

Tanneries

Safety Campaign Proves Value To Plant As Salz Tannery Employees Record 236 Consecutive Days Without Accident

By Wallace Trabing

In industry, "safetyness" is a science followed by a state of mind. The days of the random word of caution, the cute jingle on safety-first, and the safety cartoons are waning.

It is dawning on management and safety officials that establishing a successful safety consciousness within a group of individuals is a task more akin to creating an organization than to carrying on a publicity campaign. It is something that has to be worked at with the determination of a guidance counselor briefing a parent on how to stress the importance of a seemingly commonplace fact to his son.

One of the best success stories of industrial safety in the U.S. can be found right in Santa Cruz.

The tannery of A. K. Salz company on River street leads all tanneries in the nation in an over-all record of the least time lost by employee accidents.

At Salz's, in fact, safety is now nearly a by-product.

Before the program was launched in October, 1951, two months rarely passed without a report of an accident which took an employee off his job from one to eight days.

The situation was not unlike that which exists in many industries and workshops at present.

For every dollar paid to the company in accident insurance, it was discovered that \$11 were lost in indirect causes such as time lost by fellow workers helping the injured party, cost of breaking in a new man and loss of production.

Then came science.

Strangely enough, the impetus behind the program was given by the Industrial Indemnity company, which sent a bevy of safety engineers to roam over the plant, their eyes peering into every nook and corner and in and under all the machinery.

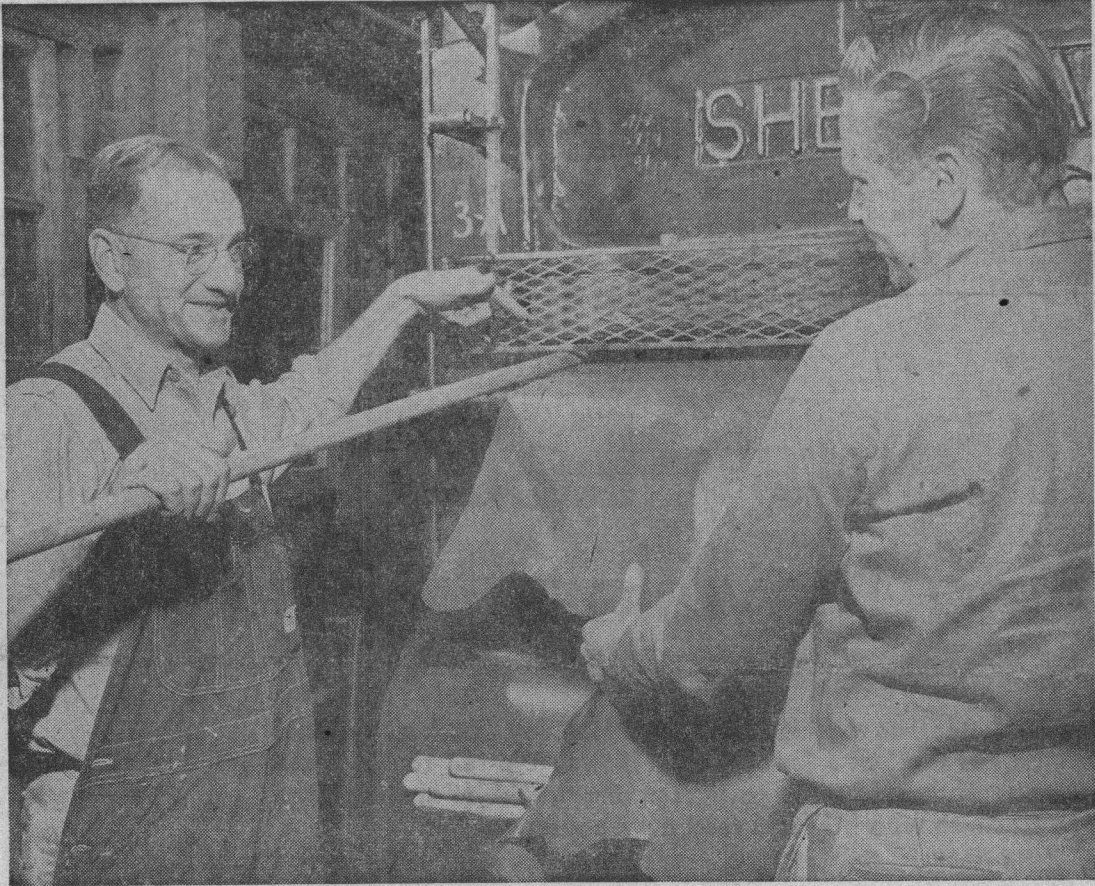
Working in close cooperation with Salz's officials, they found 130 conditions existing which they figured could cause injuries. These have since been reduced to six or seven.

Next the experts helped to revitalize the company's safety committee.

It was not long before management caught the spirit of the plan and decided to make it an all-out program. They chose workers and supervisors from various sections of the plant and appointed them as members of a safety committee which meets with representatives of the management once a month.

