



Make **SAFETY** A Way of Life!" one day at a time!

February Daily Safety Topics

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Unsafe Shortcuts February 3

We all like to get our work done without unnecessary effort, getting the most out of the time and energy we spend on each task. And sometimes this attitude helps us find a better way of getting things done.

But at other times, when it leads us to take shortcuts, it can put us on a direct route to trouble. All of us at some time or another have exposed ourselves to possible harm by shortcutting rather than taking the few extra steps required by the safe way. As kids, we hopped the fence instead of using the gate; now we cross the street between the intersections.

A successful shortcut—meaning one that results in no damage—nevertheless has a downside. It gives us the feeling that we can always substitute the quick way for the tried-and-true safe way and get out of it in one piece. Unfortunately, that feeling can be misleading.

Take the case of the worker on a ladder who is almost finished with the job except for just a little bit that can be done by reaching farther than the safety guidelines call for. It's decision time: get down, move the ladder, and climb up again, or take a chance.

What are the possible outcomes? The worker may luck out and finish the job by reaching, with no trouble. Or leaning too far to the side may cause the ladder to topple and the worker to fall, resulting in a concussion, a broken leg, or a broken neck.

What kind of choice was that? One way, the safe way, the odds are 100 to 1 in your favor. There's no way of knowing the exact odds on a given shortcut—but it's surely less than 100 to 1. So the decision to take a chance was not a wise one. Risking your neck to save a few minutes of time is a bad gamble.

Of course, when you come right down to it, most of the shortcuts people take aren't really aimed at saving time. People take shortcuts because doing things the safe way is "too much bother." To avoid all this bother, they will:

- Use the wrong tool instead of going to fetch the right one
- Lift too heavy a load instead of getting extra help
- Use a sander or chipper without putting on the safety goggles.

In every one of these cases, they will have avoided the bother they had in mind, all right, but they may run into some bother they didn't expect. Like, for example, a particle in the eye that requires first aid or more extensive treatment. Or a back-muscle strain that results in several days' lost time. Or worse!

I'm willing to bet that every one of you has sometime in the last couple of month's cut a corner or two off the safe way. You really knew better, but you did it anyway. I don't want to hear about it; this is not "true confession" time. What I do want you to do is think very hard about what could have happened as a result of that shortcut. And remember that the same possible result is lying in wait every time you try the same thing again. The odds may have shifted, though, so think hard again. Is it really worth the gamble?

The safe work practices that have been established here are designed to protect you. If they sometimes involve a little "bother," that should be regarded as a small price to pay for safety.

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Safety Doesn't Stop at the Exit February 4

You've finished work for the day-or night. Now you can relax and forget about the job. Good. Forget about the nagging little details of your workday, who got on your nerves, and what you didn't like about your lunch. Step away and leave all that behind. But for goodness sake—or, rather, for your sake—don't forget about safety!

Off-the-job accidents can be just as serious as those that happen at work—just as disabling or just as fatal. So it's just as important as it is at work not to let those accidents happen! Probably the first thing you do when you leave work is get in your car. That means the second thing you should do is buckle your seat belt. Of course, if the weather is bad, the very first thing you'll want to do is clean the snow and ice off the car window, hood, and roof so that your vision can't be obscured while you're driving. (By the way, have you replaced the windshield wipers recently? Is the windshield in good condition—easy to see through?) Now, don't start thinking about arriving home; think about driving there—carefully, and as slowly as necessary in order to be safe.

When you do get there, try something different today. If there's a pet to be kissed, and spouse or kids to pat, go ahead. But then, take a careful look around. In other words, do a safety inspection of your own premises. If there's a mat inside the door, is it secure, or is someone likely to trip over it? What about the rest of the rugs and flooring? Is there a danger spot where someone has already had a fall or a near accident? Make this the day you retack a carpet that's coming up, or skidproof any area rugs. Are there any stairways in your home? Make sure the lighting there is good, the handrail secure, and any carpeting completely trip-resistant.

Trips and falls are so common in the home, in fact, that preventing them should be a number one priority in your residential safety review. Clear up any areas that are too cluttered for walking safely. Make sure no cables and electrical or telephone cords cross anyone's possible path. In the bathroom, where many falls occur, keep the floors wiped dry and install a nonskid type of mat by the tub or shower. In addition, a rubber mat or antiskid adhesive inside the tub or shower may prevent a bad accident.

Falls are also a potential hazard whenever you're climbing—whether it's an extension ladder that enables you to clean the roof gutters, a stepladder for repainting a bedroom ceiling, or even the kitchen step stool.

Have you been trained in electrical safety at work? Being safe at home also means being safe with electricity. Never disable the grounding plug on a three-prong appliance. Disconnect an appliance by grasping the plug as you pull, so that you won't damage it. Replace worn cords promptly. Water and electricity just don't mix. Never put electric appliances in a sink full of water; instead, wipe them with a damp cloth. Don't place electrical appliances next to the tub, sink, or shower. Don't enter a flooded basement if electrical appliances are present under water. Have the electric company turn off your power, first.

Fire is probably the most feared home hazard, so it's wise to prepare for emergencies before they happen. Smoke detectors are essential and do save lives. Rope ladders enable exit from upper floors. The whole family should learn and practice escape routes, including an agreed on meeting place away from the immediate area.

You probably already know many other home safety issues, and most of the rules. What's important, though, is following the rules. Let safety become second nature to you at work and after work, wherever you are.

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Foul Weather Driving February 5

Bad weather affects all roads. Our interstate system is a marvelous example of modern engineering, but no matter how good the road is, it is dangerous when there is sleet, snow, or ice on the roadway. Speed must be reduced on slippery roads.

