



Daily Safety Focus

May 2013 Morning Safety Focus Topics

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Daily Safety Focus

Taking Short Cuts Is Common Practice

May 1

Everyone takes a shortcut at one time or another. Kids jump the fence instead of using the gate. Pedestrians cross streets between intersections. In many cases, a shortcut involves danger.

Break The Habit

If you have the habit of taking dangerous shortcuts, break it. In our work it can be deadly. A construction worker who tried to cross an opening by swinging on reinforcing rods slipped and fell 20' onto a concrete floor. If he had taken a few moments to walk around the opening, he'd still be tying rods.

Avoid Dangerous Situations

If you are told to go to a particular work area, the Company expects you to take the safe route, not the shorter, more hazardous one. The Company, however, can't be a guardian angel sitting on your shoulder. Avoiding dangerous shortcuts is up to you. Moreover, it is your responsibility to warn anyone else you see taking them.

What If There's No Safe Way To Get There

Let me know. And I'll see that the necessary means of access is provided.

Shortcuts More Dangerous At Heights

Even though the job may take but a few minutes, do not climb on false work or an improvised platform. Use the ladder or scaffold. In addition, do not go from one elevation to another by climbing a column or sliding down a rope. Ladders, steps, and walkways are built to save your neck as well as for your convenience. Use them.

Remember

The safe way is not always the shortest way. But it's the surest way by far.

Daily Safety Focus

Off-The-Job Safety

May 2

We do all we can to protect you on the job: post safety signs, erect guards and barricades, issue protective equipment, and make work areas as safe as possible. Nevertheless, off-the-job safety is up to you.

Your Safety Off The Job, However, Is Important To Us

It's not easy to replace good employees - even temporarily. So, when you get hurt, we suffer, too. And beside that, we hate to see anyone injured on the job or off.

Driving Safely Is One Of The Best Ways To Keep From Getting Hurt

I know you've heard all the rules and regulations before. And I won't repeat them. The easiest way to keep from getting hurt is to drive defensively at all times. If another driver tries to cut you off, don't argue. Learn to protect your life instead of your ego.

Take Your Safety Practices Home With You

You wouldn't think of working without eye protection where it's required on the job. So why go without it in your workshop? You wouldn't use damaged or worn tools at work. So why use a mushroomed headed chisel or a taped up hammer at home?

Don't Overlook Safety During Recreation Either

Did you ever notice how many injuries happen when people are skiing, playing tennis or relaxing with a little backyard baseball? Don't overdo it when it comes to recreation. Don't try to keep up with the kids when you're no longer one yourself. And, that goes for anyone over 20.

Daily Safety Focus

Minor Injuries

May 3

When we talk of someone being injured, we usually think of serious injuries, such as those involving broken bones or where a lot of blood is lost. We don't think much about the little incidents, such as scratches, splinters, dust in the eye, and blisters. These things don't give us much pain nor lay us up. And if properly treated, minor injuries shouldn't give us serious concern.

Even Minor Injuries Can Become Serious

When we neglect a minor injury, however, we could end up in the hospital or even six feet under. Do you think that I'm exaggerating? Consider what can happen if you let a minor cut on your arm go untreated. Germs can enter and cause infection. If the infection, in turn, isn't treated, it can cause blood poisoning, which can be fatal.

Two Kinds Of Injuries Often Neglected

A hard blow on the head. This can make you dizzy or unconscious for a few seconds. It's easy to overlook this injury because after-wards you may feel OK, except for a headache. What many of us don't realize is that a blow on the head can cause a slight concussion or fracture, which can't be detected except by a doctor. As a result, we later may go to sleep and not wake up. So if you have a head injury see a doctor for a checkup.

A blow to the stomach. This can occur when you run into something or are struck by something. The blow may knock you down and take the wind out of you, but a few minutes later you may feel OK. Just because there may be no visible injury, however, is no reason for not reporting to first aid. It doesn't take much of a blow to rupture an intestine or start internal bleeding. And these unseen injuries can kill you.

Report All Injuries

The important thing to remember is to report all injuries, even though they are minor and no physical damage is apparent. Get proper first aid and see a doctor if necessary.

Daily Safety Focus

Protecting Your Eyes

May 4

Some 150,000 disabling eye injuries occur each year. Eye injuries can occur in any operation and in any work area, including offices. All too often we take our eyesight for granted and figure that we'll always have it. We treat our eyes as though we can get replacements. How many home runs could Hank Aaron have hit if he had lost the sight in one or both of his eyes? How well would you be able to do your job if you were blind? There are two important issues to consider; first, you need to have the proper eye protection, second, you need to USE IT!

People who wear glasses usually become so accustomed to them that without much thought they clean them, carry them in their pocket or purse so they are handy, and wear them when they are needed. Unfortunately, few of us are this mindful when it comes to eye protection, and too often we forget it. Some safety glasses and goggles grow dusty from lack of use as their owners trust luck to protect them from an eye injury.

The most common complaint about eye protection is that it's uncomfortable. Protective eye equipment must be carefully fitted and then worn correctly. It may take some time to adjust to wearing goggles or safety glasses, but it will take much longer to adjust to losing your eyesight. If your goggles or glasses give you a headache, adjust the frames or straps or consider a new pair. Straps used to hold goggles or glasses in place should be adjusted to provide just enough tension to hold them securely. During hot weather, a sweatband will keep perspiration off your goggles or glasses and out of your eyes. Take time to clean your goggles or glasses so they do not interfere with your vision. Don't touch the lenses with your fingers, and keep them away from anything that could scratch or pit them.

Protective eye protection extends beyond keeping bits of debris out of your eyes. If you are working around welding or cutting operations special lenses may be required to protect your eyes from the bright, intense light. Chemicals also pose a hazard to your eyes; make sure you use eye protection and splash guards when handling chemicals. Your employer will provide eye and face protection when machines or operations present the potential for eye or face injury. See 29 CFR 1926.102 for more information and a selection guide for proper eye protection.

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Working Together

May 5

Have you ever wondered who writes the rules? The safety rules, that is? Has it ever occurred to you that maybe those people who wrote the rules just don't have a clue as to what's really going on out in the field, or out in the plant or in the world for that matter?

Well let's take a look at these people who wrote the rules: It was the guy we've all heard about who cut two of his fingers off after he wired up the guard on a circular saw. He was helped by the machinist who didn't have the time to go back to the lunch room for her safety glasses and lost an eye when the bit broke in the drill press. They both got advice from the fellow who had his head split open by a falling hammer because he just plain didn't like to wear hard hats.

I think you get my point here. If not, then let me put it another way: Each and every safety rule came about because someone was hurt, maimed or killed. Their misfortune contributed to our knowledge of how accidents happen and how to avoid them. Rules came into being in order to help you avoid a similar accident or injury.

Your company is very interested in your safety. It has provided you with the tools, equipment and working conditions that will help you do your best. But in return, the company expects certain things from you. It expects your cooperation in abiding by the rules, in assisting your fellow workers with a willing attitude, by helping your foreman by following their instructions and by your valuable comments and suggestions. It also looks for your cooperation by maintaining your physical fitness to perform your job, by not showing up sick or under the influence of drugs or alcohol, and by getting the proper rest at night.

By cooperation or working together with your company, a win-win situation is created that benefits everyone involved. The most obvious benefit is a safer and more productive work place. A somewhat less obvious, and some would mistakenly say a selfish or greedy benefit, would be more money for the company. Let's take a look at this "money" benefit.

There is no doubt that if a safer and more productive work place is created, then the company stands to make more money. There is less down time due to accidents, insurance rates decrease, operating costs are lower and profits are up. But what happens when profits go up? The company becomes more competitive. It can now sell its products, be it through construction or manufacturing, for less. Being more competitive means more work for you, more tangible benefits like profit sharing, or raises, paid vacations, holidays. Simply put, healthy employees insure a healthy company and a healthy company means happy employees.

So you see, safety rules benefit everyone. By working together with your company and fellow employees to ensure a safe working environment, you are, in many ways, ensuring your own physical and financial well being. It is not just a tired old phrase to say SAFETY FIRST. In fact it's the only phrase that makes sense when it comes to getting the job done, on time, under budget and, most importantly, a happier, healthier you when it's complete.

