



# SAFETYTIMES

ROUTING SLIP

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## Safety Success Story ~ BLAKESLEE ELECTRIC/TELECOM, INC.

**Even when you know you are doing it right, an accident can happen**

*This accident opened the door to a new safety program*

### BLAKESLEE

ELECTRIC INC.

INDUSTRIAL • COMMERCIAL

Blakeslee Electric is a leader in their field, primarily providing heavy commercial and institutional electrical work. The company was founded by John Blakeslee in 1963 and passed on to his son, Jeff Blakeslee, in 1987. Among the jobs Jeff considers signatures of the company's work are many of the North Bay's hospitals; including Santa Rosa Memorial, Petaluma Valley and Sutter Hospitals. Other projects include the new Fiesta market in Rohnert Park, Loral Skynet Satellite Control facility and Mancini & Associates office complex in Santa Rosa.

Two years ago the company created Blakeslee Telecom, a new division that is a provider and installer of Toshiba phone systems and premium access control systems provided by Hirsch Electronics.

Blakeslee Electric is such a safe company that for the majority of its existence they enjoyed a low mod rate along with the financial benefits of being free of any major accidents, up until five years ago.



The Loren Skynet Satellite Control Facility provided Blakeslee Electric with a unique project

The accident that changed the way Blakeslee Electric went about their safety program caused injury to two of the company's field electricians. They suffered extensive burns that required hospitalization and a review of the accident by Cal/OSHA. Ironically, that investigation found that the company "reeked of goodwill and safety" and determined this was an isolated incident.

The Cal/OSHA investigation concluded that Blakeslee Electric had done everything in their power to prevent the accident. They

**"What we came to realize is that... we had to both reward good behavior and punish bad behavior."**

company policy. Although Jeff appreciated that this was considered a preventable accident and that both men eventually recovered and returned to work, his company faced a required minimal fine and an adjusted mod rate that led to dramatic increases in workers' comp insurance premiums. This one incident opened the door to new procedures.

According to Jeff, "We thought it was positive to have this incident downgraded but at the same time we were pretty sad that we had two individuals in the hospital. It would have been easy to focus on the actions of a single individual not paying attention, but as a company we decided 'if we don't try to better ourselves, regardless of who caused the event, it's a mistake.'"

"We decided to

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## COMP CORNER

Hallie Fraser  
Workers' Comp & Safety Director



### 10/1 RENEWAL

If your company's workers' comp policy is a 10/1 renewal, it's coming up fast. Make sure to get your payroll information in to State Fund in a timely manner so they can give you an accurate rate for the next policy year. If you are a NCBE member, and not already in our group, ask your broker or State Fund to convert you into our group program. You get a 6% discount plus the following value-added services that you are not likely to get from another group program: Discounts on safety seminars; discounts on state/federal posters (one set free); discounts on CPR/1st Aid training (one person free); Onsite safety inspection services (free); assistance with writing your safety programs (free); assistance with training your Spanish speaking workers (free); a copy of our bimonthly newsletter, the SafetyTimes. If you use the services available, you'll definitely pay for your membership in the money you'll save for hiring a safety consultant and potentially in OSHA fines. Use us to make your business stronger!



### NEW ROOFING LAW

Just a reminder that the new roofing law goes into effect January 1, 2007. If you are a roofing contractor you will be required to have workers' comp regardless of whether

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## About Cal/OSHA Partnership Programs

The Division of Occupational Safety and Health has long recognized its limitations in improving occupational safety and health in industry. Safety and health standards, no matter how carefully conceived and crafted, will never address all work activities and conditions. Available resources are insufficient to conduct regular or exhaustive inspections of all the state's workplaces. However, the Division has long since recognized the potential for improving workplace safety and health when industry, labor and Cal/OSHA work together in a cooperative manner.

The Division was first in the nation to develop a program that relies on industry, labor and Cal/OSHA to work as partners in encouraging and recognizing workplace safety and health programs that effectively prevent and control injuries and illnesses to workers. Currently, the Division offers four different structured partnership programs, and is always seeking special alliances between industry, labor, and OSHA.

### BENEFITS

Participation in one of the Division's partnership programs will provide the following benefits. Some programs also offer an exemption from routine enforcement inspections.

