



# The Tool Box

Serving the Electrical, HVAC & Plumbing Industries Since 1912

Volume 4, Issue 87 October 1, 2007

## Some Companies Can't Learn From Their Mistakes

By: Tom Frisby - [www.frisbygroup.org](http://www.frisbygroup.org)

In the construction industry, most of our struggles come from *repeating our mistakes*. I can't tell you how many repetitive mistakes I have catalogued over the years, although I do know that they relate to only a few generic categories:

- People: not attracting and keeping excellent people who have a potential for growth and who do in fact grow.
- A system for performance that is communicated to the employees, and executed and challenged as time goes on to improve.
- Scheduling, Planning, Execution.
- A quality program aimed at building quality into every function of the company.
- Operating the company to provide excellent performance.
- Integrity and accountability.
- Being committed to internal and external customers alike.

The failure to attract excellent people at all levels results perhaps in having a designer on the boards who is inexperienced and incompetent, who is given the responsibility of, say, designing the skyway for the Hyatt in Kansas City where over 100 people died when the walkway collapsed. Or one slip off a beam 100 feet high from a worker not tied off. Or one failure of a contractor to give written notification.

I cannot generalize for the industry, but in my own experience in dispute resolution, I invariably discover that any specific problem I am asked to deal with has occurred repetitively with this client or the entity (entitles) he is dealing with. Safety is a good example: It is rare that I find just one bad occurrence; almost always there have been a string of smaller incidents (and often with the same supervisors).

Why do we repeat our mistakes? And what can we do about it?

One of the reasons we repeat mistakes is that the mistake doesn't seem like a big deal at the time, like the superintendent who doesn't consider it important to give written notification when the concrete pour is delayed because there wasn't a timely RFI response or to include this information in his daily report. The designer who is rushed for time and says: "If there's a problem with the drawings we can handle that in the construction phase." At that moment, it is not that important in the scheme of things, or so he thinks, but it can (and usually does) become a big deal farther down the line.

Another reason for repeating mistakes is that mistakes are tolerated. About 20 years ago I was called in to handle a serious dispute resolution matter in which the project manager created adversarial relations on the job, failed to maintain good daily records or update his schedule. Recently I was contacted by the same company to handle a claim ...yes, the same project manager, the same inattention to project record keeping, scheduling and team building. I said "no thank you" to the request.

So, here's how to prevent repetitive mistakes: First, there must be procedures and processes in the company (design, construction, owner) that are communicated to everyone who has a responsibility for project planning and execution. Those processes become EXPECTATIONS, that is: this is what our company expects you to do in this situation.

*(Continued on page 3)*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>H. R. Allen, Inc.</i>	
Mechanical Member Article	2
October Birthdays	2
Safety Tip	3
Press Release	3
Page 1 Article Continued	3
Independent Contractors V.	
Employees By: Phillip Evans	4
Message From Tom Frisby	4
Welcome New Members	4
Concerns	4
Condolences	4
Anniversaries	4
<i>3rd Annual Piedmont</i>	
Scholarship Golf Tournament	5
2007 Training Courses	
Registration Form	6
<i>Hilti, Inc.</i>	
Associate Member Article	7
Area Meeting Calendar	7
Vision/Mission Statement	8

**The 3rd Annual  
MCASC  
Piedmont Area  
Scholarship Golf  
Tournament  
Friday, Oct. 19th  
Link's O' Tryon  
Gowensville, SC  
Shotgun Start @ 9  
Registration  
Deadline  
Friday  
October 12th!  
See page 5**

**Mechanical Member:  
H. R. ALLEN, INC.**

H. R. Allen is a full service electrical and mechanical contractor. H. R. Allen was established in 1979 in Charleston, SC by Herbert R. (Roddy) Allen. Since that time H. R. Allen has grown to have a statewide presence while employing on average 250 full time employees. Many of these employees have been with the company for twenty or more years.