Daily Safety Focus

Why Take a Chance?

May 6

Have you ever made a decision to break a safety rule? How long did it take for you to reach that decision? What did you gain by taking a chance? It only takes a moment to decide to break a safety rule, yet that one moment could change your life forever. Today's Safety Topic offers you an opportunity to think about your personal safety behavior, both on and off the job. We'll talk specifically about taking safety risks, your personal commitment to safety, and what you can do to keep that commitment strong.

Do you always work safely? Are you 100% committed to the safety of yourself, your coworkers, friends, and family? Are there times when your commitment to safety is not as strong as it should be? Have you been taking risks and getting away with it? Don't expect your luck to hold. No one ever plans an accident. An accident, by definition, is an unplanned event. No one wakes up in the morning and drives to work thinking, "I will have an accident today so I'd better buckle up." No one ever climbs to the very top of a ladder and knows for sure they won't fall. That's why it's so important to have a personal commitment to safety; a commitment to do the right things to prevent an accident--or minimize the damage done in case an accident does occur.

What is gained by taking a chance? Think about a time when you've risked your personal safety. Have you ever bypassed lockout-tagout procedures? Have you ever driven a car after you had too much to drink? Have you failed to use fall-protection equipment because it was just too much trouble? What did you gain in that situation? A minute of time, an ounce of convenience? Now honestly ask yourself if those gains were worth it. Is a little bit of time or convenience really worth chancing electrocution, a car accident, or a bad fall? Don't sacrifice your healthy future by taking a chance. Every time you're tempted to take a chance with your safety ask yourself if it's really worth the risk. Your family and friends will thank you for making the right decision.

Keeping a strong commitment to safety is not easy. What interferes with your commitment to safety? Is peer pressure a problem? Do your peers think it's silly to take time for safety? You can set a safe example for your peers. Consider taking a stand for safety. By committing to safety 100% of the time, you can help reverse the peer pressure that sometimes causes unsafe behavior. Keep up this exemplary behavior. Someday you may find that the old peer pressure has given way to something new--the respect of your peers earned by setting a safe example.

It's normal for your commitment to safety to fluctuate. Sometimes it's strong, at other times it's weak. Unfortunately, it tends to be strong just after a close call, or perhaps for a few days after you hear of an accident. Then the commitment wanes, only to be strengthened again by another tragedy. Simply recognizing this pattern can help you avoid it. Think about your work habits. Have there been times when you're more likely to take a risk? How about those times when you've been extra careful? Did the strength of your safety commitment depend on an outside event--like another person being involved in an accident?

You can keep your commitment to safety strong by remembering the commitment is for you. If you allow things that happen to other people determine the strength of your commitment, it is likely to fluctuate a lot. You can always learn from things that happen to other people, but to keep your commitment strong all the time, stay focused on your personal safety and those things you do that affect it.

Having a personal commitment to safety and keeping it strong are more important than any safety program, procedure, or rule. In fact, programs, procedures, and rules depend on a strong personal commitment to safety. Ask yourself where you are with your own safety attitude and behavior. Are you 100% committed to safety, 100% of the time? You are? Great! Need some improvement? Promise yourself to work on it--and keep that promise. You'll be glad you did.

Daily Safety Focus

Driving Safely in Traffic

May 7

When you are driving in traffic, what are some things you must do to avoid accidents? Avoiding accidents in traffic is a little different than avoiding accidents on the open road. Long-distance drivers know that fatigue is responsible for numerous accidents. But what causes accidents when you are driving around town, making frequent stops? safety topic discusses some of the causes of these accidents and what you can do to prevent them.

Many people spend a lot of time on the road as they are working. On any city street you are likely to see delivery vans, couriers, salespeople, and utility persons making frequent stops as they conduct their business. Some people spend many hours in traffic just going to and from work. Even though the mileage may be small, the amount of time spent on the road is very long. Every hour spent on the road increases your chance of having an accident.

Certainly **speed** is a factor in accidents. Many accidents happen simply because the driver is going too fast. City streets usually have speed limits of less than 25 miles per hour, and often you will see posted limits as low as 5 or 10 miles per hour. Speed limits are carefully selected to minimize the chances of accidents. When traffic is heavy, there just isn't very much distance between you and the next vehicle to stop. The slower you're going, the less distance it will take to stop. By going slowly, you will also be able to observe your surroundings more easily, taking note of cyclists, pedestrians, and other vehicles. Observing the speed limit is one sure way to reduce your chance of an accident. On rainy, foggy, or snowy days keep your speed even lower.

When you make stops, park your vehicle carefully. Avoid leaving it in a space that's likely to block traffic or create a blind spot. As you exit the vehicle look both ways before stepping into the road or onto the sidewalk. You'll want to avoid collisions with other vehicles as well as bicycles and passerby. If you must load things into or out of your vehicle, be sure your load does not obstruct your vision. It is better to make several trips with smaller loads than to overload yourself to the point you cannot see other vehicles. It will also help prevent tripping and falling over objects in your path.

Perhaps the main cause of accidents in traffic is a simple matter of **not paying attention**. In traffic, it is easy to become distracted, frustrated, and annoyed. Any of these can cause you to pay less attention than you should, often resulting in rear-end collisions when the vehicle in front of you stops. Running stop lights and stop signs is also a possibility if you are not paying attention.

Sometimes **paying attention to the wrong things** causes accidents, too. Reading addresses on buildings, street signs, and maps while driving can lead to accidents. You will be better off if you find a place to pull over safely while you read signs and addresses. Even better, try to pinpoint the exact location when you plan your trip--before you begin driving.

To drive safely in traffic you must keep your speed down, pay attention, and avoid driving when you are tired. Many accidents and injuries could be prevented by following these precautions. Next time you're in traffic, remember these things and keep yourself safe!

Daily Safety Focus

Protect Your Hands

May 8

Let's take a minute here to talk about your hands. How would your life be affected if you lost a finger? Not Much? A lot? How about if you lost your thumb? No problem you say? Try using any tool effectively without your thumb. What if you lost a hand? Or both hands? I know of one person's grandfather who lost both of his hands and forearms in a farming accident when he was a kid. While he was a remarkable and successful man, there were many things that people with two good hands take for granted that took him years to master. Like eating with a fork, (he refused to use prosthetics), or dealing from a deck of cards. What would you do if you lost your hands? Think about it. It probably would not be what you are doing now.

All accidents just don't happen, they are caused by not paying attention and by not thinking of what can go wrong before it goes wrong. I am sure that you can think of instances in your own life where you or somebody you know or love was injured because of these simple reasons. The grandfather who lost his hands as a young boy did so because he didn't shut down the threshing machine before he tried to unclog it. You may be shaking you head and thinking that you would never to such a thing. But how many times A DAY do you do something that could result in an accident to yourself or those around you? Someone, somewhere suffers an injury every single day, every single hour and probably every minute.

The construction trades and manufacturing industries are especially prone to hand injuries. There are rough materials to handle, objects to be stacked and stored, tools to be utilized, equipment to be operated. All pose special risks to hand injury. To come up with a list on how to protect your hands in each and every situation would be impossible. The list would be never ending. Each new advance in technology also advances the opportunities for people to damage their hands and they will, be it by operating a 100 ton press or testing a circuit board.

People usually approach their tasks "at hand" in one of two ways: they either don't think of safety at all before they jump into the task or they think that they "won't or "can't" hurt themselves. Wrong. They will. If not today then most likely sooner than later. Do the smart thing: Before you begin a project, or take up a tool, or start a piece of equipment, think of the accident that CAN and WILL happen unless you make sure that it doesn't. Apply the "what if" criteria of safety to what you are doing: What if...the knife slips while I am stripping this wire? Will I cut myself? What if...the screw driver slips off this stubborn screw I'm trying to remove from this box in my hand? Will I punch the screwdriver through the palm of my hand? What if...that pallet of material falls off the fork lift while I am holding this gate open? Will my hands be crushed?

