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It looks safe, but is it?

We all know milk expires, but what about your safety tools? Do you know the expiration date on your safety products? A worker's safety on the jobsite is dependent on the ability of the worker to work safely and trust in the safety products that are employed. Many workers, no matter what occupation, have safety guidelines and procedures to keep them safe. Safety products have been utilized to better protect a worker so they can get the job done correctly, efficiently and most importantly, safely. With all these safety products in the world today comes numerous standards and regulations that must be met and followed when workers are required to be placed in dangerous situations to complete a job; hence, the certification of products. Certified safety products allow workers to perform their duties efficiently and confidently. But how long do these certifications last? With such a high level of importance, the recertification of safety products is a practice that should not be forgotten.



The use of certified safety products protects both the worker and the company. The worker can confidently perform his/her job, and the company can be self-assured that the task at hand is being completed correctly. With all the standards and regulations these days, there have been countless safety products that are available for numerous situations. The use of safety products could range anywhere from entering a confined space using an ANSI compliant manhole guard retrieval system, or having fall protection using a

composite fall arrest tower anchored to an I-beam on top of an electrical transformer. When you or someone else's life is dependent on certain products or equipment, making sure that it is correct working order is of the utmost importance.

With new standards and regulations being written and revised constantly,

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new products are being created or evolving to meet those new conventions. Depending on the level of danger or complexity, some products may require more attention than others. It is important to identify which products need to be recertified and which do not. The recertification process can catch small issues before they become a major disaster. Products may need to be recertified due to age or amount of normal wear and tear. There should be a set routine for checking and ensuring the products integrity and full dexterity of its capability. Recertifying a product may not always mean repairing a broken part or missing component. The product may just need routine maintenance to keep it performing at its full potential and functionality while maintaining its level of reliability.

Visible problems with safety equipment can range from broken welds to deformations in the metal itself; however, it is imperative to get safety products recertified because not all issues or problems can be seen with the naked eye. For example, when the safety product is mechanical with moving parts, like a personnel hoist, it is very important to get these inner workings of the hoist inspected. In common cases involving hoists or winches, the equipment would likely include a hoist line (cable), gears, brakes, etc.

These components can be compromised by over usage, improper usage, improper storage, chemical exposure, etc. In most cases, the products just need a routine check up and maintenance by having the components of the hoist be re-lubricated or brakes replaced. There are certain areas that an untrained person should not attempt to do visually. It may be best to have the equipment recertified under the original manufacturer, or under an approved dealer of the manufacturer. Recertifying equipment can avoid major problems which can cause injury or even death caused by a missed routine maintenance.

The use of safety products is allowing us to expand our vertical limits. Whether it is building enormous structures stretching for the sun, or descending into the depths of manholes toward the center of the earth, a worker's trust in their products could mean the difference between a job succeeding or not. Certifying a safety product ensures the well being of the worker and the workers around them. It is up to the user to ensure that their equipment can perform and maintain standards in which it was originally intended to do. Internal deficiencies may impose greater concerns and problems than external signs. The product must be routinely examined, tested, and recertified by a qualified technician if not the original manufacturer themselves. The ability of the user is somewhat limited to the capability and the functionality of the user's equipment. The common phrase "If it isn't broke, don't fix it" comes to mind. This is not the case when it comes to safety. Ensuring that there is not a problem of fixing a problem before it turns into a major catastrophe is the safest thing one can do. Recertification of safety products is as important if not more important as using a completely new certified product.

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