At these meetings the men discuss the accidents of the past month, what caused them, and how they could have been avoided. They bring in suggestions for safety improvements. (Example from minutes of July 3, 1952 meeting—burn dry grass by shed, better drain cov-

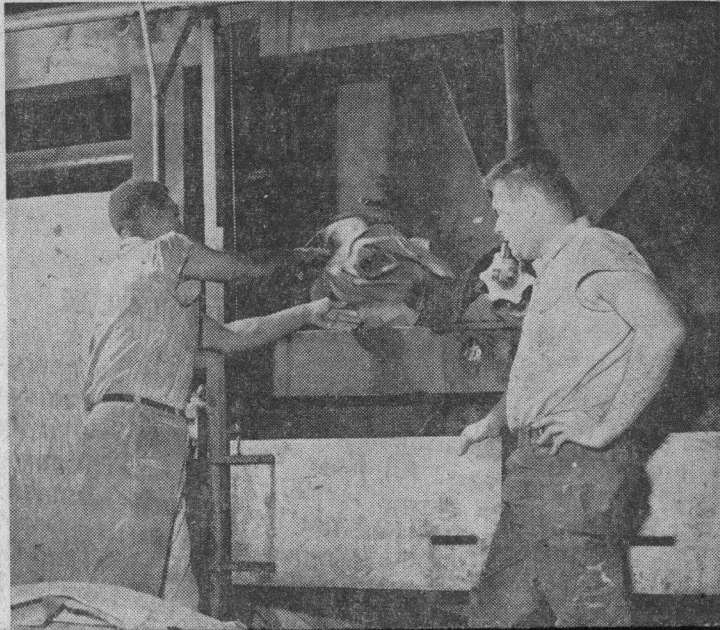
Employees Demonstrate Hazards Of Jobs



"That, my friend," says Ed Diener, assistant plant supervisor at the Salz tannery, "is what happens when you get your arm too

close to this embossing press." Bernard McCafferty, holding the leather, sees how the guard lowers with the press which puts

tons of pressure on the leather and stops the machine when something is caught under the guard.



accidents, no matter how many guards you put on the machinery. "Almost everyone takes part no in keeping an eye open for dangerous conditions. "They even pounce upon each other for doing work carelessly." As the accident-free record mounts, so does the employees' enthusiasm. Lezin said that there was almost an uprising in the plant once when a worker sprained his thumb and decided to stay home for a day. A delegation of workers was even formed to talk over the situation. The man decided to stay on the job.

In another case a man stuck himself in the foot with a pitch fork and hobbled about for three days before reporting it because he did not want to ruin the existing safety record.

"We don't want it to go that far," Lezin declared, "so we insist that every bruise and cut be reported."

Confidence by the workers that they are working in a safe plant because they themselves help to

Sign Keeps Accidentless Score



Norman Lezin, tannery manager (left) stands proudly by the sign which shows the company's present and previous

record. On "the

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ment once a month. At these meetings the men discuss the accidents of the past month, what caused them, and how they could have been avoided. They bring in suggestions for safety improvements. (Example from minutes of July 3, 1952 meeting—burn dry grass by shed, better drain covers, new belt guards, stop sign at plant entrance, new no smoking area, mirror on wall by machine so that operator can see men on other side.)

Members of the present safety committee are Warren Bartle, John Bown, Claude Lamb, Mervin Brantley, Frank Guliford, Ray Thuringer, Manuel Anecito, Ed Diener and Norman Lezin.

These meetings are held on company time. The management also organized safety meetings every three months for all employees and their families.

A typical meeting in the plant cafeteria, includes a safety talk by Norman Lezin, manager; perhaps a talk by a safety engineer, a sports film for the men, a cartoon film for the kids, a safety film, and refreshments.

The management also promised to throw a company party every 150 accident-free days. Any injury which forces an employee to leave his job for one day constitutes a break in the record.

The best record so far since the program started is 382 days, good for two consecutive parties. The present status, as of yesterday, is 236 days without a lost-time accident.

"We have spent thousands of dollars providing guards and safety devices for the machinery," said Lezin, "but it has paid off in cutting accidents and probably just as important, it has given the men confidence. It proved to them that this safety program of ours wasn't just another way to reduce our insurance rates."

When management and the employees came to see how an efficient safety program could improve their well-being both physically and financially, the spirit of the thing caught and snowballed. It hit the plant like the new game of scrabble hit the nation.

Lezin began making it a rule to brief each new employee on the plant's safety program. When Lezin finishes with a new man he is turned over to a safety committee-man who lets him know how the employees feel about the program and that the plant's existing safety record isn't made to be broken. He is then required to attend at least one safety meeting.

"We have over 70 employees," said Lezin, "and over 75 per cent turn out for our quarterly safety meetings. I think that's almost a record for safety meeting attendance."

This "safety fever" plays a big part in the plant's record, Lezin believes, adding "Men will have

not want to ruin the record. "We don't want it to go that far," Lezin declared, "so we insist that every bruise and cut be reported." Confidence by the workers that they are working in a safe plant because they themselves help to make it that way, is one of the most satisfying results, according to Lezin.

The program has cut insurance rates by 40 per cent, according to Hap Hasty, Industrial Indemnity company broker.

Ironically, the force behind the science of saving life and limb is cold, hard, money making business. But it pays off for the employee as well as the employer.

It's been proved at the Salz tannery.

Capt. Pennell Is Home On Leave

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The hole in which you see Frank Willis poking hides is a potential guillotine when being inspected or cleaned. So in order for the tanning drums to be turn-

ed on the heavy guard on which John Tolia is leaning must be raised in front of the opening. Most of the guarding equipment was made at the tannery.