Keep your mind on your hands. "Hand Safety Sense" is just plain ol' "Common Sense"...use yours BEFORE you loose yours. If your coworker seems to be lacking in common sense then use yours BEFORE they loose theirs. Keep your mind on safety first and your hands will continue to provide you with a way in which to achieve your personal goals.

Daily Safety Focus

Preventing Slips, Trips, and Falls

May 9

Did you know that slips, trips, and falls are second only to automobile accidents in causing personal injury? On stairways alone, falls result in almost two million disabling injuries yearly. There are thousands more minor injuries caused by slips, trips, and falls each year. Most alarming of all is the fact that industrial falls cause over 1000 deaths each year. This safety topic discusses what can be done to prevent slips, trips and falls. Most of the suggestions in this article can be used on the job and at home.

Slips occur when there is too little friction between a person's feet and the walking surface. Many factors can cause a slip. Ice, oil, water, cleaning fluids, and other slippery substances are probably the most obvious causes. However, the flooring may be inappropriate-perhaps it is a slick material-or the person who slips may not be wearing proper shoes. To prevent slips, avoid walking in areas which pose slipping hazards if at all possible. Always promptly clean up spills of slippery substances. Better yet, prevent the spills in the first place. If an area is a chronic problem, re-route foot traffic in order to avoid it. If flooring is a problem, replace it or coat it with a non-slip surfacing material. Always follow your company's safe shoe policy. Most safe shoe policies require a slip-resistant sole.

Trips occur when a person's foot contacts an object and they are thrown off balance. The main cause of tripping is obvious--anytime something is in a walkway it could cause someone to trip. Another culprit is an object which projects into the walkway--perhaps material stored low on a shelf. Poor lighting and uneven walking surfaces also cause tripping. Prevention of trips is simple but does require diligence. Keep objects that could cause someone to trip out of the way. Repair uneven flooring and install proper lighting if required.

Falls can be caused by a number of things. Slips and trips frequently result in a fall. Falls also occur for other reasons. Improper use of ladders and scaffolding can result in a fall-usually a very serious one. Falls also happen when people climb objects without using fall protection equipment. Don't risk serious injury by taking shortcuts. If you are working on a ladder, scaffold, or other elevated platform, make sure you know the requirements for using them safely. Always use fall protection equipment when it is required.

Slips, trips, and falls cause numerous injuries every day. But they are among the easiest hazards to correct. Take the time to look around your worksite for these hazards and work to prevent them. Take care not to cause any slip, trip, or fall hazards as you go about your daily activities. Don't let a slip, trip, or fall keep you from enjoying all that life has to offer.

Daily Safety Focus

Material Safety Data Sheets

May 10

Material Safety Data Sheets, commonly called MSDS's, have come to be very important documents. Every workplace should have readily-accessible MSDS's for all the hazardous materials which are used or stored there. This safety topic takes a look at the content of an MSDS and provides some other important information for using an MSDS.

First of all, the time to become familiar with a material's MSDS is **before** you begin using the material. If you have responsibility for procuring hazardous material, you should obtain an advance copy of the MSDS to review the safety information before the order is placed. Many companies and other institutions require approval of hazardous materials before they are purchased. The MSDS contains information which is very useful in the approval process. Once a material is brought into the workplace, everyone who uses it should review the MSDS. You wouldn't want to wait for an emergency to learn about the material's hazardous properties! Suppose the material catches fire. The MSDS specifies fire-fighting procedures for the material. However, your chances of successfully extinguishing the blaze are very small if you waste valuable time running to review the MSDS!

There are also other very good reasons to review the MSDS before using a material. By doing so you will learn what personal protective equipment is required when using the material. You will also learn what conditions to avoid when working with the material, such as heat and sparks. MSDS's also tell you what materials should not be brought into contact with the hazardous material. The MSDS also provides valuable information for storage and disposal of the material.

The information on an MSDS is typically grouped into these categories:

- hazard ratings, such as NFPA (National Fire Protection) ratings
- name and address of the material's manufacturer or importer
- identity; by common name, synonyms, and chemical abstract number of the material
- physical and chemical characteristics, such as the material's appearance, odor, specific gravity, and melting point
- fire and explosion data, such as the material's flash point, explosion hazards, and recommended fire extinguishing media
- physical hazards, such as the material's stability, incompatible material information, and hazardous decomposition products
- health hazards, such as inhalation and ingestion hazards, carcinogen classification, and basic first aid information
- special precautions and spill or leak procedures such as storage, clean-up, and disposal information
- special protection information such as personal protective equipment recommendations

MSDS's contain a wealth of useful information for you to use when working with a hazardous material. Remember, the best time to learn the content of the MSDS is before you use the material. Another thing to be aware of is that mistakes can and do happen. If you are using a material that doesn't seem to fit the description on its MSDS, do not use the material but contact your site's safety personnel immediately. There could have been a mix-up in the labeling or the information on the MSDS. The material may also be out-of-spec and could be dangerous to use as you were planning

MSDS's have proven to be very valuable tools in protecting people from hazards. They provide a wealth of information in a convenient form. But MSDS's are only as useful as you make them. Take the time to review the MSDS's for every hazardous material you use

Daily Safety Focus

We Know Better

May 11

Most of us have the necessary knowledge and experience to do our jobs and most of don't want to hurt ourselves or others.

Why, then, do we often ignore our good friend "common sense" and set ourselves or others up for an accidental injury? 1. Carbon monoxide can ill - but we sometimes work in a closed garage with our automobile engine running!

2. A bump on the head hurts - but we don't think about that for a minute when we walk under an overhead load!

3. A circular saw can cut off a finger - but we go right ahead and operate a saw without a guard!

4. There is a safe way to climb a ladder, which we use here at work - but we take a chance and fall from a ladder while painting our house!

5. Excessive speed in an automobile may cause an accident - but we try it anyhow and wrap the family car around a tree!

6. Radioactive fallout is dangerous - but we think nothing about leaving household poisons around where kids can get at them!

7. It is dangerous for children to run out in front of cars - but we drag them across the street on the red light!

8. It is important for teenagers to learn safe driving habits - but we violate a traffic law with our teenage son or daughter right in the car with us!

9. A loose board on a stairway can trip someone - but we don't bother to report it!

10. Grease and oil spills can cause a nasty fall - but we "forget" that we should cover these spills with oil absorbent material!

11. Tools and parts can become falling objects or we can trip over them - but we fail to put them back where they belong!

12. We know an unsafe condition when we see one - but we pay no attention to material or trucks in the aisles!

13. We know an unsafe act when we see one - but we oil, adjust, or try to fix a machine without even bothering to stop it!

14. We shouldn't take a chance when operating equipment - but we drive a forklift truck with the load carried high and try to turn a corner while going too fast!

15. We can't fool safety devices - be we remove or fasten a machine guard so it won't give us the protection we need!

16. It is dangerous for us to block fire-fighting equipment - but we pile boxes and cartons in front of fire extinguishers and store material right up to the underside of sprinklers.

17. We should wear protective equipment - but we wear our goggles around our neck and leave our hard hat in our locker, our car, or on the shelf while at work.

18. Horseplay causes a lot of injuries - but we blast Gus with an air hose just for the heck of it.

I realize that we all know better and I'm sure that most of you aren't guilty of doing the many things that I have covered. But you'll have to admit that some of these things are a possibility, even for each of us with all our knowledge of the safe way of doing things. Yes, we know better! But, since knowing is only half the job, we must act on our knowledge to be safe.

Daily Safety Focus

Accept It - It's Yours

May 12

Accident prevention is the responsibility of everyone. You've heard that statement probably more times that you can remember. But it is a fact. Safety responsibility has to be the responsibility of each and every one of us. No one man or department can constantly watch, guide or instruct every operation that is going on throughout a company each day.

Top management is vitally concerned with your safety. So are your department heads, the safety supervisors and foreman. However, these people can't be with you every minute on every job, and you have to accept your own responsibility for safety.

It's not such an overwhelming task. You should know how to do your job safely. The training that you have received, the departmental work procedures, the safety rule book and the use of everyday common sense will prevent you from being involved in an accident.