When road conditions are slippery, drivers must look farther ahead so they can anticipate emergencies and avoid the need for sudden maneuvers. Last-second stops and turns cause most skids on slippery pavements.

Extra care must be taken on hills. Brake over the top of blind hills at a speed that will permit you to bring your vehicle to a stop in case the highway isn't clear ahead. On a downgrade, both loss of traction and gravity are working against you.

Don't attempt to drive around or through a scene where other vehicles have obviously had trouble with the road conditions. The same conditions that caused their trouble may still be there when you arrive. When there is no room to get through, you must be prepared to stop.

During the winter months, snow- and ice-covered truck lots are prevalent. Good drivers will allow more clearance between their vehicles and fixed objects when maneuvering on bad surfaces. A pile of snow or an ice rut may throw vehicles off just enough to cause them to strike a stationary object if not enough clearance has been allowed.

Drivers of vehicles with air brakes must take care to protect their air supply in freezing weather. Brakeline freeze can be annoying and dangerous. Many newer trucks are equipped with synthetic air lines, so the old solution of melting the ice with a fuse or torch is no longer a quick solution. If the vehicle is not equipped with an air dryer or other means of automatically expelling water and other contaminants from air tanks, the driver must take the time to manually drain the air tanks every day.

The lighting systems of vehicles become especially important during the winter months. Nights are longer, and visibility is often reduced by bad weather. Electrical systems are winter-sensitive. Approximately 80 percent of all light bulb failure is due to environmental reasons. Drivers must inspect their lights more often during the winter and clean them when necessary so they can see and be seen by other highway users.

Foul weather driving is much more strenuous. Drivers need proper rest before every trip, and while enroute, fresh air helps keep drivers alert. An open window is an old safety practice, and it helps drivers hear what is going on around their vehicles.

After all precautions are taken and good practices are followed, there still will be occasions when conditions become too hazardous to proceed. Good drivers will pull off the road at the first safe place, notify their companies of the delay, and wait until conditions improve before continuing.

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The Right Safety Attitude February 6

Employees are paid to get out production, and there can be no quarrel with the worker who gives his or her all toward this end. However, this doesn't mean you have to take safety shortcuts, since statistics indicate that accident prevention and high production go together like peanut butter and jelly, or April showers and May flowers.

Accidents cost money, and must be paid for by the company. This cost is not like the cost of materials, equipment, or wages. It is a total loss, to say nothing of the loss and suffering of the injured employee. There is no return for the company or the injured employee on money spent as the result of an accident. Look at it this way: An accident-free business is a profitable business.

When you buy a house, a car, or any large item, you weigh the advantages and disadvantages before you invest your money. The same is true of investing your time and effort in safety, with one exception. You may decide to forego the expense of a new car, but you should not, in fact cannot, afford to forego your "safety investment."

A good safety attitude toward laws, rules, and housekeeping practices is the best way to protect yourself and your fellow employees from accidents. People with lackadaisical attitudes about safety blame accidents on the "law of averages." But accidents don't just happen—they are caused. Most accidents happen as a result of an unsafe condition, a poor attitude, or both.

People with bad attitudes are showing disregard for themselves and others. Just look at traffic accidents, for example. Research shows that bad driving attitudes often cause unsafe acts, and unsafe acts are involved in most accidents. The same is true in your job. People who take chances—trying to repair machines while they are running, or removing a guard to make the work go quicker—are showing a bad safety attitude. You can never be smart enough or quick enough to beat the odds!

What about good attitudes toward safety? All of us are required to follow certain procedures in our jobs, but your best defense against injury is a good safety attitude.

One way to build a good safety attitude is to learn your job well. Know the hazards and know the safeguards. If you understand your work, you will have a better understanding of the importance of safe work practices and a good safety attitude.

Another indication of a good safety attitude is to set an example for others. If you see a piece of scrap on the floor, take the time to pick it up, because it could cause an injury to someone else. This may sound too simple to work, but it really does. Safe attitudes are contagious.

If you run into a problem that you're not sure you can handle safely on your own, report it to your supervisor or manager, who is in the best position to correct the problem quickly.

Another key to working and being safe is communication. Here's your chance to tell us what safety items you are concerned about. Tell us what hazards you have seen recently. Is there a condition you know about which could cause an injury? Is there a suggestion that you feel would help prevent an injury? It is part of the company's safety attitude that you are in an excellent position to spot the signs of potential trouble. So all your comments will be reviewed and corrective action will be taken promptly.

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Survivors of natural disasters can be at risk for serious cold illness. Rescue crews and cleanup workers are also subject to this potentially fatal condition.

Emergency preparedness includes knowing how to prevent and treat serious cold illness. Hypothermia is a dangerous lowering of the body's core temperature because the body is losing heat faster than it can produce it.

This condition occurs when the person is exposed to wet, cold and windy conditions without shelter or when wearing wet or inadequate clothing.

Natural disasters and other types of emergencies can put you in this situation. You may be living outdoors after an earthquake, cleaning up after a flood, stranded in a vehicle in a winter storm or staying in a house without electrical power because of an ice storm.

Prevent hypothermia by wearing adequate clothing. Dress in layers so you can add or remove clothing as conditions change. Wear a hat and keep your gloves and socks dry. It is important to avoid getting sweaty because this can also lead to chills and hypothermia. Keep dry. Change if footwear, gloves or other clothing gets wet. Working in water cooler than 75 degrees Fahrenheit (24 degrees Celsius) will deplete body heat faster than it can be replaced.

