

## Problems

The staff of Safety and Risk Management has pondered and discussed the possible reasons behind these sorts of statistics. Following are what we at S&RM believe are the primary problems:

- ✓ While O.U. has made it a worthwhile priority to save money by conserving water, natural gas, and electricity, freezing new hires, early retirement buyouts, and maximizing the amount of solid waste diverted from landfills, **we have not placed equivalent emphasis on prevention of workplace injuries!** That emphasis must come from the top down in the administrative chain of command. Doing so would not only help save direct medical and compensation as well as the future liability costs, but would also help reduce the human pain and suffering which results from those injuries.
- ✓ Based on numerous interviews with injured workers and their supervisors, we've found that **there seems to be a prevalent belief at O.U. that "accidents just happen"**. We now want to make a conscientious attempt to change this belief. We believe that all incidents are preventable.
- ✓ The immediate causes of most incidents and injuries are often apparent, but the more important challenge is the identification of the contributing causes (WHY it happened). Those "whys" often include **failure to enforce safety rules, failure to inspect for hazards, insufficient instructions, not following instructions, and not using proper personal protective equipment**. Everyone at O.U. needs to do a better job of uncovering the root causes of work-related injuries and making the necessary changes to prevent similar injuries in the future.
- ✓ Most unsafe acts that contribute to injuries have been observed at some time(s), but have not been addressed by co-workers or supervisors.
- ✓ We too often don't learn from our mistakes.
- ✓ Performance evaluations don't consistently include safe work performance and adherence to work rules as a criterion for judging the performance of our employees. There is no financial consequence to an individual or department for poor safety performance. Likewise, there is no financial incentive for working safely.