Don't be ashamed to ask questions about a job assigned to you. A workman trying to bluff his way through a job he doesn't understand is just asking for trouble. Even if you think you know the correct procedures, a review may bring out an important phase of the job that has slipped your mind. At the same time, your questions and the answers you get may be helping a new or less experienced man on the job who is too bashful to ask questions.

But your responsibility for accident prevention doesn't stop with the job. At home, behind the wheel, at play, you've got to keep your safety guard up. Not just for your own safety of others as well.

Face your safety responsibility as you do the other obligations that make up your daily life and each day will be completed without untimely accident or injury

Daily Safety Focus

Thoughts To Start The Work Day

May 13

Do you realize how important your safety is to you and to your family? Are you "on the alert" every minute of the day . . . to the dangers of using unsafe procedures? Many safe procedures have been designed to protect you on the job. These safe procedures are vital to you . . for you are up against a tough enemy who has an arsenal of missiles to launch against one of your most vulnerable targets . . . your hands. **SAFE PROCEDURES PROTECT HANDS** against injury's missiles, such as sharp edges . . . improperly conditioned hand tools, improperly handled material and other pinch points.

Be on guard every minute of the day. Failure to observe just one safe procedure . . . just one time . . . can cause injury to those vulnerable "tools" . . . **YOUR HANDS.**

If you have learned the safety know-how of your job and learned it well it will be easy for you to catch anything some other fellow does that isn't as safe as it should be. If you see it and don't say anything and he gets hurt, aren't you partly to blame? Think it over.

Keeping an eye out for the other fellow's safety can help you too . . . a lot, sometimes. We all make mistakes. We slip up once in a while. After all, we're only human. But if each of us is keeping the other fellow's safety in mind, and he is doing the same for us, he's likely to catch our slips or at least the serious ones. You help him, he helps you. One hand washes the other. Believe me, it pays.

How are you fixed for safety? . . . Have you enough left to last until the next hazard comes along? Be sure before you answer. Buying safety is pretty much the same process as buying anything. Most employee buy it. Some buy more than others. Big buyers, naturally, are less likely to be injured on the job. They are also less likely to injure someone else. The question isn't always how much safety does an employee **WANT**, but rather, how much safety does he **NEED** . . . How are you fixed for safety?

Daily Safety Focus

Defensive Driving

May 14

While a good offense may be the best defense in football, this doesn't hold true in driving. A professional driver is a top defensive driver! He seems to have eyes (or mirrors) in the back of his head!! He stays out of the other fellow's way.

The Professional Driver:

1. Knows and obeys the company rules for the operation of his vehicle.
2. Knows and obeys the traffic rules and regulations applicable to the area in which he is driving.
3. Is aware of the traffic situations far ahead on both sides and to the rear of his vehicle.
4. Is constantly alert to illegal acts and errors of others.
5. Is willing to yield the right-of-way to prevent accidents and does not tail-gate.
6. He is particularly cautious approaching intersections. He lessens the odds of an accident by taking his foot off the gas and putting it on the brake to shorten his reaction time for stopping.
7. Knows and adjusts his driving to the special hazards of: (a) pedestrians (b) the road (c) weather (d) traffic (e) degree of light and (f) the added dangers brought on by his own emotions such as anger and worry.
8. Requires an ATTITUDE of confidence that he can drive without ever having an accident. He is POSITIVE about accident prevention.
9. He drives as though every child in the street is his own and every motorist is a dear relative or friend. He know the secret of safe driving: DO IT THE SAFE WAY EVERY TIME.

Daily Safety Focus

Defensive Driving

May 15

When you're at the controls of any vehicle, it is important to remember that defensive driving is a full-time job. The most dangerous mile you have to drive is the one directly ahead of you. Anyone can drive perfectly for 10 feet or 100 feet or even one mile, but it takes a real professional to drive perfectly for 100,000 miles or more. To be a professional driver there are many things you must observe and practice. A safe driver is not merely someone who has been lucky enough to avoid accidents, but is one who drives defensively and looks out for others. But today's driving standards demand more skill, knowledge and decision-making ability. Drivers who are safety-conscious have developed good habits and practice them daily. Every time they get behind the wheel, their driving record is on the line. They must drive like a professional and be prepared mentally and physically. If you are a driver who has a safe attitude about your driving, you will be able to drive with a sense of security in inclement weather, on difficult roads and through heavy traffic. In addition, to be a good driver you should respect all traffic laws and be courteous to others. Don't be in a big hurry--you're just asking for trouble. When bad weather affects driving conditions, you must adjust your driving time and habits. Driving on wet or slippery roads is not the same as driving on dry surfaces. The number of traffic accidents and cars running off the road during rainy weather could be reduced if drivers would anticipate the slippery road conditions and adjust their driving habits. Stay a safe distance from the vehicle in front of you--one vehicle length for each 10 mph. Start stopping sooner. Apply your brakes the instant you see a hazard developing, but apply them gradually so you don't go into a spin or grind to a stop so quickly that you risk a rear-end collision. Defensive driving is driving to prevent accidents, in spite of the incorrect actions of others or adverse weather conditions. ANTICIPATE driving hazards and know how to protect yourself from them. Be alert while driving by keeping your mind free of distractions and your attention focused on driving; alertness involves watching and recognizing accident-causing factors instantly. The professional driver has foresight, the ability to size up traffic situations as far ahead as possible. The driver must ANTICIPATE traffic problems that are likely to develop and decide whether these developments could be dangerous. Many drivers fail to understand why they were given a "preventable" for an accident when they were not legally at fault. A "preventable accident" is one in which you fail to do everything you reasonably could have done to prevent it. Even though the driver cited with a "preventable accident" did not violate any traffic laws, the professional driver should have seen or anticipated the incorrect actions of the other driver in time to take actions to prevent the accident from happening. However, you may also learn the valuable lessons that near-misses offer and make the necessary adjustments in your driving habits. As a defensive driver you must operate your vehicle in a manner to avoid contributing to an accident or being involved in a preventable accident. Awareness of the vehicle's limitations is essential; pre-trip checklists and inspections can familiarize you with the vehicle and point out things that might need attention.

Daily Safety Focus

Protecting Hands and Fingers

May 16

The capabilities of our hands and fingers place human beings above the other animals. Certain species of apes have hands, fingers and thumbs, but no species can touch their little fingers with their thumbs. This simple fact sets us apart. While our fingers are possibly the most used parts of our bodies, they are also the most mistreated. It will be helpful to review a list of hand and finger safety precautions. Of course, we must realize that each job has its own hazards, to a greater or lesser degree. Let's talk about those potentially dangerous situations in our jobs:

- ⌋ Never put your hands or fingers on loads being moved mechanically without watching for pinch points and other potential hazards.
- ⌋ Wear gloves only when there is exposure to hazards that could produce cuts or scrapes or to chemical hazards that could produce injuries or skin diseases. Do not wear them around reciprocating or rotating machine parts; gloves can be caught up, and fingers and hands can be pulled into the machine. .
- ⌋ Never use hands to stop rotating parts.
- ⌋ Never use fingers to align holes in parts, like castings.
- ⌋ Don't wear rings on the job. Any jewelry can be dangerous.
- ⌋ Use fuse removers to pull fuses, not your fingers.
- ⌋ When lifting, check objects for protrusions, nails, splinters, screws, metal banding, or other sharp or pointed objects.
- ⌋ Watch your fingers and hands when lowering heavy loads; they could get pinched.
- ⌋ Adjust grinder tool rests properly (no further than 1/8 inch away from the wheel) to avoid getting a finger into the gap or having the work piece hurled at you or your co-workers.
- ⌋ Never use your fingers to test the temperatures of gases, liquids, or solids. Damage can happen before your reflexes remove your fingers.
- ⌋ When handling large metal drums, watch out for pinch points and sharp edges; one drum can roll against another, catching your fingers in between.
- ⌋ Handle very sharp or pointed tools, like hatchets, chisels, punches, awls, knives and machine blades with extreme care. Avoid using your fingers to fish out things lying near saw blades, knife blades, parts moving together, such as a punch press, rotating parts of drill bits and reciprocating parts of in-running rolls, since this can be hazardous. Of course, machinery parts should be guarded.