Keep clothing and blankets in your vehicle and emergency kit. Be prepared for cold weather survival when you are engaged in outdoor sports such as hiking or skiing. Learn how to build a fire and a shelter in the wilderness. Supply your vehicle with matches and a candle in a coffee can for a makeshift heater. If you live in a cool climate, establish alternative heating in your home which does not require electricity.

Keep your strength up by avoiding overexertion and fatigue. Drink plenty of fluids, but don't eat snow as a water replacement, since it will only chill you further. Eat high energy foods to replace calories needed for body heat.

Watch for warning signs of hypothermia in yourself and companions. These include uncontrollable shivering, mental confusion, slurred speech, drowsiness and excessive fatigue.

If hypothermia is suspected, seek medical care immediately. If you can't reach medical help, start warming the person slowly. Get the person into dry clothing and wrap in warm blankets covering the head. Warm the body core first. Do not warm the arms and legs first because this can drive cold blood to the heart and possibly cause heart failure. You can lie down and use your own body heat to help warm the person.

Do not give the person alcohol or beverages containing caffeine. Avoid both hot or cold drinks; instead give warm water or warm broth.

A natural disaster or another emergency can throw you from your sheltered world into the cold outdoors. Learn how to prevent, recognize and treat hypothermia — just in case.

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Another Highway Hazard: ‘Road Rage’ February 10

Is there anyone here who hasn't read at least one horror story about an angry motorist taking "revenge"—even to the extent of a fatal shooting—against someone who cut in front of him, or sounded a horn too loud or too often?

More to the point, is there any one of us (including myself) who hasn't been severely annoyed by someone who tailgated us or who wouldn't move over to let us on the highway? And haven't we sometimes dreamed of, or even indulged in, some minor retaliation—not homicide, of course, but a loud beep or an offensive gesture? We've excused ourselves by saying that it's a way of letting off a little steam, calming us down so that we can get back to concentrating on a safe drive.

Unfortunately, nowadays an angry response from us may be like waving the cape in front of the bull—asking for real trouble. So in a sense, your own anger has put you in danger.

Reasons

Why is this? Behavior experts have come up with a number of possible explanations for this rapidly increasing type of attitude and action. They've even coined a name for it: "road rage."

The most common theory is that the stresses of everyday life—both on and off the job—have for many people become so intense that it leads to a coping mechanism they may not even be consciously aware of.

It supposedly goes something like this: "My boss treats me unfairly; I'm doing more work for little if any more money—and could even lose my job at any time; I'm not getting the attention and support I need from my boyfriend/girlfriend, husband/wife, or friends; prices and taxes are getting way out of hand. But by gosh, when I'm in my car, I'm in charge. Nobody's going to push me around here. So if you know what's good for you, you'll stay out of my way!" Of course, this is not verbalized; it's an attitude.

Responses

What should you do when you encounter this kind of attitude on the road—either in another driver or, for that matter, in yourself? First of all, exert whatever effort it takes to refocus your mind. Ask yourself whether your true goal is to win some kind of competition with the other drivers on the road, to get where you're going a little faster, or to reach your destination in one piece by being a cool head rather than a hothead.

Let's assume you've given yourself the commonsense answer to that question. Now what? Now concentrate on not allowing the situation to escalate. Don't let either your own anger or the other driver's put your safety at risk. Patiently remind yourself that the more courteous driver—you—is the better driver—you. So yield the right-of-way even to someone who obviously isn't proceeding in the right way. Then congratulate yourself on having been wise enough to avoid a confrontation in what could very likely have been a lose-lose situation.

Rewards

Sometimes this is easier said than done, of course. But it will be worth the effort, not only by increasing your odds of a safe trip but for peace of mind. You'll know you've used mature, sound judgment; you can feel superior to that clod who cut you off; and you'll actually have avoided an increase in your own level of stress. "Road rage" is like a contagious disease. Protect yourself from it with daily doses of common sense and safety consciousness and by steering clear of any obviously infected drivers you see on the road with you.

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Job Briefings February 11

Job briefings are not only an important aspect of our daily work habits, they are also mandated through OSHA. In 29CFR1910.269 (c) it states, we the employer shall ensure that the employee in charge conducts, a job briefing with the employees involved before they start each job. You noticed it said each job and not just at the beginning of each day.

The only time just one daily job briefing is needed, is when all the jobs are similar in nature. This would pertain to production workers on an assembly line. In our line of work there are no two jobs that are similar.

Our company policy states that whenever it becomes necessary to replace the person in charge and/or a worker during an on going job, a new briefing must be conducted. It also goes on to state that, if the status of a job changes, work is temporarily stopped, or unexpected conditions arise a new job briefing is required. It is also important that everyone on that job is involved in this briefing.

The following Five Steps are to be utilized in each briefing, no matter if you're working alone or in a group.

1. All Hazard Associated with the job. This includes all hazards physical, mechanical & natural.
2. Work procedures involved, proper tools needed, clearances, hold offs, what each individual will be doing and where they will be doing it from, etc.
3. Any special precautions or unique situations particular to that job, any mechanical limitations etc.
4. Energy source controls, proper tagging, grounding, clearances etc. Clear and concise communications with dispatch.
5. Proper PPE, safety glasses, hard hats, face shields, rubber gloves, etc. Is any special PPE's required for this particular job?

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Some members of the animal kingdom are able to see what's going on behind them without turning their heads. The human animal can't do that. Therefore, we face an extra challenge when we have to drive in reverse. Most backing-up accidents occur at speeds under five miles per hour. But they still result in significant damage to vehicles and other property, may even cause serious injury, and are sure to wreck the driver's safety record. Reviewing and following safe backing practices can reduce such accidents. I have a list of 12. How many do you know and practice?

