A year ago at this time government economists were predicting the U.S. economy would grow at a rate of 1.8% in 2016. In actuality, the U.S. economy grew at a rate of 1.6%. 2016 was the worst in five years, as far as economic growth.

Expectations for gross domestic product (GDP) growth in 2017 have gotten “murky” with the election of Donald Trump to the presidency of the United States. Mr. Trump has described the recent GDP numbers as “anemic” and has vowed to grow the economy to near 4% within a year of taking office. Even though Mr. Trump has many skeptics, the consensus of economists is, 2017 will be a better year for growth in the U.S. economy.

We are optimistic as well. Wood fiber is again plentiful. Ongoing severe drought conditions in the West and Southeast have been eased due to winter storms. New home and new construction are starting to trend upward. And finally, the use of color-enriched mulch still has plenty of room for growth in the existing home market.

Again, thank you for choosing us to be your partner for success. Amerimulch® is well-prepared to deliver our world-class customer service and the highest quality products to help make operating your business easier and more profitable.
TOP 10 OSHA CITATIONS OF 2016: A STARTING POINT FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY

Tackling the most common safety hazards is a good place to start saving workers’ lives and limbs.

By: Thomas Galassi - Director of Enforcement Programs for OSHA

Every October, the Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration releases a preliminary list of the 10 most frequently cited safety and health violations for the fiscal year, compiled from nearly 32,000 inspections of workplaces by federal OSHA staff.

One remarkable thing about the list is that it rarely changes. Year after year, OSHA inspectors see thousands of the same on-the-job hazards, any one of which could result in a fatality or severe injury.

A Starting Point

More than 4,500 workers are killed on the job every year, and approximately 3 million are injured, despite the fact that, by law, employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for their workers. If all employers simply corrected the top 10 hazards, OSHA is confident that the number of deaths, amputations and hospitalizations would drastically decline. Consider this list a starting point for workplace safety:

1. Fall protection 6. Powered industrial trucks
2. Hazard communication 7. Ladders
4. Respiratory protection 9. Electrical wiring
5. Lockout/tagout 10. Electrical, general requirements

It’s no coincidence that falls are among the leading causes of worker deaths, particularly in construction, and the top 10 list features lack of fall protection as well as ladder and scaffold safety issues. OSHA knows how to protect workers from falls, and has an ongoing campaign to inform employers and workers about these measures. Employers must take these issues seriously.

OSHA also sees far too many workers killed or gruesomely injured when machinery starts up suddenly while being repaired, or hands and fingers are exposed to moving parts. Lockout/tagout and machine guarding violations are often the culprit here. Proper lockout/tagout procedures ensure that machines are powered off and can’t be turned on while someone is working on them. And installing guards to keep hands, feet and other appendages away from moving machinery prevents amputations and worse.

Respiratory protection is essential for preventing long-term and, sometimes fatal, health problems associated with breathing in asbestos, silica or a host of other toxic
substances. But we can see from the list of violations that not nearly enough employers are providing this protection and training.

The high number of fatalities associated with forklifts, and high number of violations for powered industrial truck safety, tell us that many workers are not being properly trained to safely drive these kinds of potentially hazardous equipment. Rounding out the top 10 list are violations related to electrical safety, an area where the dangers are well-known.

The list of top violations is far from comprehensive. OSHA regulations cover a wide range of hazards, all of which imperil worker health and safety. We urge employers to go beyond the minimal requirements to create a culture of safety at work, which has been shown to reduce costs, create a culture of safety at work, which has been shown to reduce costs, raise productivity, and improve morale. To help, OSHA has released new recommendations for creating a safety and health program at workplaces.

OSHA has many additional resources, including a wealth of information on the Website plus the free and confidential On-site Consultation Program. However, tackling the most common hazards is a good place to start saving workers’ lives and limbs.


Thomas Galassi is the director of enforcement programs for OSHA. For more information, visit www.osha.gov.
WHO IS RD OLSON?

By: Matt Gurney - General Manager - RD OLSON MFG., INC.

Some reading this article may know who or what RD OLSON is, but most likely not a lot of you. You may not know our name, but there is a good likelihood you have seen one of our vibrating shaker screens out in the marketplace over the last 30-35 years. Starting in the 1980’s and finishing 2014-ish, RD OLSON was the manufacturer of the CEC Screen-It in partnership with Gary and Roger Smith of Construction Equipment Company. In 2014, the two companies decided to go separate ways after CEC built their own manufacturing plant.

Beginning in 2014, RD OLSON (http://www.rdolsonmfg.com/home) started marketing our own machines under our own colors and brand. RD OLSON machines are built in the USA, at our manufacturing facility located on 12 acres in Kelso, Washington. The campus consists of 8 buildings, with each having a specific function in the build process. Our teams of builders have many years of experience across our whole product line which allows them to turn out quality machines time and time again. Check out this link to see our manufacturing facility: https://vimeo.com/80113777

When it comes to screening, the RD OLSON Screener is one of the lowest cost per yard produced screen plants to own. The vibrating shaker screen when equipped with the right screen cloth and a ball deck cleaning system will give years of trouble-free service when the proper maintenance schedule is followed. We build screens and screen plants in various sizes from 4’x6’ up through 6’x20’. We build these plans in two and three product layouts plus overs. Please give us a call to talk about your screening needs and we will take the time to walk through the various ways we can help.

So how does RD OLSON help customers in the coloring, wood recycling, composting and organics recycling markets? We help by building purpose driven equipment to make the job, not only easier, but less costly and we employ a solutions-oriented customer assistance team. At RD OLSON, we do
not want to sell you a machine, we want to provide you with the information needed to help you buy the right machine.

