



# JMT & Associates, LLC

*Human Resources & Safety Consulting*

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## PEOPLE POINTERS

Volume 11, Issue 3 July 2014

### \*\*\* NEWS \*\*\*

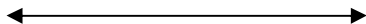
#### COBRA Notices

Now available are updates to model notices that employers must provide to employees, informing workers of their eligibility to continue health care coverage through the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA).

The Department of Labor (DOL) released a new model general notice form and model election notice form for providing COBRA notices to employees and a related notice of proposed rulemaking on the COBRA notice requirements. Also released is an updated model notice regarding premium assistance.

The updated notices make it clear to workers that if they are eligible for COBRA continuation coverage when leaving a job, they may choose to instead purchase coverage through the Affordable Care Act's (ACA) Health Insurance Marketplace.

The model notices can be found at the Department of Labor's website - [www.dol.gov](http://www.dol.gov).

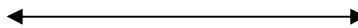


#### FLSA Cases Rising

Federal wage and hour lawsuits filed under the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) are on the rise. 2014 is the seventh straight year of increases in these cases.

According to the Federal Judicial Center a total of 8,126 cases were filed during the 12-month period preceding March 2014.

Are you ready for a FLSA audit?



#### New Books by Dr. Turner

#### *"Office Safety - Hidden Dangers"*

#### *Book A*

Safety is Priority Number One. Safety First. Think Safety. Always Work Safely. Safety slogans like these are very common. Companies want to provide a safe workplace for their employees. No one wants to have an accident.

When you think of workplace safety, what types of businesses do you think of? Construction,

factories, manufacturing, saw mills, logging, commercial fishing, foundries . . . office workers.

Even though we don't normally associate safety with office workers, there are hazards and health concerns associated with working in an office environment. Serious accidents can and do occur.

In this resource, information is provided for the following office safety topics:

- Slips, Trips, and Falls.
- Office Lighting.
- Housekeeping.
- Ergonomics.
- Back Injury and Safe Lifting.
- Office Equipment.
- Electrical Safety.
- Chemical Safety.
- Material Handling and Storage.
- Air Quality and Ventilation.

You will learn what the hazards are, how to recognize the hazards, and how to avoid an injury.

This resource provides the following tools:

- Real-life office accident scenarios.
- The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards that apply to an office.



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- Office safety tips.
- Office safety checklist (audit form).

### **Book B**

Working in an office environment is safe, right? You might be surprised by the number of employees that suffer an injury while working in an office.

Most office accidents are minor, but you could have a serious accident that results in time off from work.

Every office employee has responsibilities for safety. These responsibilities include having the knowledge to identify office safety hazards and working in a manner to avoid causing an injury either to themselves or a co-employee.

In this resource information is provided for the following office safety topics.

- Noise.
- Emergencies in the Office.
- Stress.
- Office Furniture.
- Workplace Violence.
- Germs in the Office.
- Getting Hit—Ouch!
- Bloodborne Pathogens.
- Reporting Accidents and Near Misses.
- Employee Safety Training.

You will learn what the hazards are, how to recognize the hazards, and how to avoid an injury.

This resource includes the following tools:

- Real-life accident scenario.
- Office safety tips.
- Office safety checklist (audit form).
- Sample employee safety training topic agenda.
- The components of a typical emergency action plan.
- Stress relieving exercises you can do at your desk.

These two books are available at [www.jmt-associates.com](http://www.jmt-associates.com).



### **Compliance Review Checklists**

Checking key components of your human resources and safety programs is important to maintaining an effective and up-to-date management program.

In each issue we will present a checklist of human resources, general industry safety and construction safety key components.

Please take a few minutes to check your compliance with the components that apply to your business.

#### **Human Resources Checklist**

- ✓ The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. It guarantees equal opportunity for individuals

with disabilities. An employer is required to go through an interactive process with the applicant or employee to determine reasonable accommodation. Take the time to develop and review your interactive process.

- ✓ When using employees from a temporary agency, you should develop and implement a written agreement that describes the specific relationship, including responsibilities to comply with the various labor regulations.

- ✓ Personnel files should be stored in a locked cabinet. A checklist for each employee classification should be developed to ensure that the file contents are consistent and complete. Documents should be kept according to the specific standard that applies. Review your files to determine if they contain any records that are not permitted to be stored in a personnel file.

#### **General Industry Safety Checklist**

- ✓ Safety related work practices shall be employed to prevent electric shock or other injuries resulting from either direct or indirect electrical contacts, when work is performed near or on equipment or circuits that are or may be energized.
- ✓ Electrical safety related work practices cover both qualified persons (those who have



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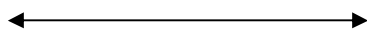
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training in avoiding the electrical hazards of working on or near exposed energized parts) and unqualified persons (those with little or no such training).

