

“General Safety - It’s Your Decision”

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 sometimes 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.

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.

Through several years of investigating accidents and research in the field of accident reconstruction, leaders in the field of occupational accident prevention have concluded that there are specific reasons why accidents occur. They found that worker safety is dependent on worker behavior and human factors. They developed ten safety rules and, while some of you may have heard them before, they are worth repeating:

1. **STAY ALERT** - and stay alive. The more awake a worker is, the less likely he or she is to get hurt. If you are unsure how to operate equipment or perform a task, ask your supervisor. Don’t guess and muddle through. Make sure you know in advance the correct, safe way to do it.
2. **WEAR THE RIGHT CLOTHES** - work clothes should fit properly. Anything that can catch in machinery or trip you up is hazardous. Wear protective clothing and equipment as required.
3. **USE THE RIGHT TOOLS** - if you need a hammer, get a hammer. It may be handier to use a pair of pliers, wrench, screw driver or even your fist. But you will have only yourself to blame if you break your fingers.
4. **LEARN HOW TO LIFT** - lifting takes more than muscle; it is an art. Don’t try to show how strong you are; you may end up in a hospital. Get help to handle anything that is too heavy or cumbersome for you.
5. **DON’T BE A PRANKSTER** - practical jokes and horseplay can be dangerous around machinery. If you feel the urge to play, resist it until after work.
6. **BE TIDY** - good housekeeping reduces hazards in the workplace or your home. Always put away tools when they are not in use. Keep the floors clean, pick up the scraps, wipe up spills. A slip or trip can be fatal.

7. **REPORTING IS IMPORTANT** - never fail to report accidents, defective equipment, and unsafe conditions.

8. **GET FIRST AID IMMEDIATELY** - if you're hurt – even if it is just a scratch. Neglect of the injury may lead to serious infection, weeks of lost time, even permanent injury.

9. **BACK YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM** - if you have an idea you believe will reduce accidents, tell your supervisor about it. Set an example by obeying safety rules. Cooperate with your safety committee.

10. **NEVER TAKE A CHANCE** - next to sheer carelessness, the short cut is probably the biggest killer of all. To save a minute or two, you may lose a lifetime. Whatever you are doing, if you are not doing it safely, you are not doing it right!!

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.

YOU are
RESPONSIBLE
for your own
actions