1. **Plan and drive your routes to avoid backing wherever possible.** This may mean a few extra steps to get from the vehicle to the worksite, but walking is good for you.

2. If you pass the place you are looking for, beware of drifting back. Your slow progress when looking for the right address might be the reason that the car behind you pulled up so close. If you have a clear view of what is behind, check the mirror, turn around, and then put the vehicle in reverse. If there is a remote possibility of a blind spot, get out and look before you have an accident.

3. When obligated to back up, make absolutely sure there is nothing behind, and then back up immediately. Do not look and then wait for a while before backing up, because conditions could change.

4. Use all mirrors when backing—right, left, rear, and the overhead too if there is one. You can't see any of the mirrors if you are hanging out of the driver's door to see what is behind you. Besides, you could damage the door if it strikes an object.

5. If it is necessary to back up some distance, travel slowly and stop part way, then get out and check your safe progress.

6. If you are driving a big truck, and there is help available to assist you in backing, **use it.** Have the guide stand to the side and give a hand/arm signal because a vocal signal may not be heard. Never let the guide get directly behind the truck. If that does happen, stop until the guide is alongside. Remember that safe backing up is still your responsibility as the driver, even if you have a guide.

7. **Park where you will not have to back up to get out of a parking spot.** Always pull away from a parking place in forward gear, if possible.

8. If you miss your turn at an intersection, don't back around a corner to change direction. Instead, drive on and around the block. The extra few minutes might save someone else's car from damage.

9. If you have to park in a driveway, back in if possible, so that when leaving, you can drive forward rather than backing into the street.

10. When backing over a sidewalk and into a street, stop at the sidewalk and make sure there are no small children playing close by. Stop again at the curb to make a last check on traffic before backing into the street.

11. Remember that, when backing, a turn of the steering wheel turns the front of the vehicle in the opposite direction. While backing, the front wheels should be in line with the back wheels until objects on each side have cleared the front bumper.

12. Before backing into an unfamiliar area, get out and look for stakes, holes, and sharp objects.

These commonsense precautions came from assorted drivers with good safety records after driving many miles—both forward and backward.

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Exercise for Health February 13

Occupational safety and health has expanded its scope in recent years. However, a missing ingredient has been the physical preparedness to meet the work requirements.

General Condition

Anyone who is not physically prepared to perform the assigned tasks is more likely to suffer from strains, sprains, backaches, slips, falls, and other injuries than someone who is in condition. People who are not in good physical condition may be excessively overweight and may experience shortness of breath, fatigue, sore or tender muscles and joints, backache, and difficulty in keeping up with other individuals.

Athletic coaches realize the importance of conditioning in reducing the risk of injury.

They require their players to be mentally alert during the entire game and to have stamina to execute plays properly.

In the same way, we want to help you make sure you are physically and mentally prepared to work safely.

Exercise

Exercise is important in maintaining your health and well-being. While it isn't necessary to build muscles the way bodybuilders do, daily exercise improves muscle tone, helps circulation, and strengthens the cardiovascular system.

Before beginning any extensive exercise program, consult a physician who can recommend how much activity—and of what sort—is best for you. That will take into account your age, your present physical condition, the level of your present activities and the kind of exercise you enjoy.

Start your physical activity program gradually with conditioning exercises, and keep workouts moderate. If you haven't been getting much exercise lately, 15 minutes of simple exercise each day may be enough at the beginning of your program.

Aside from calisthenics or "sitting-up exercises," other activities that promote physical preparedness include walking, bicycling, swimming, and jogging. But no matter what form of exercise you choose, the sessions should start with some slow and easy warm-up movements. More strenuous exercise will take up the main part of the session, and then milder, slower exercises will help cool your body down and slow your pulse rate gradually.

Remember to limit your session to a length of time that feels comfortable to you, increasing the time and the number of reps as you begin to feel stronger. But stay alert to signs that you may be overdoing it. Pain and shortness of breath are definite "slow down" messages.

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Knife Safety February 14

Statistics indicate that knives are more frequently the source of disabling injuries than any other hand tool. People in all occupations are injured by knives—the high school student working in the supermarket produce department, the retail store employee who attempts to open a box, the slaughterhouse worker, the salad chef. Actually, all of us are frequently exposed to knife injuries for no other reason than the fact that a knife is a very useful and therefore much-used tool.

By the time we were old enough to work, most of us had already learned the basic dangers associated with knives. Hiking, camping, or just plain whittling usually bring on enough accidental cuts to acquaint a young person with some of those realities. But we didn't always learn the safety precautions as quickly.

The principal hazard in using a knife in industry, safety experts have concluded, is that the user's hand may slip from the handle onto the blade, causing a painful and possibly serious injury. Keeping handles dry and non-greasy will help prevent this mishap. A handle guard will eliminate this hazard.

Another cause for injury is the knife's striking the free hand or the body. When using a knife, the cutting stroke should be away from the body whenever possible. Otherwise, adequate protection should be worn to protect the body. Mail gloves are available for selected industries such as meat packing, where materials must be held close to where the knife will cut. Provisions should also be made to hold materials steady.

If it's necessary to carry a knife on the job, it should be in a sheath or holder. Safety experts recommend that the sheath be worn over the right or left hip and toward the back. A knife carried in front or over the leg could cause a serious injury in a fall.