- ✓ There must be written lockout and tagout procedures.

### **Construction Safety Checklist**

- ✓ The employer shall provide training to all employees who might be exposed to fall hazards.
- ✓ The employer shall assure that each employee has been trained by a competent person who is qualified in the nature of fall hazards in the work area, the correct procedures for erecting and maintaining, disassembling and inspecting the fall protection systems to be used, the roles of each employee and the standards issued by OSHA concerning fall protection.
- ✓ A firefighting program is to be followed throughout all phases of construction and demolition work. It shall provide for effective firefighting equipment to be available without delay and designed to effectively meet all fire hazards as they occur.



## **Employee Compensation Management**

By: John M. Turner, Ph.D.,  
President

### Part 14

### **Pay Compression**

A major problem you may face is called pay compression. This occurs when the pay difference among employees with different levels of experience and performance become small. The major reason this occurs involves situations in which labor market pay levels increase more rapidly than current employee's pay adjustments.

In response to shortages of particular job skills in a highly competitive labor market, you may occasionally have to pay higher amounts to hire people with those scarce resources. To combat this issue, some companies will use a step progression based on length of service. This assumes, of course, that the employee's performance is meeting or exceeding the established job expectations.

### **Determining Pay Increases**

Pay increase decisions are a critical component of the supervisor/employee relationship. Your employees will make a determination as to whether they perceive their pay increase as fair. There are several ways to determine pay increases. These include performance, seniority, cost-of-living adjustments and lump-sum increases. These

methods can be used separately or in combination.

### **Pay Adjustment Matrix**

It is important to develop and apply pay adjustments equally. One method of accomplishing this is to use a pay adjustment matrix. Pay adjustments are based in part on an employee's compa-ratio. This is calculated by dividing the pay level by the midpoint of the pay range. Let's look at two examples:

$$\frac{\text{(Current Pay) } \$16.50}{\text{(Midpoint) } \$15.00} \times$$

$$100 = 110$$

$$\frac{\text{(Current Pay) } \$13.05}{\text{(Midpoint) } \$15.00} \times$$

$$100 = 87$$

The compa-ratios are 110 and 87.

An employee's placement on your salary guide chart determines what pay raise he or she should receive. For example, an employee with an "exceeding expectations" rating and an 87 compa-ratio would be eligible for a percent increase based on your salary guide chart.

The salary guide chart is developed so an employee must exhibit higher performance to obtain the same percentage raise as those lower in the range performing at the "meets performance expectations" level.

Your chart should be developed to reflect your specific pay-for-



performance policy and your company's pay philosophy.

### **Seniority**

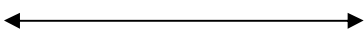
Seniority is the time spent in a company or on a particular job. Seniority is often used as a basis for pay increases. Pay adjustments based on seniority often are set as automatic steps once an employee has been employed the required length of time. Most programs require performance to be at least "satisfactory" in order to receive a raise.

### **Cost-of-Living Adjustment (COLAs)**

This type of pay adjustment is usually tied to changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This program allows all employees to receive a pay increase regardless of individual performance.

*This article will continue in our next newsletter edition.*

**Note: Previous articles are available on our website.**



## **10 Ways To Simplify Your Life**

By: Nick Dillon, MAED  
Independent Human Resources and Safety Consultant

These days, it's easy to get overwhelmed by an overly complicated life. If you're looking for ways to gain control

over your life or your current situation, consider simplifying.

Simplifying your life can mean cutting unnecessary to-do list items, eliminating clutter from your home, fine-tuning your priorities, or otherwise gaining perspective on what truly matters to you.

**You can use these strategies to simplify your life, beginning today:**

### **1. Identify what's most important to you and then get rid of everything else.**

Know what really matters the most to you. Things that don't matter are simply wasting your time and energy, so purge them as soon as you can.

### **2. Make a list of the top 4-5 priorities in your life.**

Keep this list with you all the time so you always remember what counts the most. Put a copy on your bathroom mirror, another above your bed, and keep one in your wallet for good measure.

### **3. Evaluate your current commitments.**

Look at absolutely everything going on in your life right now. Which of these commitments actually deliver value or joy? Which are in line with the 4-5 priorities you listed in the previous step? Eliminate everything else.

### **4. Assess how you spend your time.**

How are you spending your time? Make a list of everything you do in a day and compare that to your list of priorities. What can you eliminate?

