



# JMT & Associates, LLC

## *Human Resources & Safety Consulting*

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## PEOPLE POINTERS

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### Are Your Employees Protected?

*If you utilize electricity at your facility – don't skip this article.*

#### **NFPA 70E – Standard for Electrical Safety in the Workplace**

What is NFPA 70E? It is a standard developed by the Technical Committee on electrical safety in the workplace and acted upon by the National Fire and Protection Agency. It applies to all industries and facilities that use electricity above 50 volts.

One of the components of this standard that we are hearing more and more about is the arc flash. An arc flash is a violent unexpected release of energy when powered conductors are shorted. Arc flashes can be deadly!

OSHA does not, per se, enforce this standard, however OSHA considers it a recognized industry practice. The employer is required to conduct an assessment of workplace hazards in accordance with CFR 1910.132 (d)(1). OSHA will issue citations under the General Duty Clause. Employers are responsible for protecting their employees from all electrical hazards.

This standard is far too complex to fully explain in an article of this nature. Listed below are some of the key components:

- Electrical one-line diagram.
- Hazard analysis.
- Establishing relevant safety boundaries.
- Labeling.
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Safety program.
- Electrical preventive maintenance program.
- Employee training.

An electrical accident can happen at any time. Some of the common causes include:

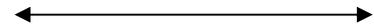
- Accidental contact with electrical systems.
- Dropped tools or equipment.
- Corrosion.
- Build-up of conductive dust.
- Equipment break-down/failure.
- Improper work practices.

**Remember:** This standard is not just for “electricians.” In certain circumstances it can apply to your machine operators.

Do you open an electrical panel box to turn your plant lights on and off?

Are you in compliance and protecting your employees from

electrical hazards at your work site?



### Got Dust?

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has published an extensive list of products that when processed in powdered form may lead to a “Combustible Dust” explosion. The major categories of materials, products and dusts include:

- Agricultural products.
- Agricultural dusts.
- Carbonaceous dusts.
- Chemical dusts.
- Metal dusts.
- Plastic dusts.
- Wood dusts.

All employers should review their processes for potential hazards. The Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS) is an excellent source of information. Caution should be used because all MSDSs may not contain all the necessary information.

After conducting a comprehensive assessment, an effective dust control program will include the following key components:

- Dust control measures.
- Ignition control measures.
- Prevention measures.



- Protective measures.

You may be producing hazardous dust and not even know it!

Give us a call if you would like a copy of the complete list of potentially hazardous products and materials.



## **Employee Performance Appraisals – Part 5**

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

*This article continues our series on employee performance appraisals. Previous articles have appeared in our past newsletters and can be found on our website.*

In this article we will continue our discussion on employee performance appraisals. We will discuss the remaining three methods of who conducts the appraisal.

### **Employees rating themselves**

In some situations this method works very effectively. It forces employees to think about their strengths and weaknesses and to set goals for their improvement. It is a self-development tool. In situations where employees work in isolation or possess unique skills, the employee themselves may be the only one qualified to do the appraisal. The concern with this method is that most employees will rate

themselves using a different standard than that of the supervisor. The research is mixed on whether employees actually are more lenient or demanding on themselves. This method can be a useful source of performance information for employee development.

### **Outside sources rating employees**

This method calls on people outside of the employee's immediate work group to conduct the appraisal. Some examples include: Human Resources representative, customers, and clients. Although good information can be gathered from these sources, caution must be exercised when using this method. Many times, the outside source may not be able to give a fair and job-related appraisal.

### **Multi-source**

Multi-source appraisals are sometimes referred to as 360° feedback. This method is starting to become more popular. Companies are realizing that employee performance is multi-dimensional and crosses departmental, organizational, and even global boundaries. The major purpose of this method is not to increase uniformity by soliciting like-minded views. But rather, it is to capture evaluations of the employee's different roles. Some of the common participants include:

- Managers
- Customers
- Co-workers
- Subordinates
- Employees themselves

One of the obvious drawbacks of this method is the increased administrative time and paperwork to request, obtain, and summarize feedback from numerous people. There are now several web-based systems available that can significantly reduce this burden.

One of the major advantages of this method is its focus on employee development. Some of the key focus areas include:

- Conflict resolution skills
- Decision-making abilities
- Team effectiveness
- Communication skills
- Managerial styles
- Technical capabilities

The employee's supervisor is still responsible to receive the feedback and to discuss the results with their employee.

Employers must anticipate potential problems with this method. Some of the more common problems include:

- Differences among raters can present a challenge.
- Bias among the raters.
- "Inflation" effect – if raters know their scores will affect pay.
- Issues of confidentiality.

What is the research showing us regarding this new method? It is



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both positive and negative. There can be more variability than expected in the ratings given by different sources. Supervisor's ratings should carry more weight than peer and subordinate input to resolve the differences. Another concern is that those peers who rate poor performing co-workers tend to inflate the ratings of those people, so that the peers themselves can get higher overall evaluation results.

