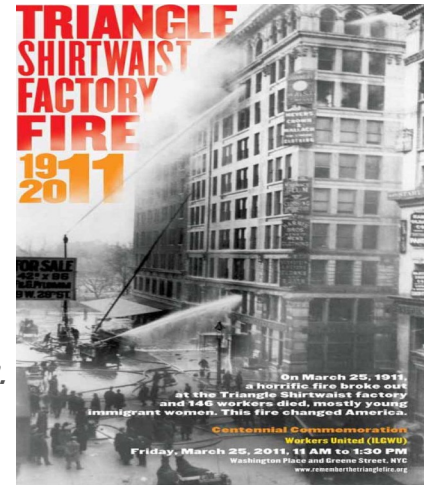


Volume 4, Issue 3

March 29, 2011



Healthier Workers. Safer Workplaces. A Stronger America.

"The worst day I ever saw"

One hundred years ago on March 25, fire spread through the cramped Triangle Waist Company garment factory on the 8th, 9th and 10th floors of the Asch Building in lower Manhattan. Workers in the factory, many of whom were young women recently arrived from Europe, had little time or opportunity to escape. The rapidly spreading fire killed 146 workers.

The building had only one fire escape, which collapsed during the rescue effort. Long tables and bulky machines trapped many of the victims. Panicked workers were crushed as they struggled with doors that were locked by managers to prevent theft, or doors that opened the wrong way. Only a few buckets of water were on hand to douse the flames. Outside, firefighters' ladders were too short to reach the top floors and ineffective safety nets ripped like paper.

The catastrophe sent shockwaves through the city, beginning in the communities of immigrant workers on Manhattan's Lower East Side, where families struggled to identify their lost in makeshift morgues. Family grief turned to citizen anger as the causes of the fire – including the abhorrent working conditions at the time – were exposed.

The public outcry over what was clearly a preventable tragedy brought a renewed sense of urgency to the labor movement and to other groups working to improve women's and immigrants' rights in the workplace.

Frances Perkins, who became the Secretary of Labor under President Franklin D. Roosevelt, witnessed the horror from Washington Park, recalling later that what she saw convinced her that "...something must be done. We've got to turn this into some kind of victory, some kind of constructive action." Perkins and other leaders with direct experience of the Triangle fire, like New York Governor Al Smith, soon helped marshal new workplace safety standards into law in the State of New York, setting an example for the rest of the country.

The Triangle factory fire remained the deadliest workplace tragedy in New York City's history until the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center 90 years later.

"It is this sustained legacy of reforms that paved the way for OSHA's 40 years of protecting workers. As we celebrate one anniversary and mourn another, OSHA remembers these 146 workers and the more than 4,000 workers who died on the job in 2009 by refusing to accept these tragedies as a normal cost of doing business." - Dr. David Michaels, Assistant Secretary of Labor for Occupational Safety and Health



Protect Yourself Permit-Required Confined Spaces

A confined space has limited openings for entry or exit, is large enough for entering and working, and is not designed for continuous worker occupancy. Confined spaces include underground vaults, tanks, storage bins, manholes, pits, silos, underground utility vaults and pipelines.

Permit-required confined spaces are confined spaces that:

- May contain a hazardous or potentially hazardous atmosphere.
- May contain a material which can engulf an entrant.
- May contain walls that converge inward or floors that slope downward and taper into a smaller area which could trap or asphyxiate an entrant.
- May contain other serious physical hazards such as unguarded machines or exposed live wires.
- Must be identified by the employer who must inform exposed employees of the existence and location of such spaces and their hazards.

What to Do

- Do not enter permit-required confined spaces without being trained and without having a permit to enter.
- Review, understand and follow employer's procedures before entering permit-required confined spaces and know how and when to exit.
- Before entry, identify any physical hazards.
- Before and during entry, test and monitor for oxygen content, flammability, toxicity or explosive hazards as necessary.
- Use employer's fall protection, rescue, air monitoring, ventilation, lighting and communication equipment according to entry procedures.
- Maintain contact at all times with a trained attendant either visually, via phone, or by two-way radio. This monitoring system enables the attendant and entry supervisor to order you to evacuate and to alert appropriately trained rescue personnel to rescue entrants when needed.

For more complete information:

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OSHA 3214-10N-05