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Weekly Safety Meeting

The “Little Things” Are Hazards

Many small things influence our lives; and not paying attention to them can sometimes have disastrous consequences…especially when it comes to safety. Fortunately, most of us have been trained to keep an eye out for the “big hazards” that could cause injury. But, sometimes, it’s the little or unnoticed hazards that can cause us the greatest harm.

One company became very concerned when its accident frequency showed a large increase over a three-month period.

Management began an in-depth check of systems, equipment, and material that are considered to be high-hazard: heavy machinery, ventilation, toxic substances, machine guarding, etc.

To everyone's surprise, none of these things were the cause of their accidents. Chemicals were properly labeled and stored; machines were in good repair and properly guarded; the exhaust fans, sprinkler systems, respirators, etc., were all in good working order. ***Instead, accidents stemmed from a variety of "little things" that had been ignored until an injury occurred.***

Serious Falls Have Been Caused by:

- A puddle of oil on the floor from a leaking forklift. No one had poured absorbent on the spill because it was "too small to worry about." It wasn't too small, however, to make a passing employee slip and fall when he didn't notice it. (Furthermore, the leaking forklift needs to be repaired so this accident won't happen again.)
- A box of supplies that had been left on the floor in front of a shelf, instead of properly stored. It had been walked around dozens of times before someone finally tripped over it.
- A ladder that was placed in front of an outward-opening door "just for a minute" to change a light bulb. It was knocked over by another worker coming through the door, and both he and the worker on the ladder were injured.

All these "incidents waiting to happen" had been ignored because they didn't really seem that dangerous to the workers involved. Employees all knew about, and carefully avoided, the major hazards found when repairing energized electrical equipment or bypassing machine guards.

We often intend to report a defective tool, extension cord, or stepladder to the maintenance department but don't take the time or forget about it. It is important to follow through on our good intentions, since these are just the sorts of "little things" that can result in a serious injury to ourselves or to other workers.

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Here's What We All Need to Remember:

It's important to follow through and fix or report these "little things.". Little things do matter especially when someone gets hurt because of that "little thing." If everyone took the time to pay attention to all of the potential hazards around us and then fix them or report them we could prevent some of these workplace injuries – even some of the more serious ones.

If you are walking near one of those "little things" or even a serious safety issue, ask yourself, "Would I want someone else to report this if I knew that I might be injured because of it?" If the answer is yes, then take the time to report it!

As You Begin Work, Ask Yourself:

- Do I have the right tools/equipment for the job?
- Have I inspected my tools/equipment to make sure they are in good repair or am I trying to get by?
- Is the work laid out to provide safe completion of the job?
- Are the materials I am using safe, and do I need additional personal protective equipment such as; safety glasses, gloves, hard hat, or respirator, etc.?
- Is there a safer way to accomplish the task?
- Are all necessary equipment guards in place?

Summary:

Hazards are present on every jobsite. They include falls, flying debris, lacerations, electrical, confined spaces, noise, use of tools, fire, illumination, scaffolds, ladders, aerial lifts, defective equipment, material handling and storage, and housekeeping.

It is the right and responsibility of every employee to work in a hazard free environment.

Take a few seconds before beginning your task to look for hazards created by the work you are about to perform, evaluate the current weather conditions, and consider the workers, equipment and machinery around you.

IT'S BETTER TO LOSE ONE MINUTE IN LIFE…THAN TO LOSE LIFE IN A MINUTE!

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Safety Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Supervisor:	Subject:
Location:	Date:
Conducted By:	Trainer Signature:

Name (print clearly)	Signature	Comments / Safety Concerns / Training Requests

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