From June 1, 1998 until December 13, 2005, H. R. Allen was a subsidiary of IES out of Houston, Texas. On December 13, H. R. Allen was repurchased from IES and is operated with Rod Allen as president and Roddy serving as Chairman. Our electrical division serves the entire state of South Carolina while our mechanical department, which was started in 1989, serves the Lowcountry. The Charleston office also offers a full-service electrical service department. Headquarters are in Charleston, while we have additional offices in West Columbia and Piedmont. The West Columbia office was opened in 1990 and is managed by Erik Violette followed by the Piedmont office in 1994 and is managed by Brian Violette.

H. R. Allen is primarily a commercial and industrial subcontractor. Examples of our jobs include work for the Medical University of South Carolina, Lexington Medical Center, Roper Hospital, and the Anderson Medical Center. Public schools, colleges, and universities also make up a large percentage of our projects including The College of Charleston, Clemson University, and various school districts through out the state. While H. R. Allen does not maintain a permanent office in Myrtle Beach, we have several large, on-going projects in the area, including Ocean Watch Villas for Marriott, Paradise Grande, and the redevelopment at the former Myrtle Beach Air Force Base.

**H. R. Allen, Inc.  
P. O. Drawer 31898  
Charleston, SC 29417-1898  
Phone (843) 747-4100, Fax (843) 747-5238**

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**OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS**

<b>Michelle Morelli</b>	<b>10/1</b>	<b>Triad Mechanical Contractors, Inc.</b>	<b>Wife of Ken</b>
<b>Bert King</b>	<b>10/3</b>	<b>Honorary Life Member</b>	
<b>Rachel Martin</b>	<b>10/4</b>	<b>E. F. Martin Mechanical Contractors</b>	<b>Wife of Earl</b>
<b>Ophelia Brewer</b>	<b>10/5</b>	<b>Easley Mechanical</b>	<b>Wife of Steve</b>
<b>Joyce Ann Kirkland</b>	<b>10/5</b>	<b>W. N. Kirkland, Inc.</b>	<b>Wife of Gary</b>
<b>Nick Miller</b>	<b>10/13</b>	<b>Shealy &amp; Sons Electric Company, Inc.</b>	
<b>Beth Thomason</b>	<b>10/16</b>	<b>James M. Pleasants Company</b>	<b>Wife of Will</b>
<b>Frank Hill</b>	<b>10/22</b>	<b>Hill Plumbing &amp; Electric Company</b>	
<b>Junior Jones</b>	<b>10/22</b>	<b>Waldrop, Inc.</b>	
<b>Wendy Jones</b>	<b>10/23</b>	<b>The Chapman Company</b>	<b>Wife of Randy</b>
<b>Henry Poplin</b>	<b>10/23</b>	<b>B &amp; L Electric Company</b>	
<b>Beth Wilson</b>	<b>10/24</b>	<b>Control Management, Inc.</b>	<b>Wife of Phil</b>
<b>Randy Harley</b>	<b>10/26</b>	<b>Metro Electric Company, Inc.</b>	
<b>Bill Kirkland</b>	<b>10/26</b>	<b>Bill Kirkland Htg. &amp; Air Conditioning</b>	
<b>Jeannie Duke</b>	<b>10/28</b>	<b>Honorary Life Member</b>	<b>Wife of Bob</b>
<b>Jane Brailsford</b>	<b>10/30</b>	<b>Robinson McFadden</b>	<b>Wife of Dan</b>
<b>Terry Smith</b>	<b>10/30</b>	<b>RepSouth</b>	<b>Wife of Bob</b>

*Happy Birthday Members! We Would Like To Announce Yours.  
Please call the Birthday Hotline at 803-772-7834 or Email to [mflowers@mcasc.com](mailto:mflowers@mcasc.com)*

**“Tool Box Talks” - Safety Tip****Hazard Communication (Right to Know)**

Right-to-know refers to your "right to know" what hazardous chemicals and materials you may be exposed to on the jobsite. You should be aware of the potential hazards in order to properly prepare yourself to work with the materials. We cannot eliminate hazardous substances, but we can greatly reduce the danger in dealing with them.

