



The Wire

The Newsletter of the EHSCP

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Chairman's Corner

By Mike Minerva, Comcast

Although as EHS professionals we have been consumed with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic for our respective companies, I would like to reflect on the accomplishments the EHSCP has had the past year. One of our major accomplishments last year was adding 4 new companies as associate members, becoming full voting members this year. Those companies are SAC Wireless, Lumos Network, American Tower and SBA Communications. In January and February of 2020, we also added 4 new associate member companies. They are Shaw Communications, Midco, Cox Communications and Consolidated Communications. These new members add diversity to our organization as far as the telecommunication services they provide, and the regions and countries they service. With the recent merger of Sprint and T-Mobile, there are now 21 member companies in EHSCP.

In 2019, Brian Wiedower became the organization's Vice Chair, and will succeed me as Chair in 2021. We also have several new Committee Co-Chairs (Environment – Wendy Key and Matt Fohlmeister, Safety – Michael Porpora and Clarence Watson, Industrial Hygiene – Kyle Madden, Sponsors -Jeff Hamm, Program – Chrissy Chapman) who will bring new perspectives to these groups. I would like to thank the vacating Chairs and Co-Chairs who have done outstanding jobs leading these committees for the past several years. They are: Jay Weir (Safety), Greg Myka and Bob Gurdikian (Environment) and Brian Wiedower (Sponsors).

SAC Wireless hosted our annual Symposium in Chicago this past September, and approximately 100 EHS professionals attended. Pertinent topics covered included Walking and Working Surfaces, RF Safety, Hazard Identification and Recycling in the Telecommunications Industry among others.

We capped off 2019 with a very informative and well attended webinar on Radio Frequency (RF) Safety Practices, presented by a panel of four EHSCP member companies.

This coming year promises to be very exciting for EHSCP. Although we are postponing the annual Fall Symposium until Spring 2021, a virtual half-day symposium will be held in September. The Spring 2021 Symposium is planned for Seattle and will be hosted by Steve Moon of T-Mobile. More information on the virtual and Seattle Symposia will be forthcoming soon.

Lastly, we are also starting 2020 in excellent fiscal shape, and will be able to fund all the activities planned for the year.

IH Committee Meeting – Weekly Meetings,
Contact Kyle Madden or John Malone for more
information.

Environmental Committee Meeting - May 8th,
11:30am Eastern, Contact Wendy Key or Matt
Fohlmeister for more information

Safety Committee Meeting - TBD: May 18/19
Contact Michael Porpora or Clarence Watson for
more information.

EHSCP Panel Meeting – TBD
Contact Brian Wiedower for more information

More information on the EHSCP is located at:
www.ehscp.org

-----2021 Annual Symposium-----
Spring – Date TBD

Location:

Seattle, WA

Host Company:

T-Mobile

COVID-19

By Brian Wiedower, T-Mobile

As all EHSCP members would surely agree, the COVID-19 pandemic has forced all of us to not only implement our pandemic plans, but quickly address any shortcomings that were not anticipated when originally written. At our company, which was in the final stages of a two-year plan to merge with another industry peer, our first Employee Continuity/Pandemic Planning correspondence was on January 21. This came at a time when the confirmed infections were mostly limited to Asia, but experts were starting to voice concerns it would likely spread worldwide. As the days, weeks, and months followed the conference calls not only became daily, but the emails and phone calls became so frequent, the work tasks consumed 75% of most workdays for some EHS team members. A full breakdown of this event will not be known until it fully subsides and would make for a great panel discussion at the Symposium. But from speaking to various EHS peers across the industry, I believe we would all agree there are some clear trends thus far.

The main pluses have been:

- ✓ **Teamwork** – There has been constant teamwork displayed by staff members, and not just within EHS, but across all aspects of company operations.
- ✓ **Technology** - The technology to support flipping the switch from most employees at work to most employees at home has held up quite well and will most likely cause companies to question the previous model of having robust physical workspaces.

And the deltas:

- ✓ **Supply Chain Limitations** – I am not sure anyone envisioned the challenge to obtain not just personal protective equipment, but basic cleaning and personal hygiene supplies.
- ✓ **Governmental variability** – Federal, state, and local requirements have varied greatly, which makes running nationwide companies much more difficult.

