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SAFETY & RISK MANAGEMENT NEWS

Current News in EH&S and Risk Management

December 2019

Human Trafficking (Safety week and Risk Management month)

Hopefully you were able to attend one of the eye opening presentations on Human Trafficking that were held in November to support Safety Week and Risk Management Month. We were honored to have Maria Busch, the Anti-Trafficking Program Specialist at the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Office of Criminal Justice; Lisa Wilson, a forensic nurse and anti-human trafficking advocate; as well as two strong survivors of Human Trafficking visit Otterbein and tell their heartfelt, powerful stories. Both women had very different stories to tell, yet very much the same. And both of them are now leaders working with companies that help people being trafficked today, as well as doing community outreach in places such as Otterbein.

Otterbein is a great place to help educate and spread awareness to as many people as we can, so that together, we all can help recognize and combat this terrible issue that is occurring right here in central Ohio. Human Trafficking is a form of modern day slavery, it is often seen as sex trafficking, but there are also incidents of labor trafficking, both of which are very hard to identify. Most people being trafficked will not self-identify for many reasons such as they are taught to mistrust others (especially authorities), they may be fearful of harm on themselves or loved ones, they have a great deal of shame, and they may be part of a trauma bond to what is referred to as a Romeo Pimp, their boyfriend. So how can we help someone who won't tell us there is a problem?



Here are some signs to help recognize Human Trafficking

- A person that is not free to come and go on their own.
- Someone who doesn't appear they are in control of their own life.
- Someone who mentions they have a large debt to an employer and are unable to pay it off.
- Someone fearful, anxious and extra nervous around law enforcement or even the mentioning of law enforcement.
- Someone with lack of eye contact, health care or personal possessions.
- Someone who seems to have a lot of self-shame.

If you suspect a case of human trafficking call the **National Human Trafficking Hotline** to report it. This phone call might just save someone's life. The number is **888-373-7888** or text **BEFREE**. Also, the 1st ever Human Trafficking Summit with the Ohio Attorney General's office is Jan. 9th, 2020. For more information go to <https://www.ohioattorneygeneral.gov/Human-Trafficking-Summit>

Fire and Safety Violations

It is important that everyone on campus supports safety and compliance.

We are all responsible for safety!

Fire Codes and Safety Rules are in place to keep all of us as safe as we possibly can be while on Otterbein's campus. Otterbein has failed several of the annual building inspections mostly due to behavioral issues occurring on our campus. In many of our buildings during recent inspections, we were cited for the following Fire and Safety Violations:

- **Propping Fire Doors**
 - **Blocking exits with obstructions such as trash cans**
 - **Storing things in stairwells, aisles, hallways and corridors**

The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) is serious about blocked exit routes. OSHA actually directs all of their inspectors to carefully examine if employers provide and maintain an adequate number of exit routes that are unobstructed for their employees. The definition that OSHA gives for an exit route is a "continuous and unobstructed path of exit travel from any point within a workplace to a place of safety". A good example of how serious OSHA is with these type of violations is a company in New York City that was cited in 2013 for 22 violations of this nature and received a fine for \$82,800. The inspections began at this company as a result of an employee complaint. During the inspection of this company, OSHA cited all of the above noted violations. Since 2013, OSHA has raised the cost of their fines significantly, an increase of over 80% for all citations. These citations can even be higher if OSHA finds that a company has been cited before for the same violations and they are thus considered repeat violations. Today, serious violations are \$13,260 per violation, willful violations (knowing and disregarding the law) are \$132,598 per violation, and repeat violations are upwards of \$132,598 per violation.

The sad reality is that people are doing these things for convenience, typically because it makes entry faster to the area, or makes the temperature of their office more comfortable. They do not realize the overall hazards and risks that they are causing to every person in the building with these types of violations. In the event of a fire, the propped exit doors will allow an upward draft of air that will intensify the growth and spread of the fire; obstructions in doorways, stairwells or hallways potentially block people from getting away in a timely manner whether it be from fire or an active threat, increasing the possibility of someone getting trapped, without the ability to exit and suffer injury or death. Convenience and comfort are not good trade offs for endangering the life of every individual in the building.

So let's work together to keep each other safe!

Holiday Decorations Safety and Compliance

Enjoy your holidays!

- Decorating your areas on campus is always fun. We encourage the use of miniature lights if you are going to use lights, as they are cool and energy efficient and often battery powered.
- All holiday displays must be turned off when the area is unoccupied.
- Do not hang decorations from the ceiling tiles, smoke detectors or sprinkler systems.
- Avoid stringing decorations in hallways and corridors, as they can spread fire from one area to another.
- Exit routes must be kept free of all obstructions.
- Do not store things in stairwells, hallways and corridors.



Winter Slips Trips and Falls Scenario

An employee was running late to work after a slow drive in due to the winter storm and traffic on the roadways. When he arrived, he pulled into a parking space and stepped out onto the wet parking lot surface wearing black leather dress shoes. He immediately slipped on the wet surface falling to the ground. The employee tried to catch himself using his arms to protect the fall, which caused him to fracture his left wrist when he landed.



Safety Tips for our Slips Trips and Fall Campaign:

- **Wear proper shoes (leather soles are among the most slippery type of shoe). A rubber sole grips the surface better in colder temperatures.**
- **Be prepared to find ice on the sidewalks and parking lots. If you see any ice on main walkways, try to walk on the grassy edge for additional traction and take smaller steps.**
- **Bend slightly, and walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over the feet as much as possible.**