Every hazardous substance that has been identified has a Material Safety Data Sheet or M.S.D.S., which tells you what the substance is, what possible dangers you might encounter while using the product and how to properly protect yourself from the substance. The MSDS will list any personal protective equipment required with use of that particular substance.

Each project manager has a set of MSDS's. Do you know where they are located? Have you ever opened them up and pulled out the MSDS for the substances you use in your particular task each day? If you have not, do it today. Read over the description and make sure that you are using the proper protective equipment.

Maybe you do not think that you use hazardous substances. Here are some common items that are considered hazardous and may be found on a jobsite:

- Welding and Cutting Gases
- Adhesives
- Solvents
- Fuels
- Concrete and related compounds

Many items may not seem hazardous, but become hazardous when handled improperly. Think about the substances you use and check for an MSDS so that you really know how to use that substance and what equipment you need to make sure you are not exposed to a hazard.

**If you are not sure what you are working with, ASK. Be safe and not sorry.**

**The "right to know" about the substances we work with is yours.**

**By: Mel Rosas – RSS Safety, LLC**

**1122 Industrial Drive, Suite 109, Matthews, NC 28105**

**Telephone (704) 844-2519 Fax (704) 844-0291**

**Press Release**

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina and the Associated Builders and Contractors of the Carolinas were recently awarded a Career Cluster Partnership Grant of \$150,000.00 from the South Carolina Department of Education. Initiatives by the collaborative efforts of these leading industry associations and the department of education will be focused upon the development of the next generation of workforce and the identification of career opportunities in the construction industry in South Carolina. Primary emphasis will be placed upon making middle and high school students, school administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents fully aware of the multiple career paths available within the construction industry. Further information on this effort can be obtained via the internet by going to [www.ccp-sc.org](http://www.ccp-sc.org)

*(continued from page 1)*

Then there must be a control mechanism (a check and balance) to assure that the process is being followed. The control mechanism must be fairly close to real time, instead of getting to the end of the job and discovering what went wrong.

I hate *post-mortems*, which means everyone getting together at the end of the bad job and using 20/20 hindsight to figure out when and why this project went in the “can.” I prefer *pre-mortems*, which happen prior to the job’s beginning, with the staff planning how to make it successful and then monitoring the project as it unfurls against given guidelines.

Lastly, the best way to avoid repetitive mistakes is displaying an INTOLERANCE of failing to execute those steps required (and communicated through the procedures) for a successful project.

It is tolerable to make a mistake – but only the first time. And it’s wise to keep in mind this trite but important saying: “Fool me once, shame on you. Fool me twice, shame on me.”

## Independent Contractors v. Employees

**By: Phillip Evans – Smith Kesler & Co., PA, CPA**

Worker classification is a hotly contested audit issue that has caused anxiety for business owners all across the country. Whether a worker is classified as an employee or as an independent contractor can mean a substantial difference in the amount of employment taxes that the business pays. And, as stories in the popular press have underlined, an incorrect classification can lead to interest, penalties and tax liens that can cripple an otherwise successful business.

The IRS, not just business, has felt pressure on this issue. It has now responded with the announcement of a three-pronged relief package that goes some way towards alleviating businesses' well-founded fears. As a result of the initiatives, many businesses will be able to operate with less downside exposure in dealing with worker misclassification. And others may be able to formulate plans for structuring their work force with more certainty that they will be able to withstand a challenge from the IRS.

Foremost in the relief package, the IRS has revised the rule book used by its employment tax agents. The new Manual is good news not only because IRS agents must now conform to one set of rules on worker classification, but also because preventative steps can be taken in light of the Service's current thinking.

