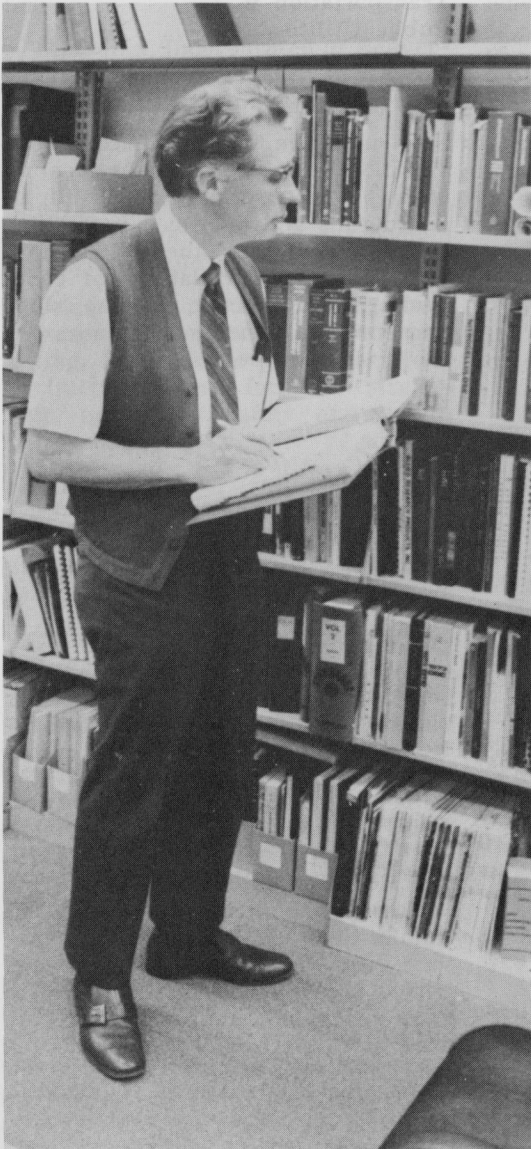


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TEKTRONIX:

one firm's approach to corporate safety management

By Karl Sloan

Committees and meetings are part of any corporation, but the operations and activities of such groups all too often result in confusion, more paperwork, and an increasingly cumbersome corporate management system.

Tektronix, Incorporated of Beaverton has been avoiding just such problems since September, when its Corporate Safety Council (CSC) was formed. "Tek" is the world's largest manufacturer of oscilloscopes, employing 12,000-plus workers worldwide and 9,000-plus in a dozen main production buildings at Beaverton.

Tek's CSC includes management representatives from personnel, marketing, engineering and other departments, and was formed to strengthen the firm's safety and health program.

Helen Thomas, Tek Safety and Health Manager and Council member, says, "We at Tektronix are vitally concerned with the health and safety of all employees, because we recognize that they're our greatest asset. The CSC has the responsibility to strengthen this commitment even more today, due to the increased emphasis being placed on employees' safety in the work environment."

Lang Hedrick, Council chairman, agrees with her and outlined the steps now being taken to improve the company's safety program. "For several years," he said, "each of our production buildings has had its own safety committee, composed of employees and supervisors within a particular operation. Members and chairmen of these committees sometimes tended to become permanent fixtures in these groups and inter-committee communication on safety

matters affecting larger areas of concern was less than satisfactory."

To solve the problem, the Council developed a model charter for the building safety committees, requiring that membership be open to all personnel, that terms served be no longer than a year, and that no member serve two consecutive terms. Chairmen would serve at least 12 months and no longer than 24.

Such action will allow more employees to become involved with safety decisions that directly affect them, and is preventing stagnation at

one of Tek's most vital, decision-making levels—line supervision.

In addition, the building safety committee chairmen decided themselves that company and individual department safety matters would be better served if they were to form a chairmen's group to handle problems that extended beyond departmental boundaries.

These developments, plus the creation of the Corporate Safety Council, have opened the door to increased communication between line super-

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"The Council will evaluate areas of concern expressed by those responsible for safety and health, . . ."

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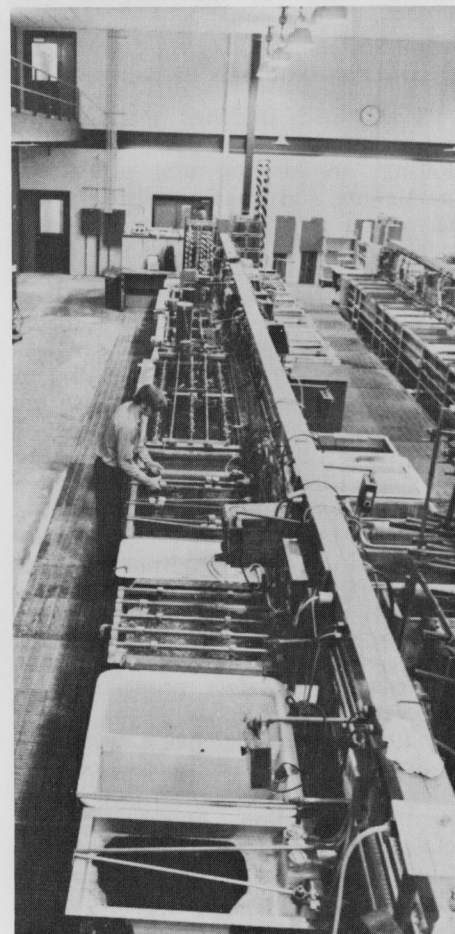
vision personnel and management. "We have found," said Hedrick, "that our safety program will be stronger if it's based on a line accountability basis. The line supervisors and department managers are closer to their individual safety problems than any one safety man or single, high-level committee can be in an organization this size."