Daily Safety Focus

Common Sense and Accident Prevention

May 17

Generally speaking, we are not *born* with common sense, we *acquire* it throughout life. Actually, common sense is really common experience--we learn about life from others' experiences as well as our own. Awareness of your environment, self-preservation and concern for your fellow workers are all factors in good common sense. Contrary to popular opinion, all workers can prevent themselves from getting hurt. The easy way to avoid pain is to observe how others have taken risks and been injured, rather than learning the hard way--from your own injury. That's common sense!

The experts say at least 80% of industrial accidents are caused by unsafe acts on the part of employees--and not by unsafe conditions. Although employers are required by law to provide a safe and healthful workplace, it is up to *you* to be aware of your work environment and follow safe work practices. By avoiding unsafe acts and practicing common sense, your work will go smoother, with less chance for accidents.

Statistically, most accidents are caused by unsafe acts, including:

Being In A Hurry - Sometimes there is more concern for completing a job quickly instead of safely. Take time to do a good job *and* a safe job.

Taking Chances - Daring behavior or blatant disregard for safe work practices can put the whole work team at risk. Follow all company safety rules and watch out for your fellow employees. Horseplay is never appropriate on the job and can lead to disciplinary action.

Being Preoccupied - Daydreaming, drifting off at work, thinking about the weekend and not paying attention to your work can get you seriously hurt or even killed. Focus on the work you are paid to do. If your mind is troubled or distracted, you're at risk for an accident.

Having A Negative Attitude - Being angry or in a bad mood can lead to severe accidents because anger nearly always rules over caution. Flying off the handle at work is potentially dangerous. Keep your bad moods in check, or more than one person may be hurt. Remember to stay cool and in charge of your emotions.

Failing To Look For Hidden Hazards - At many jobsites, work conditions are constantly changing. Sometimes new, unexpected hazards develop. Always be alert for changes in the environment. Hidden hazards include spilled liquids that could cause slips and falls; out-of-place objects that can be tripped over; unmarked floor openings one could step into; low overhead pipes that could mean a head injury; and other workers who don't see you enter their hazardous work area.

Remember to stay alert for hazards, so you won't become one more accident statistic: You *can* do a quality job without rushing. Maintain a positive attitude and keep your mind on your work. This is just common sense--something smart workers use!

Daily Safety Focus

Develop and "Sell" Your Safety Solutions

May 18

The best ideas for improving the work environment often come from the people who are most affected by what happens in that environment-the workers. But how can employees effectively create solutions to their workplace safety problems, communicate their ideas for improvement to management, and have those ideas be seriously considered? Two tools are needed-a structured approach to solving problems and a way to submit formal suggestions.

A Five Step Approach to Solving Problems:

1. Identify the Problem. Perhaps you already have a specific, perplexing safety problem in mind. It may be a piece of equipment or a process within your department that needs improvement. Define the problem as it now exists-the more specific the better. If excess costs are associated with this problem, knowing what these are will make it easier to explain the problem to management. This will also help you develop clear solutions.
2. Make a list of options. What possibilities exist to fix the problem? What are the results you are looking for? Brainstorm a multitude of ideas which could effectively and efficiently eliminate the problematic situation.
3. List the consequences. You can rarely do one thing without having it affect someone or something else. All ideas have pros and cons associated with them. Consider all sides of the issue and the effect each option may have on other departments or workers.
4. Compare the options. How much effort will be required? How much time and money will it take? You may need some help from your supervisor in calculating time and costs.
5. Choose the best option. Step 4 should help identify the proper choices. Again, discussing this with your supervisor or someone else higher up may help you see the bigger picture and aid you in making the best choice.

Submitting the Formal Suggestion

1. Describe the current safety problem in a brief, clear, and objective statement to decision makers. Explain the disadvantages of the present situation.
2. Outline your idea. Briefly detail your suggestion for improvement, avoiding negativity.
3. Show how much it will cost to execute your plan. Include the anticipated effect your idea will have on other workers or departments in your organization.
4. Estimate the cost savings. There must be some monetary benefit to what you are suggesting. If your plan improves safety, what are the expected cost savings associated with preventing an injury that old methods caused? Are there other benefits? Is it more efficient? Will it take less time? Try to state these benefits in terms of hard dollars which can be saved.
5. Finish with a more in-depth description of your idea. Break your idea down into its component parts. Use drawings and all other pertinent information to emphasize the importance of your idea. Get your plan across to the decision makers persuasively. If you use this twofold method to address safety concerns in your workplace, you'll be giving your management team all the information and tools they need to make an intelligent decision. By submitting your ideas in this format, you may *also* demonstrate to your organization that you are the person to be considered for that next promotion.

Daily Safety Focus

Hand Tool Safety

May 19

Hammers, wrenches, chisels, pliers, screwdrivers, and other hand tools are often underrated as sources of potential danger. Hand tools may look harmless, but they are the cause of many injuries. In fact, an estimated 8 percent of all workplace compensable injuries are caused by incidents associated with hand tools. These injuries can be serious, including loss of fingers or eyesight.

Hand tools can cause many types of injuries:

1. Cuts, abrasions, amputations, and punctures. If hand tools are designed to cut or move metal and wood, remember what a single slip can do to fragile human flesh.
2. Repetitive motion injuries. Using the same tool in the same way all day long, day after day, can stress human muscles and ligaments. Carpal tunnel syndrome (inflammation of the nerve sheath in the wrist) and injuries to muscles, joints and ligaments are increasingly common if the wrong tool is used, or the right tool is used improperly. Injury from continuous vibration can also cause numbness or poor circulation in hands and arms.
3. Eye injuries. Flying chips of wood or metal are a common hazard, often causing needless and permanent blindness.
4. Broken bones and bruises. Tools can slip, fall from heights, or even be thrown by careless employees, causing severe injuries. A hammer that falls from a ladder is a lethal weapon.

To avoid such injuries, remember the following safety procedures:

1. Use the right tool for the job. Don't use your wrench as a hammer. Don't use a screwdriver as a chisel, etc. Go back to the tool house and get the right tool in the right size for the job.
2. Don't use broken or damaged tools, dull cutting tools, or screwdrivers with worn tips.
3. Cut in a direction away from your body.
4. Make sure your grip and footing are secure when using large tools.
5. Carry tools securely in a tool belt or box. Don't carry tools up ladders. Use a hoist or rope.
6. Keep close track of tools when working at heights. A falling tool can kill a co-worker.
7. Pass a tool to another person by the handle; never toss it to them.
8. Use the right personal protective equipment (PPE) for the job. Follow company instructions for selecting and using safety eyewear, steel toed shoes, gloves, hard hats, etc.
9. Never carry sharp or pointed tools such as a screwdriver in your pocket.
10. Select ergonomic tools for your work task when movements are repetitive and forceful.
11. Be on the lookout for signs of repetitive stress. Early detection might prevent a serious injury.
12. Always keep your tools in top condition. A dull blade or blunt point can lead to injury.
13. Store tools properly when you stop work.

By following these precautions, you can help prevent injuries and provide a better workplace for everyone. Remember, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Daily Safety Focus

Preserve Your Vision

May 20

This safety message is going to require some effort on your part! I'm assigning everyone a homework task. But don't panic, this homework will be a piece of cake! What I'd like you to do on your way home today is spend the evening observing the many beautiful things in this world! For just one evening, stop taking your eyesight for granted! Let me suggest the following:

As you leave the workplace today, look up, down and all around, observing the beauty around you. See the blue sky, the many shades of leaves in the trees, and the different birds that occupy them. When you get home, watch your children playing in the yard and pay attention to how their eyes light up when Daddy or Mommy gets home. Have you ever stopped to think how wonderful your eyesight really is? Well, think about it. For about two minutes, close your eyes completely and contemplate how life would be if you lost your eyesight! That's it-your homework is complete! Did you come up with visions about how your life would change if you couldn't see? Did they include any of the following?