Second, a business that may have in fact misclassified workers as independent contractors may be able to strike a deal by paying back taxes, interest and penalties up to what, practically speaking, amounts to an 87.5-percent discount. This program, can be a relatively easy way to put what might otherwise be large misclassification headaches behind you. It is, however, only available if information returns have been properly filed.

Finally, businesses that do have a classification controversy arise during an audit no longer need to have it hanging over their heads while other audit issues are resolved. A new, early referral system is being tested for a year. It will allow a business to go straight to IRS Appeals on the employment controversy, saving time and money. This also means that some businesses can afford to take a more aggressive position in defending their classification of workers since the audit process is less damaging.

In light of the IRS's predominantly pro-taxpayer initiatives, you may want to re-examine your worker classifications at this time. Even when potential employment tax liabilities are not overwhelming, it's important to remember that misclassification can also cause pension plan difficulties.

### MESSAGE FROM TOM FRISBY

"Most people in this industry view me as obsessed with PREVENTION. Prevent claims, prevent poor workmanship, prevent needless expenditure of dollars, prevent accidents. But I guess I forgot about prevention where health was concerned and just recently was diagnosed with colon cancer. Fortunately, the operation was a success and it was caught early before it had spread, so I am quite all right except for a sore stomach. The point is, that after fifty I could have avoided colon cancer altogether. In my case, I am practically a poster boy for good diets (little red meat, no junk food, plenty of vegetables and fruit and fiber, lots of exercise), but apparently little polyps develop in the colon which can become cancerous if not detected early and removed. So, my message is, to those of you who are fifty and/or have family members who have had colon cancer, is that you routinely have the colonoscopy that will detect any problems so they can be dealt with quickly. In my case, great health was almost deadly, because I didn't see doctors for checkups since I was in such good health. And no doctor ever recommended to me that I have a colonoscopy, perhaps because I was in such good health for an old guy. And even though my mother had colon cancer. At age 75. My surgery was one week after my 75th birthday. Take care of yourself."

### Condolences

**Buddy Davis & Family  
Central Htg. & A/C Service - Columbia  
On the loss of his father  
Melvin H. Davis**

### Welcome New Members

**Better get recruiting!!!!  
No new members this month.**

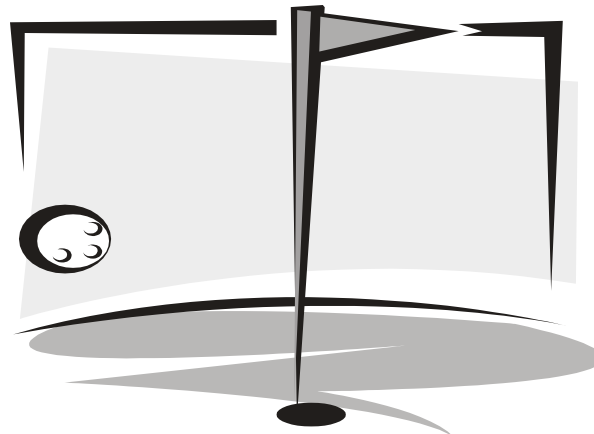
### Happy Anniversary

**Mr. & Mrs. Harry King - 10/9  
Mr. & Mrs. Paul Prevatte - 10/19  
Mr. & Mrs. Bob Townsend - 10/27**

### Concerns

**Lisa Buck - Metro Electric, Charleston  
Carol Forsberg - Metro Electric, Charleston  
Tom Frisby - The Frisby Group, Piedmont  
Pat Hough - Gateway Supply, Columbia  
Ray Merritt - Cullum Mechanical, Columbia**

# 3rd Annual Piedmont Mechanical Contractors Association Scholarship Golf Tournament



When: Friday, October 19, 2007

Time: 9:00 AM Shotgun Start

Where: Link's O'Tryon Golf Course

Cost: \$75.00 per person: includes green fee, cart, lunch and prize money

Format: Captains Choice

Note: Fill out and return to Jimmy Champion at Waldrop, Inc. by October 12, 2007

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Handicap: \_\_\_\_\_ Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