Do 360° appraisals really create better decisions that offset the additional time and investment required? Are employees fairly evaluated using this method? Does this method help create a positive image of the overall appraisal program?

These are some of the questions still unanswered. As time goes on, additional research will help determine the true value of 360° appraisals.



### **Material Safety**

By: Vicki Hershey  
Independent Safety Consultant



#### **Employer's Responsibility:**

As an employer, you are responsible for training and enforcing RTK (Right To Know) laws for all employees. MSDSs, Material Safety Data Sheets, must be on-site and available for all hazardous materials at your facility. Employers are responsible to ensure proper material handling and labeling requirements are understood and implemented.

If hazardous materials are on-site, you must follow all guidelines for training, handling, labeling, disposal and regulatory reporting requirements. Employers must ensure any hazardous waste is handled, stored, labeled, disposed, and reported also.

All OSHA required training must have a written plan that meets the minimum regulatory requirements. It is beneficial to have pre-testing and post-testing to ensure employees understand, and retain information. All training and testing should have a sign-in sheet for your records. This information should be kept for a minimum of five (5) years. Any incident where an employee does not follow company guidelines must be documented with corrective action to protect you as an employer. Exposure records must be kept for life, all other incident records must be kept for the life of employee, plus thirty (30) years.

Monthly inspections must be performed on: eyewash stations, safety showers, fire extinguishers, fire alarm

stations, spill kits, and emergency exits. Professionals must inspect fire extinguishers annually. Spill kits must be equipped with the proper tools to handle all hazardous material spills that could occur at your facility.

Emergency contacts for plant and local emergency responders should be posted along with phone instructions. Every employer should have on-site personnel trained for CPR, First Aid and AED.

#### **Employee's Responsibility:**

It is the employee's responsibility to follow all company policies, procedures and training guidelines. Prior to handling any material the employee must:

- Review the MSDS for the material you are handling.
- Use recommended (PPE) Personal Protective Equipment.
- Use all recommended safety precautions for handling and spills.
- Ensure all containers are labeled properly.
- Check the label for hazard information.
- When labels are no longer legible, report to your Supervisor.
- Do not store food in refrigerators used for



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chemicals.

- Do not store chemicals under sinks.
- Use practices and equipment that minimize hazards.
- Do not handle any material unless you are properly trained.
- In the event of an emergency, call 911.



### **Combating Identity Theft**

By: Bonnie L. Thompson, M.A.O.M.  
Independent Consultant

According to the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM), identity theft has become the country's number one consumer fraud complaint. Individuals can take steps to prevent the theft of personal information. These include; securing sale receipts, limiting the number of credit cards owned and reviewing credit reports each year.

Employers also have a responsibility to keep employee information safe. A significant amount of information is available in employee files and on job applications. Employers should remain current on developments in both the federal and state legislative arenas that impact their employee data responsibilities. Employers

should take every opportunity to eliminate information that is found to be redundant to the operating function of the organization.

Employers should audit their processes that protect confidentiality of employee information. As part of the audit, employers should review what employee information is maintained, how it is shared with others, both internally and externally, and whether or not there are other non-personal identifiers that could be used as alternatives.

Employers can minimize ID theft by following some simple procedures:

- Shred all discarded employee information including information on temporary workers, contract employees and former employees.
- Keep personal employee information locked and secure at all times.
- Verify new employee's Social Security numbers.
- Avoid using Social Security numbers as a form of identification for either employees or customers.
- Require health insurance carriers to use different numbers, rather than Social Security numbers, on health insurance cards.

- Build a firewall to keep employee information and customer data from being e-mailed or faxed to other locations. Have your computer department (MIS) make sure your computer system has adequate protection against hackers.

- Assign someone to handle legitimate inquires. Have the caller provide a copy of a signed release from the employee before verifying any information.

- Ensure that your company collects only essential personal information from employees.

- Institute criminal/credit background checks for all employees who have access to sensitive employee records information.



### **SURVEY**

#### **Facing Challenges**

More than 600 hiring managers were asked, "Is it more or less challenging to find qualified candidates for jobs within your firm compared to 12 months ago?" They said:

- 55% - Just as challenging
- 27% - Somewhat more challenging
- 11% - Somewhat less challenging
- 5% - Much more challenging



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2% - Much less challenging

Source:  
Robert Half International Inc.,  
Menlo Park, California



### 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.

**Areas of Expertise:** Coaching & Leadership Development, Compensation & Benefits, HR & Safety Compliance, Diversity, Employee Relations, General

HR, HR Assessments, HR Policies & Procedures, HR Strategy & Planning, Labor Relations, Organizational Development, Performance Management, Job Analysis, Job Descriptions, Employee Assessments, and a variety of HR & Safety Training courses.

**Legal Note:** JMT & Associates, LLC provides services in conformance with best practices of the human resource 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.

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