### **5. Simplify your work tasks.**

Rather than trying to knock off every single task on your to-do list, *focus on only the most essential tasks and then find ways to eliminate all the others.* To do this, you can try delegation, outsourcing, moving them to other days or simply dropping them.

### **6. Simplify your home tasks.**

Repeat the above process with your home tasks, removing the things that you're not reasonably going to accomplish in a day. Simplify your list of home tasks by automating, delegating, outsourcing and removing anything that doesn't fall in line with what's most important.

### **7. Learn to say no.**

When you learn to say no, you'll begin to take on only as much as you can handle. Then you can give your attention to the tasks that matter the most.

### **8. Limit your consumption of media.**

The abundance of media available today can overwhelm nearly every second of our lives. Try to simplify your own life by limiting media and information consumption whenever possible.



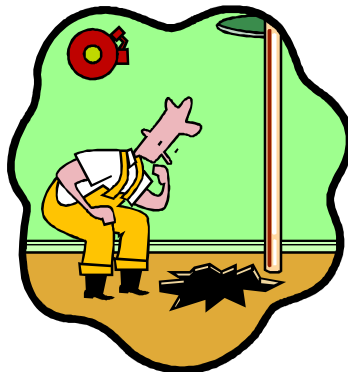
**9. Be selective with your methods of communication.**

Designate certain times for communication by only e-mailing at certain points in the day, only using the phone during certain hours, only chatting via IM in your off-hours and so on. Limit the ways that you communicate throughout the day to prevent communication from overwhelming you or your day.

**10. Purge unnecessary stuff.**

Devote one weekend every month to getting rid of absolutely anything that you don't want or need in your life. ***Removing everything that doesn't really matter can be therapeutic and cathartic.*** Purging your home and your life once monthly is a really beneficial process to your overall health and well-being.

This is only a small sampling of the things that you can do in order to simplify your life. Consider this to be a foundation, though, that will guide you to find new and interesting ways to create a simple life. With just a little conscious effort, you can achieve simplicity in all aspects of your life.



**Anticipate Accidents**

By: Safety Division

One of the key words in accident prevention is "anticipate." By anticipating what could happen, it is possible to take safety steps to prevent an accident or near-miss. One of the steps we can take is to investigate all near-miss accidents. We should always be on the lookout for unsafe practices and for accidents that do not result in injury. Injury analyses proves that, in the average case, for every mishap resulting in an injury there are many other similar accidents that cause no injuries. The next "big" accident could be right around the corner.

So we see that accidents do not have to result in injury. But, they are strong indications that something is wrong. If not remedied in time, they may very well result in a major lost-time injury.

We know that accidents without personal injury, however minor they may be, occur frequently. They have the same causes as personal injury accidents, and they can be prevented in the same ways. They are expensive and add to the cost of production. Preventing these accidents is important.

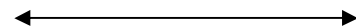
When an accidental injury does occur, unsafe practices probably had previously been committed. There probably had also been previous narrow escapes. If you stumble, fall, and sustain an injury, chances are that this was not the first time that you stumbled and fell or the first time you just stumbled.

How many times do we have to have a near-miss before we get the message? If we really believe in safety and want to avoid personal injury, one near-miss should be enough.

Near-misses or no-injury accidents, as well as injuries, must be investigated. Report all accidents to your supervisor. If you do not, eventually the law of averages will catch up with you - changing that near-miss into a serious injury.

Let us try and anticipate what could happen by being aware of near-misses and reporting them. In this way we all can play a big part in preventing accidents.

Everyone must do their part to prevent job site accidents.





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### **Control the Hazards Created by Compressed Gas Cylinders on the Job Site**

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Part 3

#### **Moving Cylinders**

Never drag, slide or roll a cylinder; use a cylinder cart or basket.

Always have the protective cap covering the valve when transporting the cylinder.

Never transport the cylinder with the regulator in place.

Make sure the cylinder is secured to the cart before moving it.

Do not drop cylinders or strike them against each other or against other surfaces violently.

Do not use the valve cover to lift cylinders; they could be damaged and become unattached. If the cylinder is dropped on a hard surface it can cause an explosion.

*This article will continue in our next newsletter edition.*

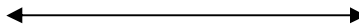
**Note: Previous articles are available on our website.**

### **SURVEY**

#### **Fewer Increases In Global Comp**

In a recent survey, 44 percent of 778 executives questioned reported a rise in total compensation at their organization during the past year compared to around 58 percent the previous year.

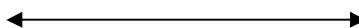
Source:  
Association of Executive Search Consultants, New York



### **INTERESTING FACT**

Organization's overall spending on employee training climbed 15 percent to an average of \$1,169 per learner in 2013.

