

Thank you, Joe, for that somber, low key introduction. I'm surprised you're so spry and wide awake at this hour, given that last night the phone rings in my room at like 2 am and guess who's calling me about a pizza!

Well, as you could probably tell right from my intro, ordinarily I like to take things lightly. But right now my sinuses are so heavily congested, I'm afraid for the next 90 minutes my voice is gonna be a bad blend of the Bruno Kirby, Joe Pesci with a head cold blues! (harmonica)

Hey, just be glad I don't try to sing. I have what my ex has charitably described as the El Niño of singing voices -- Totally unpredictable... but always a disaster! Speaking of my erstwhile wife, can I see a show of hands? That's it, just a show of hands. She wanted me to check out what kind of jewelry the movers and shakers in NEHES are sporting!

Ok, seriously, how many of you actually believe that I was married to a tightrope walker? Oh, great I've been up here for what... maybe 3 minutes. And already I've lost credibility with like three quarters of my audience. Remind me next time to get my introduction read by a more credible source!

All right, humor me on this, show of hands, how many of you once when you were young saw a tightrope walker in the circus? Now, be honest... how many of you once when you were young, pretended you were a tightrope walker in the circus? Ok, how many of you once were young? This is not meant to be a trick question. And finally, how many of you simply refuse to raise your hands in public under any circumstances?

Oh good. It's always so comforting to know where the cynics are sitting. I've got a few at this table with their arms folded looking at me like, "Great, Rob, this is shaping up to be more fun than filling out an incident report on a psych patient gone AWOL... with a full set of mind altering meds! Or having to write an 8-page application for a 2-cent energy rebate on \$4 light bulbs! And spending your entire lunch hour trying to contact a city hall building inspector, preferably one with the minimum necessary brain capacity to actually locate what you're looking for in their system ... without switching you over to a 16-step voice menu prompt!"

(Suddenly leaves platform and takes seat next to attendee)

Hey, I'm just trying to put myself in your place... and make sure your chair conforms to at least a minimum standard of proper ergonomic design! I know how much you folks love the economics of ergonomics, and how it's essentially an excuse for an employee to get a one week vacation while you rebuild the counter-top of their workstation!

Apparently that's about as enjoyable an experience as having a hospital administrator call a budget review meeting for 4 pm on a Friday! Or an unannounced visit from an EPA auditor with an attitude!

Between EPA standards and NFPA life safety codes that are so dense, convoluted and tedious they make the inside of your nose hairs hurt! I'll tell you what, just trying to cope with all the confusing, conflicting, and sometimes darn right contradictory provisions is enough to make any of you want to just raise a finger (thumb) and go hitch a ride on the ASHE Advocacy highway!

I mean if you ask me, what you've got to go through to comply with federal regs is like being on the receiving end of a bad joke that begins: Knock, Knock! (Who's there?) Jay. (Jay who?) Not Jay who, Jayco! Now known as the Joint Commission, here to review you! As a group the Joint Commission is not known for their humility. In fact they think it's only fitting that their initials are J.C.!

Of course for sheer unbridled entertainment nothing can compete with the thrilling sensation of being suddenly tapped on the shoulder by an OSHA agent, who flashes his badge, demands total access to all documents and commandeers your entire computer files. OK, judging from your raucous response I'm guessing that for sheer excitement this monologue rivals being first in line for a free root canal clinic in Matapan!

Yep, ranks right up there with telling your C.E.O. Guess what, we just made OSHA's select list for high hazard businesses. (whistle) But hey what do I know? Until I spoke with Joe Mona I wasn't even sure what the letters OSHA stood for; Occupational Safety Health Administration.... or Outrageously Sexy, Hunks and Amazons! Your choice.

If you ask me it sounds more like the name of a Japanese restaurant -- OSHA House of Sushi. Then you've got the Jewish version -- Kosha... (Rosh ha-oshah... Lechaim!) Or if you're Italian, the Osha Nostra (Hey, you mess up badly enough, and you'll end up like a character in the final Sopranos episode and swim with the fishes!). Of course I keep dumping on them, and any second now an undercover OSHA inspector's gonna come up and cite me under the General Duty clause.

All right, no more fooling around. If my sources are correct the hard truth is that as much as the government likes to think they've got everything merged into a standard code set, I don't think so. Because in reality every regulatory agency can interpret them as broadly as they choose. Oh be honest, don't you just love having to deal with such constantly shifting rules and regulations, where half the time standards change so fast no one even really knows what the flux is going on!

Ah, the joys of government mandates, requirements and stipulations that are so con-fusing, con-voluted and just plain con-founding that secretly most of you are con-vinced that the letters CMS actually stand for Constant Mental Stress! First you type the letter, and wait and wait only to find out -- Surprise! New policy! and unless you revise, retype and resend, you don't get CMS approval (wag finger). Picky, picky, picky! Can you say "pay for performance!"

Next thing you know to prevent prescription drugs from being hijacked by terrorists the government will team C M S with the C I A! Thus creating - The Department of Stealth and Human Services! Their credo reads: "your health... our homeland security!"

OK well that went over about as smooth as punching tubes in a Cleverbrooks boiler! Or Mother nature's idea of an April fool's Nor-Easter. Just what you need right.... another 24 inches of snow! Now why do I get the feeling that these earnest attempts at topical humor are proving about as funny as a fake fire alarm and a failed generator, and are making Rob Peck more popular than a whopper wet stacking nightmare! At this point some of you are looking at me like you're trying to decide whether to call in for outside help, or evacuate!

Hey it's your choice, you can either listen to my efforts at inside jokes, or we can spend the rest of the morning alternately, reviewing your 96 hour emergency preparedness plan, rereading the full text of the fascinating Joint Commission's Standards Improvement Initiative, brushing up on the newly configured- with all new colorful and titillating illustrations, NFPA 99 Medical Gas Standards which I'm sure Craig Williams will cover in a lot more detail, and to top it all off I'll pass around a stack of scintillating Pressgains modeling statistics!

Hey how much more fun can a group of Healthcare Engineers have in public... without pocket protectors! (whistle!)

Well as you can probably tell I've done a little digging into the world you all work and live in, and I've gotta tell you it's not a pretty picture! Overextended and under-staffed. Over-responsible and under-appreciated. Overworked and underpaid... and that's an understatement!

The funny thing is before I found out about all the diverse duties, multiple roles and amazing balancing acts you people have to pull off every day, I used to think I was this awesome juggler... (into choreographed 3 ball parody)

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