Storage of knives is an important safety factor, too. Exposed cutting edges should be covered, and knives should be kept in their proper place, not left on benches or on the floor. First aid is very important if a knife cuts you. Even the smallest cut should be treated to help avoid infection. Injury records are full of cases in which someone neglected a small injury and blood poisoning developed, causing several weeks of lost time from the job.

One of the more publicized cases occurred many years ago when the son of Calvin Coolidge died from a blister that was neglected. Certainly, any serious complications from a cut are even more tragic these days when there are so many first-aid treatments available.

It's often said that there's nothing more painful than getting cut with a dull knife. That may be a slight exaggeration, but it brings up a good point—keep knives sharp and in good condition. A dull knife can cause you to put too much pressure on the object you're trying to cut, and the blade could slip and slice you or someone nearby.

Never use a knife that is defective—for instance, one that has a broken handle or blade. Of course, a sure way to break a knife is to throw it or use it as a screwdriver. Use your knife only for what it was meant to do.

If you're using the right knife for the job, it should cut without difficulty. When you have to resort to sheer force to make a knife cut, you're headed for trouble: damage to the knife or to the material you're attempting to cut or, worst of all, injury to yourself or someone else.

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Don't Take Anything for Granted

February 17

The heading over an article in the newspaper said: "Man Seriously Burned at Work." The story went on to say that the worker was burned when his clothes caught fire during an explosion.

But there was more to the story than that. What actually happened was that an oxygen line was mistakenly connected to a water tank on the rear of a jet drill. When the operator opened the valve, an explosion occurred and his clothing was ignited.

Behind the headlines of another story, a worker who was priming the carburetor on a truck poured some gasoline, then stepped back, carrying the open fuel can. When a co-worker approached from behind with a lit cigarette, the can touched the cigarette—and the explosion burned both workers.

In another incident, which you might think could never happen, an employee had climbed inside a machine to perform some repairs—without turning off the power. Another worker activated the machine, and the one inside was caught between the male and female dies.

There was one thing that the three accidents had in common. In each case, someone made a false assumption. This violated a very basic safety rule: "Don't take anything for granted."

The man in the first story assumed that the right line was hooked up, so he didn't check it out. The second victim assumed no one else was around and backed into trouble. The third assumed that no one else would start the machine. All three assumptions were incorrect and resulted in serious accidents.

Taking things for granted actually involves many factors that produce safety violations, among them: poor communications, not being alert and taking chances.

Check and double-check when necessary. Check tools for flaws before you use them.

They may have been okay yesterday, but today's another day. Look before you blindly put your hands anywhere. Boxes are usually clean, but this time there might be protruding nails. Look before you step out into an aisle. Power trucks may not normally travel that route, but this time a new driver may have wandered off course.

On the way to and from work, you've seen the wreckage at intersections where a driver had assumed everyone would stop on the signal and had charged into the intersection only to discover that the assumption was tragically wrong.

In a recent study of characteristics of accident-prone employees, one of the personality factors associated with the tendency to have repeated injuries was self-assurance. The accident repeater is convinced of his or her superiority—and the ability to cope with all problems. Such overconfidence leads to taking unnecessary chances, which are followed by frequent accidents and injuries.

Another accident factor was found to be the desire for dominance. The accident repeater has decided opinions but comparatively little regard for the opinions of others. The repeater's attitude is "There are two ways to do anything—my way and the wrong way." Such people take it for granted that they will always make out okay, even though the fact that they're accident repeaters proves how wrong they are. To avoid being like them, never take safety for granted. If there's the least doubt or question about how to perform a task in the safest way, don't assume and don't guess. Check with your supervisor—you'll be doing both of you a favor.

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None of us will go through our lives without feeling the effect of stress—more than once or twice. Stress is a normal part of human experience, a response to the daily happenings in the workplace and elsewhere.

Reaction to Criticism

Stress is often produced by the way we react to events, rather than by the events themselves. For instance, we may have the idea that if someone corrects or criticizes the way we have done something, that means they think we are incompetent or "no good"—or even that we really are. But criticism can actually be valuable feedback that will help us to function in more productive ways.

Of course criticism is a lot easier to take if it's delivered in a supportive way, but cruel or mean-spirited criticism is more of a reflection on the critic than the recipient.

We can't expect approval for every action, because—let's face it—being human, we sometimes are in the wrong or make mistakes. But we can recognize ourselves as basically okay people who are making an effort to get along with others and do a good job. Even in the case of real failures, we can refuse to concentrate on the negative but rather accentuate the positive giving ourselves credit for the things that we do well.

Stress from Worry

Some of our stress may be caused by worry—over finances, health, or relationships with others. We all have to deal with this kind of stress from time to time. And although we may like the "don't worry; be happy" concept, that's easier said than done. However, there are things we can do to cope with the stress caused by worry.

Coping

First and foremost, try not to keep it all bottled up. Find a person you feel free to confide in and someone who can offer some helpful insights and advice about your particular problem. (These may be the same person or different people.) It's also important to realize that the stress itself can create fresh problems if it so preoccupies your mind that you don't take care of your physical and mental health. Here are some "stressbusters" that may help.

Good nutrition is one of the keystones to good health and a generally low stress level. This means well-balanced meals eaten at regular times and not "bolted down." Go easy on fats, and don't overdo sugars. Cut down on caffeine beverages such as coffee, tea, and cola drinks, because they imitate and aggravate stress-produced symptoms such as rapid heartbeat, shakiness, and speeding thoughts.

Regular exercise is another key. Under stress, our muscles become tense and ought to be loosened. Various stretches are a great way to start, but don't push tight muscles too far too fast.

