

FEATHER RIVER RAIL SOCIETY – SAFETY REPORT

DATE: June 7th, 2014

FROM: Tom Carter – Safety Officer

While tangible visible changes have been slow in coming to our safety program, rest assured, they are being worked on on an almost daily basis both at the museum and here at home. I have secured several new dry chemical fire extinguishers that are charged and in date (though we need many, many more) and working on securing other safety equipment that is desperately needed.

Last month, I was up working on various projects, mostly the woodshop, at the museum. This was also a steam work week and what a fantastic one it was. Our guests (including a reporter from the local newspaper) were in awe of all of the activity going on on the 165 as well as other projects. This really makes all of us happy to see and hear of so many volunteers getting so much done. With this increased flurry of activity though, comes a much higher potential for accidents and injuries. Case in point, I was watching a volunteer torch cut the bracket for the engineer's side air reservoir on a plastic cart. He had the torch turned sideways, head cocked at a 90 degree angle, and just going to town. Problem was (in addition to cutting steel on a plastic cart?!) was the sparks were flying RIGHT INTO HIS FACE. Of course, other than gloves, he had no other PPE on. I turned and told Eugene and David Elems (since David is a welder) that he was about to set his hair on fire, and no sooner did we turn back around to show them, when this volunteer lit his pants on fire. He hadn't even realized it. He was that engrossed in cutting that bracket. Luckily another member of the steam crew saw it and immediately sprung into action and put the fire out. This volunteer just laughed it off and went back to work. I was disgusted, pissed off and concerned all at once. I have talked to Chris about it, and steps were taken to prevent it from happening again. This is but one instance of some of the blatant disregard for safety that is happening lately at the museum.

Where was this volunteers PPE? Why wasn't he wearing it? Has he been certified or trained to torch cut (by a competent individual)? Where was his fire watch? Was there an extinguisher close by? (And I already know the answer to that was no.)

Folks, please think and plan your work to avoid these types of injuries. I have a cousin that was SEVERLY burned, 3rd degree, over 40% of his body, while torch cutting when acetylene "bottled up" in his welding jacket. And he WAS trained and wearing PPE; it happened at welding school. That's why this scared me as much as it pissed me off when I saw it happen. If you think I am being unreasonable or being a "safety nazi" about this, I'm sure my cousin Tony would be happy to send me some pictures from his accident. I was there the next morning at the hospital and wouldn't wish his agony on my worst enemy.

This volunteer burning his pants could have been avoided had he, or someone else on the crew, held a simple job briefing. A job briefing is essential to safety as it informs everyone of the work to be done and who is going to be responsible for each part of the job. A fire watch would have been assigned, equipment checked, and a contingency plan drawn up to determine what to do in the event of an accident or incident. The Operating crew has a job briefing before each days train operations, just like the train crews next door. There is no reason why we ALL shouldn't have a job briefing before starting any of our volunteer activities, whether we are going to work on the steam engine, repair track or clean the shop. Some job briefings take a mere

several seconds, some take several minutes, but they are essential to ensure everyone has a proper understanding of a job and how to do it safely. It is the most important thing you will do daily. They should be done at the start of the work and as work and weather conditions change.

A job briefing is important to maintain safe working practices. Remember, communication and consistency are the keys to safety.

Tom Carter

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tom Carter". The signature is written in black ink and features a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Director, Safety Officer