Source:  
Bersin by Deloitte, Oakland, California



### **SERVICE UPDATES**

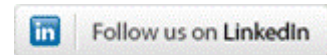
#### **The JMT Network Program**

The JMT Network Program is up and running. Please visit [www.jmt-associates.com](http://www.jmt-associates.com) (Click on the link located on the left-hand side of the home page.) to read about the latest developments.

#### **Social Media**

JMT & Associates, LLC is on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, Google+ and Skype.

Please visit us at the following social media sites:



[www.linkedin.com/company/jmt-&-associates-llc](http://www.linkedin.com/company/jmt-&-associates-llc)



[www.twitter.com/JMTHR](http://www.twitter.com/JMTHR)



[www.facebook.com/pages/JMT-Associates-LLC/144214645671881](http://www.facebook.com/pages/JMT-Associates-LLC/144214645671881)

#### **SKYPE: JMT-001**



<https://plus.google.com/117077074727697779296>

#### **Mechanical Power Presses**

Do you have a mechanical power press? As you know,



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mechanical power presses can be very dangerous. The OSHA standard is complicated and can be confusing. We can perform a comprehensive safety audit and determine if you have any safety hazards and if you are complying with the OSHA standard.

### **Monthly HR & Safety Programs**

JMT & Associates, LLC offers a monthly HR program and a monthly safety program specifically designed for the small business. A comprehensive, customized program is offered for low monthly payments.

### **Construction Safety Training**

JMT & Associates, LLC offers the OSHA 10 hour and 30 hour construction industry outreach training programs.

### **Educational Books**

**John M. Turner, Ph.D. has written the following books:**

*“The Employee Hiring Process – Who Are You Hiring?”*

This book is an employer’s guide to knowing who you are hiring – before it is too late.

This is a must have book for anyone who is hiring employees. You will learn how to hire your next great employee.

This book comes with a workbook to help you practice and understand the process of hiring employees.

All the sample hiring forms and policies are included so you can customize them for your company.

*“How Are Your Employees Performing? Employee Performance Appraisals – Book 1.”*

*“How Are Your Employees Performing? Employee Performance Appraisals – Book 2.”*

*“Interviewing for Success – Finding the “Right” Person – Book 1.”*

*“Interviewing for Success – Finding the “Right” Person – Book 2.”*

*“Office Safety - Hidden Dangers - Book A.”*

*“Office Safety - Hidden Dangers - Book B.”*

Please visit our website at [www.jmt-associates.com](http://www.jmt-associates.com) or send us an email for additional information.



## **ABOUT US**

**JMT & Associates, LLC** is a full service Human Resources (HR) and safety solutions provider. We partner with small, mid-size, and large companies to develop and improve HR processes and procedures.

We offer extensive "real-world" experience in a variety of industries, including manufacturing, service, union, union-free, profit, not-for-profit, private, and public sectors.

Our level of involvement ranges from complete management of your HR needs to providing project-based assistance to your in-house HR person, depending on your specific business requirements. These services range from basic policy development to in-depth HR strategic planning.

We begin with a comprehensive HR assessment of your current policies and procedures, then we provide a detailed analysis and a "roadmap of recommendations" to maximize your HR investment. We then provide the necessary follow-up to ensure process effectiveness.



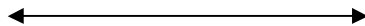
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### Areas of Expertise:

- Coaching & Leadership Development
- Compensation & Benefits
- HR & Safety Compliance
- Employee Handbooks
- Employee Relations
- General HR Practices
- HR Assessments
- HR Policies & Procedures
- HR Strategy & Planning
- Labor Relations
- Organizational Development
- Performance Management
- Job Analysis
- Job Descriptions
- Employee Assessments
- OSHA Written Programs
- OSHA Audits
- OSHA Citation Abatement
- HR & Safety Training Courses



### **ABOUT THIS NEWSLETTER**

**Legal Note:** JMT & Associates, LLC provides services in conformance with best practices of the human resource (HR) profession, but is NOT engaged in rendering legal advice or services. While implementation of effective HR management programs and systems significantly reduces potential legal liability, should legal assistance be required the company is advised to utilize the services of a competent legal professional.

While the information in this newsletter has been compiled

from sources and documents believed to be reliable, its accuracy is not guaranteed, nor is any responsibility assumed or implied for any damage or loss resulting from inaccuracies or omissions.

**Guest Authors:** Articles written by guest authors express their own views and information. JMT & Associates, LLC in no way endorses or is responsible in any way for the content or views of their articles.

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