Symposium Update

We are working hard to put together another excellent conference. However, due to the circumstances facing our nation, the current plan is to have the event in the spring of 2021 in Seattle. Stay tuned for more details.

Executive Board & Committee Chairs

Chair - Michael Minerva – Comcast

Michael_Minerva@comcast.com

Vice Chair – Brian Wiedower – Sprint/T-Mobile

Brian.C.Wiedower@Sprint.com

Past Chair - Bryan Stolte

Environmental Committee Co-Chairs

- Wendy Key, Comcast *Wendy_Key@Comcast.com*
- Matt Fohlmeister, Sprint/T-Mobile *matthew.fohlmeister@sprint.com*

IH Committee Co-Chairs

- John Malone, AT&T *jm7842@att.com*
- Kyle Madden, Verizon *kyle.madden@verizon.com*

Safety Committee Co-Chairs

- Michael Porpora, AT&T *mp2864@att.com*
- Clarence Watson, Windstream *Clarence.Watson@windstream.com*

Sponsors (Symposium) - Jeff Hamm – SAC Wireless

jeff.hamm@sacw.com

Program (Symposium) – Chrissy Chapman – Verizon

christine.chapman@verizonwireless.com

Committee News

Industrial Hygiene Committee

The Industrial Hygiene Committee has been focusing on COVID-19 so far in 2020. We are meeting weekly and reviewing issues like:

- Face coverings, masks, N95s and other PPE
- Methods for cleaning surfaces and equipment
- Work practices such as social distancing and when to require employees to quarantine
- How to conduct 2 person operations
- Engineering Controls, Administrative Controls, and PPE necessary to re-open company offices that are currently closed

We still continue to follow Non-COVID-19 related issues as well:

- Implication of small 5G units on safety of technicians working in aerial plant.
- We are also still closely following the proposed CA Lead ruling. The Lead PEL in California will be reduce from 50 µg/m³ to 10 µg/m³. This is going to have a huge impact on work with lead-sheathed cable in California.
- Respiratory Protection and wildfire smoke. We are continuing to follow the CA Wildfire Smoke regulation as it moves from an emergency order to a permanent regulation.

Environmental Committee

January 2020 not only ushered in a new year, but also new co-chairs for the Environmental Committee. We thank Greg Myka and Bob Gurdikian for their leadership and continued involvement in the committee! New co-shares are Matt Fohlmeister (Sprint – now T-Mobile) and Wendy Key (Comcast).

Topics we've been working on and/or tracking include:

- Development of a skills matrix associated with current committee members so that we can more easily identify who our "experts" are in various environmental topics and states
- Attendance at the California CUPA Conference
- How the Generator Improvement Rule might be implemented throughout the country (note: implementation of the GIR will be phases in CA and the second phase will include public comment)
- Changes to the CA Hazardous Materials Business Plan (HMBP) reporting requirements in CA
- New EPCRA Reporting requirements for lead-acid batteries implemented in New York City, NY
- Potential Tier II reporting changes by the Massachusetts State Emergency Response Commission (SERC)
- Potential Changes to NEPA Law
- Portable generator regulations and requirements, particularly in CA where utilities are permitted to shut off power due to risk of wildfire. We're tracking this both from a material permitting (fire and CUPA) perspective and air quality district perspective
- Changes to CA's Bay Area Air Quality Management District (BAAQMD) generator reporting requirements that may trigger the completion of Health Risk Assessments
- Lithium battery recycling bills in various states that propose lithium battery recycling surcharges to vendors and retailers
- The shift from permitting lead-acid batteries by electrolyte or lead to kilo-Watt hours instead. Seeing this in Denver, CO now, but because it is associated with the International Fire Code, this may expand to other cities and states

Safety Committee

We would like to acknowledge Jay Weir (AT&T) for his many years as committee chairperson and years of involvement with the EHSCP. Jay will continue to keep serve as a liaison between the EHSCP and Cal-OSHA. This committee needs to have active representation from every member organization. Committee meetings will be held quarterly via conference call. Member organizations will be asked for topics prior to each meeting. We ask that members, as needed, provide information as to their company position on various safety issues.

We will continue to work on various safety issues such as Fall Protection (Wireless and Wireline), Aerial Lift Operations, PPE, Electrical Safety, Regulatory Changes, and any other issues identified and brought to the committee by its members.