- When you and your family are on vacation, they will have to describe the scenery to you.
- You would have to be led wherever you want to go.
- Your spouse would have to describe the way your children's eyes light up when they open their presents at Christmas.
- No more leisurely activities such as hunting or fishing, watching movies or TV.
- No more driving the new truck you just bought.
- Does this sound like something you want to go through? I didn't think so! Is there a way to prevent this from happening? You bet-wear your eye protection! A recent article in *Safety & Health* states that every day approximately 1,000 eye injuries occur in the U.S. OSHA estimates that 90% of eye injuries are preventable through the proper use of safety eye wear. What does this tell us? Many people are not *wearing* proper eye protection! Let's examine a few operations that present eye hazards:
 - Grinding, hammering, chiseling, wood working or any other activity that might cause large fragments or small particles to fly through the air and into the eyes;
 - Painting, spraying, sanding, metal working, spot welding or any process that may cause dust, fumes or tiny particulate to become airborne;
 - Work tasks such as electric welding and cutting with a torch, furnace tending or operations around radiant energy or intense heat;
 - Your eyesight is a precious gift. Please do not wait until it's too late to come to your senses. If your work presents an exposure to eye hazards, wear your eye protection.
- Don't take chances. Open your eyes and protect your vision!

Daily Safety Focus

It's Your Decision

May 21

Most of us like to get our work done with the least amount of effort, and as quickly as possible. We all want to get the most work out of the energy we use on the job. This is good because it often results in discovering newer and more efficient ways of getting our job done.

This *energy-saving* attitude can also be bad if we make a wrong decision and take dangerous shortcuts. All of us at sometime or another have exposed ourselves to possible injury by taking a *shortcut* when, with a little extra effort, we could have done it the safe way. When we were kids, we took shortcuts by jumping the fence instead of using the gate. Now that we are adults we do it by crossing the street between the intersections. Why? Because we want to get there as quickly as possible, and use the least amount of energy we can while doing it.

There is no doubt about it, *the safe way is not always the shortest or quickest way*. The safe way usually takes some extra effort while the unsafe way often appears to be more efficient at the time. When we are faced with these situations, *each one of us will make a conscious decision about what actions we will take next*.

Sometimes we talk ourselves into taking an unsafe shortcut by flawed reasoning. We convince ourselves that it is worth taking the risk because we're in a hurry and can probably get away with it this time without being injured. After all, we have done it before and were not injured then.

Take the electrician I saw the other day who was working on a ladder. He was almost finished with the job except for a little work that he could do only by reaching a little farther than he knew was safe. He knows he will be taking a chance, so he has to *make a decision* whether to get down and move the ladder or to take a shortcut.

Suppose he takes the shortcut. He may get away without having an accident, or he may fall and suffer an injury that will change his whole life - or even end it. Whatever the result, his decision to take a chance is not a good one. Whether he wins or loses this time; risking his neck to save a few minutes' time is rolling the dice - a gamble that he will, eventually, lose.

When you get right down to it though, I don't really think most of us take shortcuts to save time as much as we do it because the safe way is just too much trouble. Like using the wrong tool because it's too much trouble to get the right one. Like climbing the rebar because it's too much trouble to get a ladder. Or maybe like lifting more than you know is safe because it's too much trouble to get someone to help you.

Or maybe it's like the guy I saw the other day swinging around like a monkey on the side of some forms, holding on with one hand while trying to strip forms with the other, all because it's too much trouble to go get a safety belt and tie off like he knows he should. Or how about another guy that was chipping concrete without safety goggles because it was too much trouble to go hunt up a pair.

Remember, you always have a choice, but only you can decide to do it the safe way. The safe way is usually not the shortest or quickest way, but it's your decision

Daily Safety Focus

Housekeeping Is an Important Part of Your Job May 22

Your employer is not your mother! What do I mean by that, you ask? I mean, just like when you were young, your mother had to remind you to pick up after yourself. Now that you are on your own, you still need to be told sometimes. Housekeeping is a very important part of your job. Not only does it improve the overall appearance of your shop or work area, it shows that you take pride in where you work. The best way that you can help keep your work place clean is to pick up after yourself! Don't leave it for the next shift or another craft to worry about.

Here are some reasons to keep your work area clean:

1. You reduce trip and fall hazards.
2. Increased production. You won't have to waste time looking for a misplaced tool. You will always know where your tools are when you put them where they belong after you use them.
3. If someone falls because of materials you left on the floor, you will feel guilty because you were a causal factor in the accident. Also, the injured worker may want to remind you of that!
4. You reduce a potential fire hazard by removing unneeded combustibles from the work area.

Here are some tips to maintain a clean work area:

- Plan the job. Make a list of the needed tools/materials. This will help to minimize unnecessary clutter around your work area.
- Develop a routine for cleaning up at the end of the shift or periodically during the shift.
- Do not allow employees to eat, drink or smoke in the work area, not only because of litter problems, but also because of hygiene concerns.
- This is not, by all means, all inclusive. The point I am trying to make is to take responsibility for yourself and your work area! Remember, a clean work area is a productive work area and also enhances safety!

Daily Safety Focus

Seven Common Accident Causes

May 23

Consider this statistic: 80 out of every 100 accidents are the fault of the person involved in the incident. *Unsafe Acts* cause *four times* as many accidents & injuries as *unsafe conditions*.

Accidents occur for many reasons. In most industries people tend to look for "things" to blame when an accident happens, because it's easier than looking for "root causes," such as those listed below. Consider the underlying accident causes described. Have you been guilty of any of these attitudes or behaviors? If so, you may have not been injured-but next time you may not be so lucky.

- **Taking Shortcuts:** Every day we make decisions we hope will make the job faster and more efficient. But do time savers ever risk your own safety, or that of other crew members? Short cuts that reduce your safety on the job are not shortcuts, but an increased chance for injury.
- **Being Over Confident:** Confidence is a good thing. Overconfidence is *too much* of a good thing. "It'll never happen to me" is an attitude that can lead to improper procedures, tools, or methods in your work. Any of these can lead to an injury.
- **Starting a Task with Incomplete Instructions:** To do the job safely and right the first time you need complete information. Have you ever seen a worker sent to do a job, having been given only a part of the job's instructions? Don't be shy about asking for explanations about work procedures and safety precautions. It isn't dumb to ask questions; it's dumb not to.
- **Poor Housekeeping:** When clients, managers or safety professionals walk through your work site, housekeeping is an accurate indicator of everyone's attitude about quality, production and safety. Poor housekeeping creates hazards of all types. A well maintained area sets a standard for others to follow. Good housekeeping involves both pride and safety.
- **Ignoring Safety Procedures:** Purposely failing to observe safety procedures can endanger you and your co-workers. You are being paid to follow the company safety policies-not to make your own rules. Being "casual" about safety can lead to a casualty!
- **Mental Distractions from Work:** Having a bad day at home and worrying about it at work is a hazardous combination. Dropping your 'mental' guard can pull your focus away from safe work procedures. You can also be distracted when you're busy working and a friend comes by to talk while you are trying to work. Don't become a statistic because you took your eyes off the machine "just for a minute."
- **Failure to Pre-Plan the Work:** There is a lot of talk today about Job Hazard Analysis. JHA's are an effective way to figure out the smartest ways to work safely and effectively. Being hasty in starting a task, or not thinking through the process can put you in harms way. Instead, Plan Your Work and then Work Your Plan!

"It is better to be careful 100 times than to get killed once." (Mark Twain)

Daily Safety Focus

Watch your Step!! Don't slip & fall

May 24

Slips and falls are one of the most frequent causes of accidents, both on and off the job. Each year in the United States, more than 300,000 people suffer disabling injuries from falls. Slips and falls can be fatal as well; they rank second only to automobile accidents, causing nearly 12,000 deaths a year. To avoid getting hurt from falls, avoid rushing and remember the following:

Watch Where You Walk

Be aware of where you are walking. Look down continuously for spilled liquids, materials, equipment, changing surface levels, etc. Make sure the area is well-lit or use a flashlight if lighting is poor.