The importance of adequate sleep and rest can't be overemphasized. You say it's the stress that's keeping you from sleeping well? That may well be a factor, but if you find ways to tempt sleep, you will also find that the stress begins to retreat. Be sure, for example, that your mattress and pillow are comfortable and that you are warm enough (or cool enough, depending on the season). A long bath in lukewarm water is a sleep-inducer many swear by. So is developing a pattern of long, slow, deep breathing.

Although not as basic as food, rest, and exercise, another antidote for stress is meeting new people, making a new friend, finding a new interest or hobby that engages your mind, energy, and time—preferably not competitively.

Make SAFETY A Way of Life!" one day at a time!

Any Dog May Bite February 19

Why? Because a dog's teeth are his only arms.

Where? Most bites occur are on or near the dog owners property.

Here are some of the reasons dogs bite:

- ❖ Your seemingly innocent actions.
- ❖ Many bites occur when a dog is playing with a person.
- ❖ A dog that is sick or injured may bite anyone who comes near.
- ❖ When you're teasing, harassing, or confusing a dog it may bite.
- ❖ A dog that is cornered or frightened may bite.
- ❖ A confined dog in a fenced yard or chained up very close to his home may bite to protect it's home territory
- ❖ A mother dog with pups may bite.
- ❖ A dog that is chasing something or someone may bite at it or them (bikes, joggers, cycles, etc.)
- ❖ A dog that is fighting with another dog may bite anyone who interferes in any way, including the owner.

In a recent study, more than 79% of those people bitten knew the dog before they were bitten. Along with that more than half the people bitten are under the age of 15, with most being between 4 and 9 years of age.

In Ohio, the owner or keeper of the dog shall be liable for any damages or injuries caused by the dog. In a court of law the owner or keeper would have to prove that the victim was trespassing, teasing, tormenting, or abusing the dog on the owners property, for the owner or keeper would not be held responsible. The mailman, water, gas and electrical meter man have a right to be on your property in their job, as well as various other people.

Beware of dog signs may indicate to a court of law that the owner was aware of the vicious disposition of the dog, and may as such demonstrate the owner's negligence in his failure to properly confine the dog.

Some prevention tips for dog owners:

- ❖ Never let your dog or puppy bite or mouth the skin of a person, even if playing.
- ❖ If your dog is ill or injured follow the handling advice of your veterinarian.
- ❖ Do not allow your dog to growl or snap at anyone. If you fail to properly correct the dog it may become vicious.
- ❖ If your dog has not been raised around children or other people do not permit them to chase, corner or pick up the dog, especially if the dog is more than 4 months old.
- ❖ Never ask anyone to keep or care for a dog that they are afraid of.
- ❖ Never allow your dog to run with or chase people.
- ❖ Above all, never leave your dog out, unconfined, without proper supervision.
- ❖ Do not pat or praise your dog when it shows fear or viciousness. Your patting may make the dog think that it's pleasing you.

Preventing a bite:

- ❖ Do not run away from an advancing dog, back away one step at a time.
- ❖ Do not touch a sleeping or eating dog.
- ❖ Never tease a dog or reach into a vehicle or fenced yard to pat a dog.
- ❖ Try to stay calm, as your fear can lead to the dogs confusion or cause him to bite.
- ❖ Notice how your staring affects the attacking dog. If staring keeps him back, you might also try saying, "GO HOME", in a sharp commanding tone, or "SIT"

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Circle of Safety February 20

Before you get into a company vehicle, you are required to do a circle of safety. How good is the circle of safety you do? Do you just go through the motions? You only do it when someone's watching? Or are you that conscious individual who takes vehicle safety seriously. Only you can answer that question. Let's take a look at what a circle of safety is all about and how to perform one.

As you know when you park a vehicle for any length of time, anything could and usually does happen. That is why a circle of safety is so important. During the circle of safety we are looking for anything that could be leaking from the vehicle. You're looking for anything unusual. You Check tires for any slices or parts missing on the wheel hubs. This would prevent anything unexpected while your driving down the road.

When you get to the back of the vehicle you need to look at the loaded material. Make sure all material is secured and will not fall off the truck and hit another vehicle while traveling down a road. While you're back there check the rear lights, making sure there are working and not cracked. Look all around, what's in the general vicinity, any special conditions, ice or slippery pavement etc? Look around do you see any unusual terrain, potholes, snow banks, hidden traps, oddly parked vehicles, low tree limb, children present, etc. Make a mental note of anything unusual that you do find.

While you walk around the vehicle, check the bin doors making sure they are secured and the latches work properly, look at the windows, are they clean and not cracked? Are the fire extinguisher and first aid kits current? Anything found on the vehicle that needs to be fixed must be addressed prior to that vehicle leaving the spot it is in.

A circle of safety must be done prior to moving any vehicle that has been parked for length of time. The circle of safety should encompass everything on the vehicle along with anything around it. Remember you are responsible for the safety of that vehicle and those around it once you get behind the driver's wheel.

Can you think of the times that you didn't do a proper circle of safety and what could have happened if something was left out of place on the vehicle? Or something was wrong with the tires? Had a fire or injury and you didn't have the proper extinguisher or first aid kit?

