The Colors of Safety

Introduction:

Safety Colors are the use of colors for safety in the workplace. OSHA and ANSI have authorized a nationwide color-coding system to be used by all businesses as an industry standard. Companies must stay in compliance with OSHA regulations by establishing a Safety Program and implementing the use of Safety Colors where necessary throughout the facility to identify potential safety hazards and where there is a risk for accidents. All new employees should be trained on the color-coding standards and guidelines for industrial use, with training updated anytime there is a change. Visual communication is very important when ensuring the safety of workers. There are four main categories of hazards and associated colors included in the OSHA Color-Coding Standard. These include red for Danger, to alert workers to immediate risk, orange for Warning, to show moderate risk, yellow for Caution, used to alert workers to potential risk, and orange-red for Biological Hazard, when there is a safety alert associated with Biohazards.

Discussion Points:

- OSHA Color-Coding Standards and guidelines for industrial use
- Establishing a Safety Program and implementing the use of Safety Colors
- Employee Training
- Applying Safety Colors to the facility to identify areas with potential safety hazards

Discussion:

There are several categories covered by ANSI and OSHA Safety Colors which include markings for physical hazards, pipe markings, safety signs and labels, and higher-level categories. The color red should be used for fire-related hazards, the color yellow for warnings related to slips, trips, and falls, the color green for first aid and related emergencies, the color blue to provide information on signs and labels, the colors black and white for showing direction, and the color purple for the use of Radiation Hazards. A Safety Manager should follow OSHA and ANSI standard guidelines, along with the company Safety Program, to apply the safety colors to the facility. The colors should be applied to areas and equipment in the facility and should be easily visible and recognized by all employees. There should be no confusion about the message conveyed by the Safety Colors.

As always, stay safe out there!