

Avoid Unsafe Acts

An accident is an unplanned event caused by an unsafe act, an unsafe condition, or both. Injuries and accidents trace back to unsafe acts or conditions.

Injuries on the job don't just happen – they are caused! An injury is the final link in the chain of events or circumstances. We are fortunate indeed to be able to say that most unsafe acts or conditions do not complete the chain of events that leads to an injury-producing accident.

Some figures have been rather widely used to show that only 30 out of 330 accidents result in injuries. These figures also show that out of the 30 injury-producing accidents, 29 require first aid and only one is serious enough to disable the worker or to cause loss of time from the job.

What does this mean to you? It means that you can't afford to take a chance on an unsafe act or an unsafe condition. The odds are such that if you continue to take chances you will be involved in an injury-producing accident. Your injury could very well be so serious that it would cause you to lose time from work or be laid up in a hospital.

I suppose that each of you realizes that both unsafe acts and unsafe conditions cause almost every kind of work accident that can happen or has happened. Let's talk a little about the four most common sources of injury-producing accidents in the order of their frequency:

1. Manual handling of materials is the source of about one-fourth of all compensable work injuries. Injuries due to improper lifting occur quite often. There are also many cases involving bruised and smashed fingers and toes.
2. There are many types of falls: falls on slippery floors and tripping over objects left on floors, falls on stairs, falls from slight elevations, and falls from heights.
3. Next are the injuries caused by falling or moving objects. You can get hit with anything from a falling tool to a load swung by a crane.
4. Machinery is safe if you know how to handle it and if you utilize the safety devices. Machinery is dangerous for the inexperienced worker to operate, or for one who takes chances.

I'm going to be looking for unsafe conditions on the job and I'll be trying to spot the unsafe acts that each of you may engage in without realizing it. Here are some of the unsafe acts that I am going to be looking for:

1. Operating machines or equipment without authority, failure to secure it or warn others.
2. Operating equipment at an unsafe speed.
3. Bypassing safety devices.
4. Using unsafe equipment or using equipment unsafely.
5. Handling of material in an unsafe manner.
6. Taking an unsafe position or posture.
7. Indulging in horseplay or inattention.
8. Failing to use protective equipment.

You, too, can help in our safety program if you'll agree to practice safety and to warn others when you see them endangering themselves. If you see a dangerous condition, report it to me! Always wear your protective clothing where your work demands it.

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