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On the Job, Off the Job

February 21

We talk about safety, put up safety posters and decals, erect guards and barricades, supply safety equipment, and generally do about all we can do to keep everyone reminded about safety and accident prevention while on the job. But, too often, workers get hurt while at home, at play, in traffic, or engaged in some other off-the-job activity. Certainly, you can say such off-the-job injuries are no concern to the company, and, in a way, they are not. They don't affect the insurance rates or add to the accident experience statistics so far as work is concerned. On the other hand, every one of you is important to the project, and I need you on the job. Furthermore, if one of you is injured, whether on or off the job, your place must be taken by a substitute, and substitutes are not immediately at hand. They're not kept waiting around just in case someone gets hurt or fails to show up. When one of you is injured, production is slowed down. Even an immediate replacement can't always keep up the way you would if you were here. So, off-the-job accidents are of concern to the company even though you're on your own time and can do as you please.

I'm not going to preach a lot of do's and don'ts for your off-the-job activities, but I want to see all of you back here every morning—safe. So, when you leave at quitting time, drive as though your life depended on it, which it does. Stay within speed limits, abide by all traffic information and control signs, and regulate your driving in accordance with them. Train crossings, trucks, cars, and equipment at intersections of entrance roads need watching, too.

This will help you arrive home safely, ready for whatever plans you have for the evening, weekend, or vacation. Now the goal is to keep you and your family safe during that period. Unfortunately, many workers apparently neglect to practice the basics of safety that were learned on the job—and to instill them in their families—because off-the-job injuries happen more frequently than injuries at work.

By carrying your safe work habits and safety training into your home, you can help prevent accidents and injuries to your family—and can return to work safe and sound. We'll be glad to see you so.

Make SAFETY A Way of Life!" one day at a time!

Looking back can be either safe or dangerous, depending on the particular circumstances. If you take too long a look back while driving, you could run into something ahead of you. But looking back while backing out of a parking place is using safe driving procedure.

There is one way in which looking back can have a very helpful impact on promoting safety on the job. Can anyone tell what that way is?

Taking a look back at a close call or a near-miss accident can really qualify as thinking ahead, because what you're doing is trying to figure out what went wrong yesterday so that you can keep it—or something worse—from happening tomorrow.

Many job injuries occur because repeated near misses beforehand were not heeded.

Sparks fly whenever a certain power tool is turned on, but there hasn't been a fire ... so far. Boxes fall from the top of a storage rack whenever it's bumped into—but no one has been hurt ... yet. These examples are typical of the kind of near-miss that keeps being repeated until one of two things happens: someone corrects the hazardous situation, or someone is hurt—perhaps seriously.

In a number of fields, success regularly involves looking back at earlier events. One example is the game films a coach studies on Monday morning, or the film director's screening of the previous day's rushes. Reviewing the data on how well a product has been selling is essential before making a decision to step up or tone down the promotion efforts. I'm sure you can think of other examples.

This certainly isn't intended as a recommendation for "living in the past," like people who are always mourning "the good old days." But I will insist that it's appropriate, and smart, to talk to your supervisor about a past incident you think points to a need for change in order to assure the safety of people and property.

An occasional review of job procedures is also a worthwhile investment of your time and attention. It's helpful to find out whether you are continuing to do your job or run your machine in the safest way. If you've gotten a little lazy or a little lax, on the other hand, it's good to know that too, so that you can get back on the right track.

Make SAFETY A Way of Life!" one day at a time!

Sprains and Strains February 25

Athletes in training know their abilities and their limitations, because going beyond what are physically possible leads to strained and sprained muscles and ligaments. Those injuries could put the athlete out of competition. Your job may include lifting and carrying heavy material. You should be aware of how much you can do in order to avoid any injury that could put you on the bench for a while.

Sprains and strains can occur anywhere--in the workplace, during recreational and sporting events, and at home. A sprain occurs whenever a muscle is stretched beyond its limit. Muscles do a great deal of work. However, they must be conditioned if they are to perform in a given way. Professional athletes condition their muscles through rigorous training. We also must condition our muscles. A worker who is accustomed to manually handling a large number of pieces of material in a given workday can do so with ease. Those of us who have different duties would find it difficult to do that same amount of work without paying for it with aching muscles. If we should continue to do the work, however, we would soon be conditioned and be able to perform the job without pain.

However, even the conditioned athlete or worker cannot exceed the limitations of the muscles. When a muscle is stretched too much, the ligaments pull and sometimes even tear. Stretched ligaments and tendons are termed strains. A sprain is when tearing has occurred.

The industrial setting provides many opportunities for the occurrence of sprains and strains; the most common is material handling. We all handle material in one way or another. Even the office worker is involved with material handling when picking up a package, box or chair to move it.

Other movements can also cause sprains and strains--overreaching or overextending a part of the body; reaching over something to pick up a load; or trying to reach a top shelf without using a proper stool or ladder.

What can we do to minimize these injuries? *Well, this meeting is a beginning.* If we understand what causes sprains and strains, we are better equipped to prevent them. A few basic rules to remember are:

1. Understand your limitations. Don't charge into a job cold. Warm up to it. Take a lesson from athletes--try to keep yourself in good condition and at your proper weight.
2. Don't overextend yourself--use a stepstool or a ladder when necessary.
3. Lift with your legs, not with your back. Keep the load close. Don't twist your body while *carrying a load.*
4. Be sure there are no slipping or tripping hazards in your work area or around your home. The sudden jerk caused by a slip or trip can cause a sprain or strain.
5. Don't shy away from hard work because you fear a strain. Condition your body to do what is necessary.
6. Look into ways to eliminate lifting and carrying or to keep it to a minimum. Is there a better way? Work smarter, not harder; it's easier and safer.

Make SAFETY A Way of Life!" one day at a time!

What is safety? Every one of you could give an answer of some sort, but let's rely on an authoritative source and consult Mr. Webster. His dictionary indicates that being "safe" means being "secure from the threat of danger, harm, or loss."

