



Safety Scene

On the Scene with Schuck Component Systems, Inc.

by Molly E. Butz & Chad Lilleberg

G-51! Safety bingo paves the way to lower injury rates and insurance costs.

Charles Darwin once said, "In the long history of humankind (and animal kind, too) those who learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed." In the structural building components industry we see successful collaboration happening all the time, from casual conversations at BCMC to in-depth exchanges at WTCA chapter meetings. And not to say that expert input isn't valuable or even necessary, but it's logical that your industry peers know and understand your business better than anyone else.

When talking about safety, it makes sense to follow this same model and collaborate as colleagues. At a recent WTCA Arizona Chapter meeting, Chad Lilleberg of Schuck Component Systems, Inc. did just that as he shared information about his company's "Safety Bingo" incentive program. Read Chad's story below followed by information on how you can share your story, too!

"Reportable Injuries"

At Schuck, all injuries and illnesses must be reported to a supervisor, however, only those considered "reportable" affect their Safety Bingo game. Schuck distinguishes reportable injuries as those following the OSHA standard, meaning injuries that require "medical treatment beyond first aid." This means that patching up a scrape with a bandage or applying a cold compress to a bump won't stop their current bingo game or disqualify an employee. OSHA requires that only serious injuries and illnesses be reported, specifically those that result in death, loss of consciousness, days away from work, restricted work activity or as previously mentioned, medical treatment beyond first aid, e.g., a cut deep enough to require stitches. For more specific information on OSHA Recordkeeping for Work-Related Injuries & Illnesses, visit www.osha.gov/recordkeeping/index.html.

Safety isn't a new concept at Schuck Component Systems, Inc. in Glendale, AZ. As a matter of fact, as a self-insured company, Schuck is keenly aware of the costs associated with every employee injury, big or small, which means that safety is a priority in their facility. About two years ago, in an effort to reduce their injury rates, improve overall employee safety and health and lower their insurance costs, Schuck began a "Safety Bingo" incentive program.

This was no small undertaking for the management and employees in Schuck's yard area, which employs roughly 450 people, approximately 175 of which work in their component manufacturing plant. However, implementing a program that encouraged positive safety habits and a stronger safety culture simply made sense.

Contrary to what you may suspect, there hadn't been any catastrophic accidents or injuries at Schuck to motivate them. Rather, it was the minor, high frequency injuries requiring medical attention or time away from work that persuaded Schuck to step-up its safety efforts. Here's what they cooked up.

Bingo!

Each yard employee at Schuck gets a bingo card. At the start of each game, \$100 is added to the "bingo fund." For each injury-free day, an additional \$100 is added to the pool and one bingo number is drawn. The bingo game continues throughout the work week, adding \$100 a day and drawing a new number. When an employee gets "BINGO," he or she wins the cash in the bingo fund (after the card is verified). A new game starts the next day, the pot drops back to \$100, and everyone is given a new card. *Sounds like fun!*

However, as you may have already guessed, there is a catch. If an employee gets injured on the job, and the injury requires more medical attention than first aid (see

box), two very important things happen:

1. The injured employee becomes ineligible to play for the remainder of the current game. (He/she will be eligible when the next bingo game starts.)
2. The game continues but the bingo fund drops back down to only \$100.

It's Working

It sounds like a fun game, but does it work? Indeed, Schuck is seeing a change. Last year alone, Schuck reduced their reportable injury rate by 33 percent and their insurance costs dropped by even more. Moreover, it's creating a deeper, stronger safety culture in their facility.

"Our company management has always put a lot of emphasis on safety, but this helps us get everybody involved," said Chad Lilleberg, Schuck's Plant Manager. According to Chad, the new bingo program is helping the employees take ownership of their safety and the safety of those around them. "If there's a guy that looks like he's lifting something heavy, other guys will join in to help without being asked," Chad described. "They really look out for each other." Clearly the results are showing up as more than just percentages and numbers.

At about the same time that Schuck introduced Safety Bingo, its managers also implemented weekly Tailgate Safety Meetings and a two-week new-hire training program. To be sure everyone was on the same page, they required each pre-existing employee to go through this new-hire training once as well. The Tailgate Safety Meetings train smaller groups that focus on a specific safety issue each week and the new-hire program covers—among other things—good basic safety information such as proper lifting and personal protective equipment (including their mandatory eye protection rule).

"Sometimes it can be hard to make your employees believe their safety is in their best interest, but we take our program very seriously," Chad added. And, there are definitely repercussions for safety violations that extend beyond becoming ineligible for a bingo game. "Our policy is strict and you will get written-up if you don't follow the rules. It depends on the situation, but it's usually a 'three strikes and you're out plan.'"

People in opposition to incentive-based safety programs might find reason to argue with Safety Bingo, but for an employee-owned company like Schuck, the answers are simple. "All of the money that goes out impacts our bottom line," Chad explained. "And because our employees are all vested in Schuck's ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) plan, they understand and appreciate that the less money we spend on injury claims, the more we have to give back to them."

And Schuck does pay out, rather regularly, according to Chad. Schuck's Safety Bingo program allows for a positive, if not lucrative, way to embrace its safety program and also a way for Schuck to cultivate its safety culture while protecting the people that mean the most to the company, their employees. **SBC**

For more information on the Safety Bingo program, contact Chad Lilleberg at clilleberg@schuckaz.com.



Anytime you see "Safety Scene: On the Scene with..." in the name of this column's title, you'll know you're about to read safety information that came first-hand from one of your industry peers. We'd like you to share your safety stories with us so that we can share them with everyone! Contact us at safetyscene@sbcsmag.info to share your safety ideas or successes.

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