



PASS Safety Team Attends ASSE Conference

In late June, members of the PASS Air Traffic Organization (ATO) Safety Team held a national meeting in Atlanta, Ga., that coincided with the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) conference and exposition. The ASSE conference is an annual event providing an opportunity for Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) professionals to learn from recognized speakers, visit with vendors and informational booths, and connect with other safety professionals. The event in Atlanta was the ideal chance for the ATO Safety Team not only to meet and plan for the future, but also to learn important safety-related information and updates.

“PASS safety representatives are essential to ensuring a safe ATO workplace,” said Ray Baggett, PASS National ATO safety representative. “Our workplace safety representatives provide the link between safety theory and the application of those ideas in the real ATO workplace. At the conference, we learned a lot about safety regulations, standards, and industry practices. We saw new products yet to be implemented into the ATO. Being able to step outside of the ATO environment to take a look at how things are done in other industries was invaluable.”

The PASS ATO national and regional safety representatives who went to the conference were able to attend educational sessions covering international building codes and standards, electrical safety, fall protection, hazardous material storage, and many others. “Attending the conference with industry workplace safety professionals from around the globe gave us a firsthand opportunity to compare the state of the ATO’s OSH program with standard industry practice,” said Baggett. “PASS workplace representatives often report hearing from the agency that the OSH standards that PASS expects the agency to meet are abnormal, or over-the-top. What we heard from industry safety experts and leaders during the conference indicates quite the contrary.”

“The briefings and educational sessions we attended every day showed us that what we are seeing with the FAA is not uncommon,” added BJ Dye, PASS Region II safety representative from the Central region. “These same issues are being seen in the private sector. Their issues are our issues. We’re seeing the same type of people doing the same thing, and encountering the same kind of problems.”

Tom Granitto, PASS Region I safety representative from the New England region, agreed. “The biggest thing for me was seeing the number of people and groups that were there to focus on safety—the different companies and organization from all over the world,” he said. “I knew safety was a big deal, but I had no idea there were so many people out there doing what we do as safety reps. It was amazing.”

“I was impressed with the amount of people, time and resources committed to OSH in workplace,” said Robert Seagrave, chair of the PASS National Safety Committee and PASS Region I safety representative from the Eastern region. “It was readily apparent the amount of energy and dedication OSH people commit to their professions—it’s not just a job!”



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“As soon as we walked in, it was confirmation that what we are doing is what we should be doing in terms of trying to keep the workplace safe,” said Ralph Kyniston, PASS Region I safety representative from the Great Lakes region. “Those attending the conference reinforced all we we’re doing, and made me realize how much more we had to learn. I thought I knew a bit about safety, but we are really just starting to scratch the surface. When it comes to safety, there is so much more to learn.”

Ron Pevehouse, PASS Region III safety representative from the Western Pacific region, agreed that there was a lot to be learned related to safety. He found a workshop on safety and common sense especially interesting. “It put the idea of common sense into a different perspective for me,” he said. “Common sense is a learned or taught decision tool in the workplace. We shouldn’t be learning about safety through errors or accidents.”

“We were able to see how theory and new products can be used to help us get our work done safely and efficiently,” said Baggett. “The challenge is showing the FAA that ATO workplace safety must evolve at the same rate as the rest of the workplace safety world. The ATO workforce deserves nothing less.”

“After three days of mingling with the OSH crowd, and despite recent strides by the FAA, it was obvious just how far the FAA has to go in the OSH arena,” added Seagrave. “I was reminded how important PASS’s role is in driving the OSH culture within the FAA in order to protect our members. During the conference, I was reminded the job that PASS’s safety representatives perform every day is absolutely vital to ensuring all of our members are safe in the workplace each and every day, and that can never be taken for granted.”