So why should following or enforcing safety ever be a problem? Isn't everyone interested in being free from danger, harm, or loss? Why on earth would anyone, through negligence or disinterest, expose himself or herself—and others—to those threats?

Perhaps it's partially because it can be difficult to recognize certain situations as potential accident producers. Danger is obvious in many situations, but not all of them. For example, suppose you have occasion to use a stepladder. You see that one leg is completely broken off, but the ladder can still stand. An accident is obviously a potential, though not inevitable, outcome if the ladder is used.

Suppose the leg is not broken, but only cracked. The danger is not obvious, but an alert person, recognizing that there is a possibility of an accident anytime a ladder is used, will inspect the ladder, discover the crack, and tag it for repair. There is no accident.

But maybe there would not have been an accident anyway. How can you tell when you have prevented an accident that would otherwise surely have happened? You can't.

Visualize another situation. Dwayne is eating lunch on the stair steps and leaves his soda can there. A little later, Teresa comes along and sees the cup. If she picks it up, does this mean she is preventing an accident? Maybe it wouldn't cause a slip or trip anyway, but there's no way of knowing.

There's one thing we can be sure of knowing, though. The odds are a lot more favorable for safety when the cracked or broken ladder is avoided and the drink can is removed from the stairs. Using flawed equipment may or may not cause an accident. Avoiding it will not.

Carry this over to other situations in which workers may tempt fate by taking chances.

That's what's happening every time you turn on a power tool without checking to see that it and its wiring are in good condition. That's exactly what's happening when anyone removes or sidesteps a machine guard—even for "just these few operations."

These are chances you can't afford to take, if your goal is your own safety and that of your co-workers.

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Develop a Healthy Safety Attitude

February 27

You know your job. You have the ability to do it well. But do you have the attitude required to do the job both well and safely?

There's no hiding attitude from others. If you have a poor attitude about safety, you may be able to hide it from yourself, but it will show up in everything you say and everything you do. Some workers seem to have the attitude that safety rules were made to be broken—especially when no one is looking. Even those who are hard-working, exacting, and conscientious about every other aspect of their jobs can have a poor safety attitude. They take shortcuts not because they are lazy, but because they want to get the work done more quickly.

Other workers think that not complying with the rules won't cause too much of a problem if they perceive that a risk is small. They take chances, and this leads to accidents. These individuals don't take safety seriously—until it is too late. These are the people who say, "Don't worry. I've done it this way lots of times—right before they fall flat on their faces.

Most of us don't intend to walk around with a bad safety attitude—or even realize it when we have one. We think that our last couple of accidents simply "happened" to us. Luckily, attitudes are not permanent states of mind—they can be changed. Here's how you can carry through with a good—even great—attitude concerning safety:

- Keep your mind focused on the job at hand. Put aside for the moment any personal problems that have been bothering you so that you can watch for hazards and accomplish what you have set out to do.
 - Tell yourself that you will not let nearby noises or conversations bother your concentration and prevent you from doing the job safely.
 - Don't give in to pressure from your co-workers to be unsafe. You don't have to join in horseplay, take shortcuts, or participate in coverups. Instead, take the lead in behaving in an adult and responsible manner.
 - Report all accidents and near accidents—even though they may seem unimportant at the time.
 - Try to understand why an accident occurred, to help you avoid making the same mistake twice.
 - Practice the techniques you have learned for lifting and other methods of doing the job in a safe fashion.
 - Practice good housekeeping. Keep your work area free of clutter. Clean up spills.
 - Be considerate of your co-workers. Don't do anything that would endanger them.
- In fact, go a step farther and remind co-workers about safety. Say something when they forget to put on equipment to protect themselves or when they ignore the rules.
- Take the time to remind your family about staying safe at their jobs, in school, or in the home.

After following all these suggestions for a short while, you will have developed a proper safety attitude, one that others can and will respect and even try to imitate. But even better than that, you'll feel good about yourself and will be able to do productive work and stay safe at the same time.

Make SAFETY A Way of Life!" one day at a time!

Almost an Accident—Be Warned

February 28

How many times have you come close to having an accident, shrugged it off as a near miss, and gone on your merry way without giving it another thought? I want all of you to give it thought.

Many times, the difference between a near miss and an accident is just a fraction of a second in timing or a fraction of an inch in distance. Next time, the difference may not be there.

Near misses are warnings of accidents in the making. If we accept the warnings and look for the causes, we may be able to prevent similar situations from developing.

Let's say you're going up a gangplank onto a bridge footer. Your foot slips, but you're young, agile, fast, and empty-handed. So you regain your balance with no harm done. The reactions of the next person to come along are a little slower than you were. Then comes the third worker—just as fast as the first two but unable to maneuver because he's carrying a heavy load. He slips and falls off the plank with the load on top of him. How seriously he's injured is a matter of luck—perhaps only scratches, but maybe a broken ankle or rib or neck! Now the loose cleat, sand, mud, or ice is discovered, and the condition is corrected. But it's like locking the garage after the motorcycle is stolen. Two people saw the thief but didn't recognize what was happening, so didn't report anything.

There are a few accidents that occur without some advance warning—and that is what a near miss is. If we heed that warning and check into the hazard, most accidents can be eliminated. So, I want all of you to keep your eyes open for those advance warnings. Don't shrug off the near misses as only close calls; find out why they happened and what corrective action is needed.

Don't take unnecessary chances or ignore warnings, and don't think, "it can't happen to me." It can happen to you if you don't take precautions to protect yourself.

Make SAFETY A Way of Life!" one day at a time!