- Reduction in injuries and illnesses
- Lower worker's compensation costs
- Improvement in employee motivation
- Higher quality and productivity
- Community recognition as a leader
- Statewide recognition from their industry and government as a quality employer
- Increased job referrals and bid acceptance

### PROGRAMS OVERVIEW

#### CALIFORNIA VOLUNTARY PROTECTION PROGRAM

- The Cal/VPP is designed to recognize employers and their employees who have implemented safety and health systems that effectively prevent and control occupational hazards. These systems go beyond ensuring that minimal Cal/OSHA standards are met by providing the best feasible protection at that site. Management commitment and employee participation are key elements in achieving Cal/VPP recognition. Cal/VPP establishments are considered to be leaders in the field of workplace safety and health.

Successful applicants approved for participation in Cal/VPP receive state and national recognition and are exempt from Cal/OSHA programmed inspections for three years. This frees Cal/OSHA's inspection resources for visits to other selected

establishments and industries.

Although designed for fixed-site establishments, large construction projects that will be in operation for at least one year may be eligible for Cal/VPP recognition.

**GOLDEN STATE** - The Golden State Program is designed specifically for employers with non-fixed worksites. Companies who meet the requirements of this program receive statewide recognition and exemption by Cal/OSHA for all their California worksites in which they have overall worker safety and health responsibility. Golden State companies are considered workplace safety and health leaders within their industry. All California worksites under the control of a Golden State employer are recognized as worksites expected to have a significantly lower risk for serious accidents than other employer's worksites within the same industry. In turn, this allows Cal/OSHA to focus its programmed inspection efforts on other worksites.

Golden State applicants must be able to demonstrate active management commitment to and employee involvement in their safety and health management system. The employer must also demonstrate that they are maintaining their safety and health management systems at all worksites in California and that their systems are effective in reducing accidents at the sites.

The Golden State application and approval process is managed through the Cal/OSHA Consultation Service's On-site Assistance Program. When achieved, the Golden State program status will be granted to the employer and all its California employees, and will be applicable for a period of two years at all of the employer's California worksites where the Golden State employer has overall safety and health responsibility.

**GOLDEN EAGLE** - The Golden Eagle program is designed specifically to meet the Federal OSHA requirements for a Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). Golden Eagle is site specific, including non-fixed worksites, and applies to small high-hazard employers. Employers that meet the requirements of Golden Eagle receive recognition and exemption from programmed inspections by Cal/OSHA. Golden Eagle employer worksites are recognized as worksites expected to have a significantly lower risk for serious accidents than other employer's worksites within the same industry. In turn, this allows Cal/OSHA to focus its programmed inspection efforts on other worksites.

Golden Eagle applicants must be able to

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## Cal/OSHA Partnership Programs

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demonstrate active management commitment and employee involvement in their safety and health management system. The company must also demonstrate that their safety and health management systems are effective in preventing and reducing accidents at the worksite.

The Golden Eagle application and approval process is managed through the Cal/OSHA Consultation Service's on-site visit process. When achieved, the Golden Eagle program status will be granted to the worksite for a period of twelve (12) months that includes a site exemption from Division enforcement programmed inspections. At the end of the twelve (12) month period, the Golden Eagle participant may request a second evaluation. If the Golden Eagle employer qualifies again they will be granted a one-time twenty-four (24) month exemption from programmed inspections.

**GOLDEN GATE** - Golden Gate recognition is site-specific. Your company may be eligible to receive a letter of commendation from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Service if your company requests and receives a Cal/OSHA Consultation on-site visit at one of its worksites, and subsequently meets the qualifications for Golden Gate recognition. Companies qualified for Golden Gate recognition do not receive any kind of exemption, except the traditional exemptions associated with actively working with the Cal/OSHA Consultation Service.

Like all the Cal/OSHA partnerships, the Golden Gate recognition process is designed to ensure success. The Cal/OSHA Consultation Service is always available to assist eligible companies in becoming qualified to receive Golden Gate recognition.

Only one Golden Gate letter of recognition is provided per company per worksite. There are no renewals once Golden Gate recognition is achieved by a company at a specific worksite. However, a change of ownership or location will allow the new owner, or the same company at a new location, the opportunity to apply for Golden Gate recognition.