To help these personnel discover, identify and deal with safety problems at their own levels, the Council has created safety inspection and manager's safety reports. The two simple forms will provide timely, accurate information concerning safety and health hazards in individual departments, will require line action to abate the hazards, and at the same time will aid the CSC and chairmen's committee in obtaining a clearer, overall view of how the company program is working.

"More importantly," said Hedrick, "such information will allow us to maintain a more uniform, more effective safety program throughout Tektronix without establishing a complex, confusing set of rules and regulations that by their very number would kill flexibility."

Important keys to the philosophy of Tek's newly-formed Council are found in its statement of objectives. One of these objectives is to be "... responsible for uniformity in the development of departmental safety programs . . ." but not for their implementation and control. In this same vein, the Council will seek "... to guide and help develop a program of employee safety education-training . . ."

"Cooperation, communication and a willingness to listen at all levels are trademarks of the way Tek people think," said Hedrick, "and these are exactly the things that are making our program work."



"... identify controllable elements within these areas of concern; and respond by providing standards . . . and guidelines . . ."



Individual motivation plays an important role in Tek's safety program, as evidenced by the photo at left of an "alligator" air press. Several employees designed the special air valve at the rear of the machine, which causes the foot pedal to be inoperative unless the "jaws" and tooling of the "gator" has been closed manually. This eliminates the possibility of an operator putting her fingers between the jaws.

When it came to membership on the new Tektronix Corporate Safety Council, Chet Schink's name had to be at the top of the list.

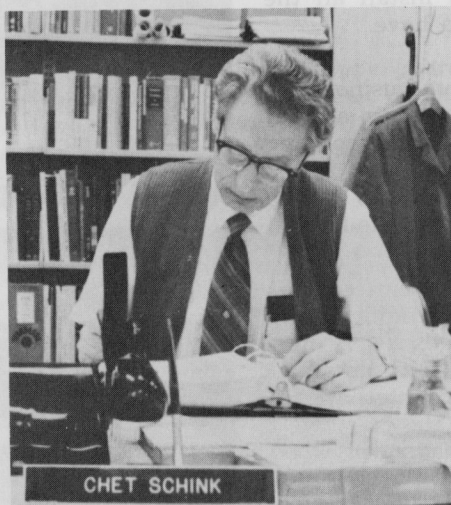
Schink, Tek's corporate chemist for 17 years, is chairman of the electro-chemical building safety committee and has a thorough knowledge of the several hundred chemicals being used in Tek processes.

Ten years ago, he decided that Tek employees and line supervisors should have a source of clear, concise information concerning the chemicals they used and how to deal with chemical-caused injuries.

"We had to do a lot of hard digging the first few years to get the information we wanted," said Schink, "since the national push for better occupational safety and health had not yet materialized and chemical manufacturers weren't printing much information about the hazardous properties of their individual products."

The information was compiled into a first aid and safety data manual, and today covers some 1,500 different chemicals, including paints and plastics.

These manuals, numbering 150 in



all, have been placed with each of Tek's five, full-time registered nurses, with each building committee safety chairman, and in every field office across the United States.

The most important feature of the manual is the fact that any employee can quickly identify what chemical is being used in what process on what part. This is accomplished by a dual-indexing of the manual, and Schink explained how it works.

"The first index lists the parts

numbers in the Tek system and the chemicals being used in the processing of each part. Therefore, if an employee says he was just injured by a chemical being used on part number 1-2-3-4, but doesn't know what that chemical is, his supervisor, or fellow employee will be able to quickly identify what the substance is by referring to the parts number index. The second index is an alphabetical listing of each chemical we use, with corresponding reference sheet page numbers and a columnar listing of what parts the chemicals are being used on."

In addition to the manual, Schink has developed individual safety and first aid data sheets on approximately 160 "target" chemicals, which by their frequency of use and hazardous properties might cause the most severe employee injuries. These sheets are sent to medical consultants and the company's nurses, and also are kept in immediate work areas.

Maintaining an up-to-date safety and first aid information program such as Schink's takes a great deal of time and effort, but pays off where it counts—in accident prevention, not investigation.