Wear Proper Footwear

Make sure your shoes are in good shape and correct for the job. Discard worn-out shoes with smooth soles and other defects. If conditions are wet and slippery, wear non-slip shoes or boots. Avoid footwear with leather soles which have poor floor traction--especially on smooth surfaces.

Check Floor Openings

Avoid unguarded floor openings. On construction sites, when covers are placed over floor openings, avoid walking on the cover unless it is absolutely secure and will not move or collapse. Never jump over pits or other openings.

Be Careful On Stairs

Do not run when going up or down stairs. Check to see that stair treads are in good shape, with no obstructions on the steps. Always use the hand railings that are provided. Avoid carrying large loads when going up or down stairs and ensure that stairs are well-lit.

Use Ladders Correctly

Never use broken or defective ladders. Set the angle of the ladder at the proper four-to-one ratio (height to width angle). Make sure the ladder is on solid footing and will not move when you climb upon it. Whenever possible, tie your ladder to the structure to improve stability. Anchorage at the bottom is also a good idea. Never stand on the top two steps of a step ladder.

Make Sure Scaffolding Is Safe To Use

When working on scaffolding, make sure it is secure, stable and properly set-up. Do not work on scaffolding if guard rails are missing or the base is unstable. Check to see that planks are in good shape and not cracked. Tall scaffolds should be tied into a structure to increase stability.

Don't Jump Out Of Vehicles

Never jump from equipment or vehicles. Use the handrail and steps provided, remembering the "three point rule." Avoid stepping onto loose rocks, slippery surfaces, oil spills, etc.

Watch your step and don't trip yourself up! Remember, Gravity Always Wins!

Daily Safety Focus

When you least expect it...lessons learned!

May 25

The prospect of getting into an accident is something no one likes to think about. Time and again we hear our managers, supervisors or co-workers telling us to be careful, work safely and use personal protective equipment. Yet, do we really listen? We hear the words, but do we really believe *we'll* be the one who will have an accident?

There are those who take the safety message at work seriously, and those who do not. Safe work procedures have a purpose. Experience tells us that if we do things right, we'll complete our work correctly and safely. When personal protective equipment (PPE) is provided, this is also for good reason. PPE prevents or minimizes injury or illness to the user.

Sometimes accidents happen when you least expect them. The following true stories prove this, along with a reminder that sometimes they *do* happen to us....

Lesson #1: Two mechanics were working on a step van and repairing the rear roll-up door. In order to fix the door, they had to alternately "tension" the large spring that assists the door's upward movement. As they took turns tightening the spring by inserting 3/8 inch metal rods into the spring catches, the front mechanic's rod slipped out from the catch. The rebound motion and force made the rod, still in his hand, fly back and strike the other mechanic in the eye. Obviously, the mechanic who was struck in the eye needed immediate emergency medical attention.

Lesson? Lack of eye protection + inadequate work procedures = serious injury.

Lesson #2: A construction superintendent was observing project operations when a piece of heavy equipment ran over a piece of concrete with its' rear tire. The object became a flying projectile when it "shot out" from under the tire, missed a small stock pile, sailed past a back-hoe and struck the superintendent in the head. Fortunately, the superintendent was wearing his hard hat, or the blow might easily have been fatal.

Lesson? Use of PPE = protection from more serious injury or death.

Lesson #3: An employee was using a bench grinder to polish a piece of metal on the wire wheel. When he turned to talk to another employee, and took his eyes off his work, the piece of metal he was holding became caught between the wheel and the tool rest. His finger was pulled into the wire wheel which instantly shaved off part of his finger.

Lesson? Lack of concentration + improperly adjusted tool rest = painful injury.

Work should not have to be a death or injury experience. Unfortunately, lack of caution and attention can make it one. The next time you hear someone say, "be careful," take a minute to really listen to the message and ask yourself, "Why should I be careful?"

The answer is, "because accidents happen when you least expect them-and sometimes they happen to you."

Think about yourself, family, friends and co-workers-don't learn a lesson the hard way!

Daily Safety Focus

Was it an accident or was it an error?

May 26

What is an accident? Briefly, it is a sudden and unforeseen event. Given that definition, can we say that the Apollo fire that killed three astronauts on the launch pad, and the Challenger disaster, were *accidents*?

The first Apollo fatalities were due to a fire that occurred when the spacecraft cabin was charged with pure oxygen during a test. Unfortunately, there was an electrical short under the seat of one of the astronauts. Oxygen fed the resulting fire. The men could not escape because of a poorly designed escape hatch that took too long to open even under ideal conditions. It is well known that pure oxygen atmospheres are very dangerous. It has also been recognized for many years that escape hatches must be simple to use and designed so they will open quickly.

The *Challenger* exploded because cold temperatures effected the performance of a seal already stressed due to an inadequate design. Previous *Challenger* inspections had shown that the seals were not holding up as intended during launches, and it was known that low temperatures would degrade them further.

What do these events have in common? In every case, there were experts in charge and plenty of opportunities to anticipate problems. Experience should have told them to take corrective action long before the disastrous incidents took place. So why--in spite of all the warning signs--were these conditions allowed to exist? The answer is simple: The warning signs were overlooked. So ask the question again: "Were they accidents or were they errors?"

Be alert to warnings and take heed when they are encountered. Irritated by the metal filings hitting you in the face and eyes while you grind? This is a warning that you need eye and face protection. Do you keep banging your knuckles when your wrench slips? That is your warning that an old favorite tool may be worn out and need replacing. Have you or a co-worker ever suffered an injury because you failed to anticipate and ward off possible dangers?

Think about what could go wrong before you act! If something minor goes wrong, this is a warning to stop! Consider what has gone awry. Figure out what should be done to resolve the problem, then take care of it! Accidents are usually errors on someone's part. They are not an incidental part of the job. If you accept, the mind set that they are, accidents *will* occur.

This is your challenge: Think about what pitfalls may come up during work tasks. Recognize the early warning signs of things going wrong. Have the strength to stand up and say:

"Hold on a minute. Let's think about this!"

Daily Safety Focus

What to do about "near misses?"

May 27

Unlike a western gunfight "shoot out" at the corral on television, serious accidents can cause real anguish and suffering so real and vivid that persons involved or nearby bystanders rarely forget the flow of blood, broken limbs, crushed bodies, or screams of pain. An accident without injury though is more like the bloodless, painless fakery of television "violence"-perhaps without real purpose in the drama, and therefore easy to forget.

In real life there is a danger in brushing off accidents that do not hurt, harm, or damage. When these accidents, or perhaps we should refer to them as near misses, happen we should immediately run the red warning flag up the pole. Because a non-injury accident is like a 104 degree fever, it's a positive sign or symptom that something is wrong.

Sometimes we misdiagnose or completely fail to diagnose the symptoms of near misses, because luck or blind chance saved us from injury. We may tend to shrug it off and forget the near miss with a casual kind of ignorance. Hopefully everyone agrees that it is not a good practice to rely on luck for effective accident prevention.

One of the best ways to eliminate the likelihood of future close calls is through effective root cause analysis and effective corrective action taken on near misses. A list of near misses can be almost endless: lack of proper machine guarding; improper maintenance or grounding of equipment; missing handrails or guardrails; poor housekeeping; improperly stored material; stubbing a toe on a protruding floor object; bumping up against a sharp object; or tripping over clutter and almost falling down. It's best to learn the real lessons from these near misses, since they are very likely to continue to occur repeatedly until an injury occurs.

There was a study done many years ago that found for every serious or disabling injury reported, there were about 10 injuries of a less serious nature, 30 property damage incidents, and about 600 incidents (near misses) with no visible injury or property damage. This study was part of the foundation for the widely accepted accident prevention theory that "increased frequency leads to severity."

How can you help? Report each and every near miss incident to your supervisor immediately in order to help prompt investigation and follow up actions that will reduce the potential for future near misses. Supervisors must partially rely upon you and your fellow workers to report these to them as they just can't see everything.

If you are involved with or witness a near miss incident, remember that you or your co-worker may not get a second injury free chance to hoist that red warning flag up the pole. Do your part to help make the workplace safe for everyone involved.