For more information and the applications for the above listed programs, go to: [http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/vpp/vpp\\_index.html](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/vpp/vpp_index.html)

## Even when you know you are doing it right, an accident can happen

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take a look and see how to avoid similar incidents. It was decided we had to get our people to listen better and after a visit from NCBE and our comp carrier, State Fund, we heard ideas that we had known, but failed to implement.

"What we came to realize is that although we had good safety teachings and good safety policies, we were mainly lax on the way we enforced them. We had to both reward good behavior and punish bad behavior to the point where we have a dismissal policy for repeated safety violations. Though we never really enforced this before now if you have three violations you're dismissed, period.

"On the reward side we created some really nice incentives for showing up to our safety meetings, including a hundred-dollar drawing for those in attendance. We are trying out new ideas as well, like giving away free tools for going one year without any safety events or loss of work."

There are plenty of safety meetings to get the word out including two monthly shop safety meetings, which is where the drawing is held. Tailgate meetings are held weekly at the various job sites. Recognizing that there will be times an employee can't make it to the shop meeting, they are allowed to make up the meeting at any of the tailgate meetings. Full wages are offered for attending the shop meetings and with a crew of 20, the chances for winning the hundred-dollar drawing are pretty good.

Topics at the safety meetings vary. Jeff says that several meetings are dedicated strictly to new ideas. Other meetings might open with a short subject and then lead to open discussion on observances of what happens in the field. There is an amnesty day when the group is invited to share close calls on the job without



**Sutter Hospital is one of many hospitals that have benefited from Blakeslee Electric's work.**

risking a mark against their safety record.

In addition to tailgate sessions and shop meetings the company holds several off-site safety related meetings, including CPR/First Aid training. An annual (and mandatory) in-service day is held to go over the general company procedures and a good portion of that meeting covers safety regulations.

The company safety program is run by general superintendent Scott Jensen and administrative assistant Liz Jackson. Together they form the team that is responsible for maintaining the safety program and the required paper trail detailing everything from safety subjects to lists of personnel in attendance.

It's safe to say this is a company with an open door safety program and a plan for the future.

### **Blakeslee Electric/Telecom Inc.**

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## Safety Snippets

### Upcoming NCBE Workers' Comp & Safety Seminars

All listed seminars are held in NCBE's Construction Training Center, 1030 Apollo Way, Santa Rosa (unless otherwise specified)

#### 2006

- October 3** – Intro to Cal/OSHA
- October 17** – Scaffolding Competent Person
- October 26** – Excavation/Trenching-Competent Person
- October 27** – CPR/1st Aid
- December 1** – CPR/1st Aid



More seminars are being scheduled. NCBE members should keep an eye out in the Building News for all seminars. Flyers for each are inserted about three weeks prior to the seminar and a broadcast fax is sent to all members.

For a full listing, go to [www.ncbeonline.com](http://www.ncbeonline.com) or for safety seminars only go to [www.ncbesafety.com](http://www.ncbesafety.com). You can also contact Rebecca at (707) 542-9502 for more information regarding our lineup of seminars.

## COMP CORNER

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you have employees or not. It also requires an annual audit from the insurer who may impose a surcharge to the policyholder for the audit. Contact me for more information.



### HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION

NCBE has information available to help you integrate the new Heat Illness Prevention requirements into your IIPP. We also have training tools you can use. Look for a seminar in Spring 2007 on Heat Illness Prevention that will help your company prepare for future heat waves. Contact me at (707) 542-9502 or email me at [hallie@ncbesafety.com](mailto:hallie@ncbesafety.com) for more information.



## Tailgate Topic

### Mix it Up

Use pictures to illustrate potential safety issues on the jobsite. See the examples below of incorrect trenching procedures.

You can use pictures from the internet, or take pictures of safety issues on your jobsite

and use them to show your workers what NOT to do. This is especially effective training for those workers who may not speak English as their first language.



**Worker in a trench with no protective system, it's also not sloped or benched and has no means of egress.**



**Not protected from cave-in, nor does there seem to be safe access or egress from the trench**

## NCBE Safety Hotline

Have a safety question? Need a copy of a regulation? Want to set up a site inspection? Is OSHA coming to visit and you need urgent assistance with getting into compliance? Call NCBE's new Safety Hotline. It's a direct line to someone who can help. (707) 542-SFTY (7389).

### Contact Us

#### WORKERS' COMP TRUST

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