The team at RD OLSON will take the time to listen to your needs and understand your business model to choose the correct solution. We will look at your material and using your experience coupled with ours, we will find ways to lower your production costs while increasing product quality. So whether you need a screen plant, a conveyor, or even a ROCK/WOOD Separator give us a call to see how we can help you. RD OLSON builds stock machines but we will also customize machines for our customer’s specific needs. Additionally, we offer training classes on Material Processing, Screen Maintenance, and Service Work.

Our team here at RD OLSON is relaxed but dedicated to our product and your needs. Our current president, Pete Laberge, started on the shop floor 27 years ago, getting into the family business and he can still be found in the field visiting with customers. The same story can be told of Kevin Graham, our VP of Engineering. Our founder and CEO, Roger Olson, still makes trips out in the field from time to time to make sure the solution is right and the customer is happy.

Some of you most likely already know me, Matt Gurney. I have been around the marketplace for 25 years, starting as a heavy equipment mechanic and eventually moving into product support and sales. After my military service, I took a position with ERIN Systems as National Product Support Manager until that company was sold. I ran a successful green waste recycling business in California prior to becoming the Southwest Territory Manager with CEC for 13 years. Recently, CEC had a major downsizing and I was invited to join the RD OLSON team. All this adds up to a full understanding of the marketplace, products, machines, and most importantly, the math required to run a profitable business.

Now you know a little about who we are. Give us a call at 503-577-7742 or drop us an email at sales@rdomfg.com to see how we can help you.
Amerimulch® recognizes the importance of safety for our employees, and just as importantly, the safety of our customers. To stand behind that statement we will be including the *Safety Brief* in each of our quarterly newsletters which will focus on a safety issue or practice. In addition, we will be expanding the safety information available on our website and all Marksman™ technology systems during 2017. Our goal is to be the industry leader in all categories including safety information and education available to our customers.

**Hopper Bridging**

One of the challenges we face in our industry is material bridging in feed hoppers. This can happen for a variety of reasons: the hopper being loaded with too much material, the hopper being fed with a loader bucket that is too large or the bulk density or weight of the fiber changing quickly during the production process. It can happen to the best of operators. The important thing to know and train all operators on is the proper procedure to take if this should occur.

Below is the step by step procedure to follow:
- STOP loading the feed hopper immediately.
- After the material has cleared the rest of the system, and any other equipment being used, STOP all other components by pressing the STOP buttons in sequence.
- Only after all the electrical-powered equipment and parts are stopped, turn off the main power supply going to the control panel.
- Next LOCKOUT and TAGOUT all power sources.
- Find safe access to the feed hopper and manually relieve the material until it is freed up once again.
- Once the system has been cleared of the problem, and once it is CERTAIN that anyone inside or near any moving parts is out of harm’s way, reverse the LOCKOUT and TAGOUT process, and then restart the system for continued production.

This procedure is simple – but it is not always followed. The main motivator in bypassing the required procedures is rushing or lack of effort from the operator. In most cases it will seem faster to relieve a bridged hopper while it is running, but it greatly increases the risk of serious or fatal injury. Unfortunately, when it works once, without an accident, workers think it is “safe,” and continue to relieve jams the “easy” way - until something bad does happen. That is why continuous training and enforcement of penalties when unsafe practices are observed is critical.
STORAGE AND MAINTENANCE OF COLORANT

As users of mulch colorant you have probably pondered the best way to store your colorant inventory. Here are some frequently asked questions and recommendations regarding colorant storage and maintenance.

**How often should I mix my colorant?**
Amerimulch® colorants have a very good shelf life if stored under suitable conditions. Our colorants are ready to use after just a brief mix. This is recommended to ensure a homogeneous blend of pigments and additives within the container. A small degree of soft settle (a thin, soft layer of pigment at the bottom of a container) may occur over time, but it can be easily remixed. 10-15 minutes of mix time prior to use and every 90 days to prevent any settling is suggested.

**Which mixing equipment should I use?**
A mixing stick on a hand drill will do the job in most cases. Getting all of the colorant evenly blended ensures consistency during your mulch coloring process and helps ensure no colorant goes to waste. The power tote mixer does the job a little faster, and with a little more zing. Using a hand mixer in the corners of a tote, then ten minutes with the power tote mixer, is the best method for any situation. Amerimulch offers a mixer that can be easily attached to your hand drill or an electric tote mixer that can be plugged into any wall outlet.

Amerimulch is an industry leader in minimizing pigment settling in the container. This is due to a superior chemical formulation and process. Which means, when a tote runs empty, it is empty with no pigment hard packed (material densely settled at the bottom of a container that cannot be easily remixed) at the bottom. No wasted colorant means no wasted money!

**What happens to mulch colorant if it freezes?**
An important thing to remember is mulch colorant is water based (as opposed to oil or solvent based). This means that it will freeze at temperatures below 32 °F. Your colorant should be stored in a heated building during winter months.

Once colorant freezes, it must be allowed to thaw and be thoroughly remixed. Multiple freeze-thaw cycles reduce the stability of the colorant and will eventually cause a hard pack condition. The colorant may be able to be used, but only after difficult and time-consuming remixing.

If you keep these few things in mind, your colorant can be stored and maintained well until it is used.
Habit #2

BEGIN WITH THE END IN MIND

Having a Plan

• I plan ahead and set goals for myself.
• I am prepared at all times.
• I think about how the choices I make will affect my future.
• I think about the positive or negative consequences of my actions before I act.

Information taken from the book - The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People®

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