

Date

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Safety Day Spotlights Workplace Hazards

Eau Claire, WI – A ladder on top of scissors lift didn't look right. Neither did a battery on a running charger placed in the middle of a bunch of other batteries. A blue can labeled as diesel fuel looked out of place, too.

These were just a few of the scenarios set up for participants in Chippewa Valley Technical College's annual Safety Day to spot during a Hazard Hunt exercise. A function of CVTC's Workforce Solutions & Continuing Education (formerly Business & Industry) team, Safety Day brings together dozens of area business leaders, human resources officers, safety professionals, and frontline employees for a day of workshops and networking focused on safety in the workplace.

"Safety Day is bigger this year, with 80 registered," said CVTC instructor Jon Leenhouts, who specializes in workplace safety issues. "We listened to what the people attending in past years wanted, and this year reduced the number of the sessions, but increased the depth."

Sessions included topics such as workplace violence, industrial hygiene, occupational noise standards, safety inspections, respiratory protection requirements and electronic device policies.

"A colleague and I came here because we heard there was a lot of good information we could get today, and there has been so far," said Cory Drost, a production supervisor at WB Manufacturing of Thorp, a table, desk and countertop manufacturer. "I took sessions on industrial hygiene and noise. With all the dust collection and background noises, those are definitely issues for us. We're going to look at implementing some of the things we heard today."

Drost added that the company plant does have programs in place to address these issues, but are not necessarily doing everything they can. "And we want to make sure our employees are not exposed to noise levels that maybe we aren't aware of. We don't want them to have any chronic hearing issues later in life."

Robert Grotzinger, a long-time production floor worker now a safety technician, and Shelly Olson, a human resources manager, came from Dunn Paper, a tissue paper manufacturer in Ladysmith.

"There have been several topics covered here that are relevant to me, like opioids in the workplace and the hazard hunt," Olson said. "When you're there in the plant every day, you become numb because you see it every day. I want to get more in tune to what can be a hazard."

“I want to be able to recognize a hazard when you’re out on the floor and do something about it before someone gets hurt,” Grotzinger said. “We want them to go home with all their fingers.”

At the hazard hunt, Olson was the first to recognize a series of work carts set up for students in the Air Conditioning, Heating & Ventilation (HVAC) lab, each including a fire extinguisher with a tag indicating a long-past date. Indeed, the outdated tags were set up just for the Hazard Hunt, session instructor Matt Lind confirmed. Using a ladder on top of a scissors lift is illegal, diesel fuel should be stored in a yellow can, and charging a battery next to other batteries is a hazard, Lind added.

For the first time, Safety Day was held at CVTC’s Energy Education Center. “This facility is really what we needed,” Leenhouts said. “The HVAC lab gave us some hands-on space for the Hazard Hunt.”

With over 155 programs offered both online and on-campus, Chippewa Valley Technical College delivers superior, progressive technical education which improves the lives of students, meets the workforce needs of the region, and strengthens the community. CVTC programs are designed with input of business and industry to prepare graduates for today’s jobs, with 95 percent employed within six months of graduation and associate degree graduates earning an average annual salary of \$46,816.

Cutlines:

Safety Day 1

From left, Robert Grotzinger of Dunn Paper in Ladysmith, Michael Karlen of WB Manufacturing in Thorp, Ken Klobucar of Global Finishing Solutions in Osseo, and Sydney Murphy of J&D Manufacturing in Eau Claire, look for safety hazards like the ladder on top of the scissors lift they recognized behind them, during a Hazard Hunt exercise at Safety Day at CVTC in Eau Claire Oct. 18.

Safety Day 2

Vanessa LaMeer of Catalytic Combustion in Bloomer, left, and Shelly Olson of Dunn Paper in Ladysmith, look for safety hazards set up in the HVAC lab at CVTC’s Energy Education Center during a Hazard Hunt as part of Safety Day on Oct. 18.

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