\* \$ 75.00 is due by Friday, October 12, 2007

Contacts: Jimmy Champion - Waldrop, Inc. PHONE: 864-578-7252 FAX: 864-578-3419  
 Bill Caldwell - Waldrop, Inc.  
 Mike Pitts - Johnson Controls, Inc. PHONE: 864-234-5160 FAX: 864-676-1174

**SPONSORSHIP LEVELS:** GOLD \$500.00 \_\_\_\_\_ *Plaque and Banner*  
 SILVER \$250.00 \_\_\_\_\_ *Plaque and Hole Sponsor*  
 BRONZE \$100.00 \_\_\_\_\_ *Hole Sponsor*



# MCASC 2007 COURSE REGISTRATION



COMPLETE AND FAX OR MAIL TO MCASC  
 P.O. BOX 384, COLUMBIA, SC 29202  
 TELEPHONE #: 803-772-7834 FAX #: 803-731-0390  
 EMAIL: mflowers@mcasc.com WEBSITE: www.mcasc.com

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_ **COMPANY:** \_\_\_\_\_

**ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_ **PHONE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **FAX:** \_\_\_\_\_

**CITY:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **ZIP:** \_\_\_\_\_ **EMAIL ADDRESS:** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAME ON LICENSE:** \_\_\_\_\_ **LICENSE NO.:** \_\_\_\_\_ **STATE:** \_\_\_\_\_

Payment Method

Please Invoice

Check Enclosed for \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**NOTE:**  
 WE OFFER A DISCOUNT  
 IF YOUR COMPANY REGISTERS  
 THREE (3) OR MORE  
 FOR THE SAME COURSE.

**NOTE:**  
 All Courses Will Be Held At  
 The MCASC State Office  
 Training Facility  
 1504 Morninghill Drive  
 Columbia, SC

**NOTICE:**  
 ANYONE FAILING TO WITHDRAW FROM A COURSE  
 TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO ITS START WILL BE BILLED  
 FOR THE ENTIRE COST OF THE COURSE.

**PLEASE PLACE A CHECK BESIDE EACH COURSE YOU WISH TO REGISTER FOR:**

NC & GA APPROVED  
 Piping Tips For Better  
 Hydronic Systems  
 October 3, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

NC & GA APPROVED  
 T. G. I. M. - Thank Goodness  
 It's Monday  
 October 17, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

NC, GA & AL APPROVED  
 Collections In The  
 Construction Industry  
 October 24, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

NC & GA APPROVED  
 Pump Maintenance  
 November 7, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$ 175.00 Non-Member: \$ 225.00

NC, GA & AL APPROVED  
 Measuring & Maximizing  
 Employee Productivity  
 November 28, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

**NOTE:**  
*Alabama Approval Pending  
 On Some Courses*

NC & GA APPROVED  
 T. G. I. M. - Thank Goodness  
 It's Monday  
 December 5, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$ 175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

NC & GA APPROVED  
 Boiler Installation  
 December 12, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

NC, GA & AL APPROVED  
 Surviving An OSHA Inspection  
 December 19, 2007 - Columbia  
 Time: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM  
 Member: \$175.00 Non-Member: \$225.00

**Associate Member:  
HILTI, INC.**

As a world-leader in manufacturing and supplying quality, innovative tools and fastening systems, Hilti also offers one of the industry's most innovative services.

The first of its kind, the Hilti Tool Fleet Management Program covers every aspect of tool management, including a comprehensive tool fleet review and recommendations based on tool usage and tool age. The program helps ensure that the tools provided feature the latest in safety and technology, yet also optimize the administrative costs and cash flow.

