucial, said Burk.

“Get rid of the people who don't care about safety,” he said. “And, if you see something unsafe, don't wait; stop it now.”

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