Report those near misses to your supervisor immediately!

Daily Safety Focus

Portable Ladders: DOs and DON'Ts

May 28

Portable ladders are a simple and effective means for climbing safely to a work area. However, careless use of ladders has led to thousands of disabling injuries and even fatalities. These accidents could have been avoided by following three basic safety rules.

Use a ladder that is the right type and size for the job to be done. The right type of ladder means using a heavy ladder for construction work - not a light household-type ladder. Metal ladders should never be used if you are working near exposed electrical circuits or power lines. This is particularly important if you are working in fields near power lines where a wind may blow the ladder into those lines. If you are working around trees and shrubs, check to be sure that power lines are not hidden behind them. The safest stepladder is 10 feet long or less. Never splice ladders together or place a ladder on an unstable base such as a barrel or box to gain additional height.

Don't use a ladder that is in poor condition. Inspect the ladder each time you use it. Check for missing, broken, or weakened rungs, side rails, and cleats. Make sure that auxiliary equipment such as ropes, pulleys, and extension ladder locks are in good repair. Clean oil, mud, or grease off ladder rungs and side rails to prevent slipping. Do not use a defective ladder. If your ladder needs repair, mark or tag it: **DANGEROUS - DO NOT USE!**

If it cannot be repaired, dispose of it permanently.

Take common-sense precautions when positioning a ladder or working on it. Position your ladder from the wall at a distance equal to approximately one-fourth the length of the ladder (at a 75.5-degree angle). Make sure the footing is secure. If it isn't, lash it to the point where the ladder touches the surface it is leaning against. NEVER lean a ladder against something that might move.

When placing a ladder up against a building, don't lean it on a window sash. Instead, fasten a board securely across the ladder so that the board extends across the window and for some distance on either side of the window.

As you climb up and down the ladder, always face the ladder and use both hands to hold the side rails. Don't carry tools or materials in your hands as you climb. Instead, put them in a tool belt or use a rope and bucket to raise and lower them to and from the work area.

Always stay below the top three ladder rungs, unless you have a firm handhold or are wearing a secured safety belt. Many deaths have resulted from workers who fell off ladders because they weren't wearing a safety belt.

Keep the ladder from becoming unsteady by not leaning or overreaching from it. Never reposition a ladder while you are standing on it. Avoid using ladders in high winds.

If you are working in front of a door that opens toward a ladder you are working on, block the door, lock it, or guard it. Have a co-worker guard your work area to prevent anyone or anything from accidentally bumping into the ladder. Barricade or rope off the space around it.

Daily Safety Focus

Preventing Sprains & Strains

May 29

(Understanding and Battling These Formidable Foes)

Sprains and strains are among the most common workplace injuries. They are painful and debilitating for employees and costly for employers. What are these ailments all about and are you doing enough to help prevent them?

What's the difference?!

Frequently mentioned in the same breath, sprains and strains are, in fact, quite different:

A **sprain** is an injury involving the stretching or tearing of a ligament (a tissue that connects bone to bone) or a joint capsule, which helps provide joint stability. Symptoms can include pain, inflammation, and, sometimes, the inability to move an affected limb. Sprains occur when a joint is forced beyond its normal range of motion, such as when one turns or rolls the ankle.

A **strain** is an injury that involves the stretching or tearing of a musculo-tendinous (muscle and tendon) structure. An acute strain of a musculo-tendinous structure occurs at the junction where the muscle is becoming a tendon. This happens when a muscle is stretched and suddenly contracts, as with running or jumping. Symptoms of an acute muscle strain can include pain, muscle spasm, loss of strength, and limited range of motion. Chronic strains are injuries that gradually build up from overuse or repetitive stress, resulting in tendinitis (inflammation of a tendon).

Doctors categorize sprains and strains according to their severity. A Grade I (mild) sprain or strain involves some stretching or minor tearing of a ligament or muscle. A Grade II injury is a ligament or muscle that is partially torn, but still intact. And a Grade III sprain or strain is one in which the ligament or muscle is completely torn, causing joint instability. Grade I injuries usually heal quickly with the familiar RICE formula: rest, ice, compression, and elevation. Therapeutic exercise can help restore strength and flexibility. Grade II sprains and strains are treated similarly, but may require the affected are to be immobilized to speed healing. Grade III injuries usually require immobilization and may need surgery to restore function.

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Share These Tips

May 30

Job-related sprains and strains (especially those that affect the back) are often caused by overexertion during material handling. An injury can occur while: lifting, carrying, overreaching, or overextending a part of a body, reaching over something to pick up a load, or trying to reach a top shelf without using a stool or ladder.

The following tips can help prevent the discomfort and expense associated with these too-common injuries. Remind employees of them at a safety meeting or toolbox talk, or by posting them on your safety bulletin board.

- Size up the job before starting. What is the best, safest way to proceed?

- Be alert to any way to reduce or eliminate lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, and carrying.

- Warm up the muscles before beginning a strenuous job, just like athletes do.

- Watch out for slip or trip hazards in the work area.

- When possible, push, rather than pull.

- Ask for help when a load is heavy, awkward, or unstable.

- Be sure that you are on a stable surface before attempting any lift.

- Keep the load close and bend with the knees, not the back.

- Use a step stool or ladder, on a stable surface, whenever called for.

- Avoid twisting while handling a load.

- Stay in good physical shape through regular exercise.

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Tick/ Insect Bite Prevention Information

May 31

As we move into the spring of the year, the following points are important for the prevention of Tick borne related diseases.

There are three stages in tick development: Larval, Nymph, and Adult.

While **all three may be infected with *B. burgdorfferi*, only the nymph and, to a lesser extent, the adult are infective to humans.** The nymphs are active during the SPRING. They reside in the leaf litter of wooded areas and uncut grasses. They are not found in cut lawns beyond nine feet from the border. Therefore, people frequenting lawns, ball fields, industrial facilities, or golf courses are not likely to become infected unless they venture into these "wild" border areas. Removal of the leaf litter from such wooded areas is effective in reducing the likelihood of a bite. Such removal also increases the effectiveness of pesticides that may be put down to control ticks.

If it bites, the nymph must **remain attached for at least 36 hours** before there is significant likelihood of transmission of the germ to the host. 90% of all cases of early, acute Lyme disease originating from a nymph bite occur between mid May and late July in this part of the country. Thus the appearance of the typical rash (which does not have to be a "bullseye") or an acute febrile illness with fever, malaise, headache, and muscle aches during the months mentioned above should be treated promptly with appropriate antibiotics. Seroconversion would not necessarily be expected (development of specific antibodies resulting from immunization or infection).

Adult ticks typically cause a problem from October to December. Like the nymphs, they must remain attached for a prolonged period before transmitting the germ. The adults though, because of differences in their internal physiology, are less infective to man than the nymphs. Again, appearance of the rash or a febrile illness should be closely examined.

Recommended Action and Position from Safety & Health for the Tick Season

The risk of being bitten by a tick or other insects can be decreased with a few precautions.

Avoid tick-infested areas, especially in May, June, and July (many local health departments and park or extension services have information on the local distribution of ticks).

Wear light-colored clothing so that ticks can be spotted more easily.

Tuck pant legs into socks or boots and shirt into pants.

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Tape the area where pants and socks meet so that ticks cannot crawl under clothing.

Spray insect repellent containing DEET on clothes and on exposed skin other than the face, **OR** treat clothes (especially pants, socks, and shoes) with PERMETHRIN, (Permanone product), which kills ticks on contact.

Wear a hat and a long-sleeved shirt for added protection.

Walk in the center of trails to avoid overhanging grass and brush.

After being outdoors, remove clothing and wash and dry it at a high temperature; inspect body carefully and remove attached ticks with tweezers, grasping the tick as close to the skin surface as possible and pulling straight back with a slow steady force; avoid crushing the tick's body. There is no need to take ticks or nymphs to the health dept.

Note: Vaccines are preventative, and therefore cannot be used to **treat** actual symptoms of Lyme disease. **Also, they will not be effective against other tick-borne diseases such as ehrlichiosis, babesiosis, and Rocky Mountain spotted fever.**