Another example of Hilti innovation is the new line of Lithium-Ion cordless tools, including the SID 144-A and SIW 144-A Cordless Impact Driver and Impact Wrench. Both deliver reliable, long-lasting power for fastening in various applications using screws or bolts.

Additionally, Hilti has a complete line of firestop solutions for the mechanical industry. The Hilti CP 680-P/M Cast-In Place devices provide a one-step firestop solution with an integrated smoke, fire and water seal for various pipe materials and diameters. CP 680-P/M offers a complete solution for virtually all penetrations through cast-concrete slabs by installing the device upfront, before pouring the concrete. This turnkey solution eliminates the need for going back to the same opening to firestop in a project's later stages.

**Hilti, Inc.  
Columbia, SC  
Contact: Sean O'Hara  
Phone: (803) 665-1964, Fax: (803) 758-5154**

**Congratulations to our next Associate & Mechanical Members who will be highlighted in the upcoming issue of "The Tool Box":  
Johnstone Supply, Greenville - Associate Member  
Control Management, Inc., Columbia - Mechanical Member**

**OCTOBER 2007 MONTHLY AREA MEETINGS**

**MIDLANDS AREA JOINT MEETING WITH ASHRAE**  
WEDNESDAY, October 3, 2007 @ 5:00 PM (Note: Change)  
Location: Mill Creek Hunt Club, Bluff Road, Columbia  
Sponsored By: Control Management, Inc.

**Topic:** Health Insurance & Employee Benefits  
Cost Control & Trends  
**Speaker:** Kevin Wood  
Endeavor Employer Services

**PIEDMONT AREA**  
Tuesday, October 9, 2007 @ 6:00 PM  
Location: 70 Chrome Drive, Greenville  
Sponsored By: Gateway Supply Co., Inc.

**Topic:** Developing & Implementing  
An Effective Safety Program  
**Speaker:** David Rhyne  
Johnson Controls, Inc.

**PEE DEE AREA**  
Thursday, October 18, 2007 @ 6:30 PM  
Location: Red Bone Alley, Florence Mall, Florence  
Sponsored By: Carolina Insulation Contractors

**Topic:** Educational Opportunities For  
Project Managers & Job Foremen  
**Speaker:** Harry King  
James M. Pleasants Company

**COASTAL AREA**  
Tuesday, October 23, 2007 @ 6:00 PM  
Location: 1553 Kings St. Ext., Charleston  
Sponsored By: Transworld, Inc.

**Topic:** Educational Opportunities For  
Project Managers & Job Foremen  
**Speaker:** Harry King  
James M. Pleasants Company



P.O. Box 384, 29202  
1504 Morninghill Drive  
Columbia, SC 29210  
Phone: (803) 772-7834  
Fax: (803) 731-0390  
E-mail: mflowers@mcasc.com  
www.mcasc.com

*Serving mechanical contractors in  
South Carolina since 1912.*

**MCASC Executive Board & Staff**

Henry Poplin, President  
Chris Cullum, Vice-President  
Richard Miller, Jr., Treasurer  
Steve Brewer, Secretary  
Bob Jacques, Associate President  
Mona Flowers, Managing Director

Mechanicals make it happen -  
Be part of the best!

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PAID  
COLUMBIA, SC  
PERMIT NO 750

**MCASC Vision Statement**

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina will be the leading construction association in South Carolina for specialty contractors and suppliers in the mechanical, electrical, and plumbing fields by serving its membership, the industry, and the community in a vibrant and harmonious fashion.

**MCASC Mission Statement**

The Mechanical Contractors Association of South Carolina will provide its membership with:

- current business/technical information and support
  - a proactive political/legislative agenda
- a joint industry collaboration to improve relative business practices
- an ongoing effort to offer training opportunities for both professional and craft personnel
  - educational scholarships for deserving students
- the development of industry related career opportunities

The Association's objective for this mission is to enhance the future of the Construction Industry in South Carolina.