Make Safety Personal

For years, safety experts have tried to implement programs to prevent worker injuries, and government has passed many regulations to help OSHA enforce workplace safety. But all of the laws, programs and rules in the world can't keep you from injury – if you don't *think*.

Statistics reveal that for every on-the job accident caused by unsafe conditions, there are at least four that can be attributed to unsafe acts.

What an employee does or fails to do can directly affect their personal safety. *"Thinking"* is a personal action that no one else can do for you. "*Failure to fully think the task through*" has been referred to as the hidden safety hazard or unsafe act that contributes to workplace accidents. Unsafe acts include both actions that are taken, as well as those failed to take to avoid risk exposures or accidents. So what are some of the reasons we fall into this trap of not thinking – before we act?

- **<u>Anger:</u>** Anger is another common problem and we all get angry at times. However, if you get mad enough you may not think straight, act in haste, and act unsafely. If you feel yourself getting angry – stop and think about the situation, before you act or respond in anger. Count to 10 or take a deep breath before you do anything else.

- **<u>Confusion</u>**: If you find this happening, stop what you are doing and think. If you don't understand the instructions you have been given – ask. It's not wrong to ask questions, but it could be a hazard if you don't – if it exposes you or others to danger.

- **<u>Daydreaming:</u>** Daydreaming or inattention on the job is dangerous and it could kill you. If this is happening to you, force yourself to focus and concentrate on the task at hand. Don't allow your attention to drift and thoughts to wander.

- **<u>Fatigue:</u>** Fatigue often gets in the way of straight thinking too. If you are tired, it's often hard to think things out clearly. You can avoid this problem by getting enough sleep, eating properly, and keeping yourself fit.

- **<u>Indifference:</u>** This can also lead to accidents. Don't let yourself get in a rut. If you feel your job is becoming routine –think about ways to improve things.

- **<u>Worry</u>**: This is a common problem for all of us, and no one is completely free of it all of the time. However, worry can be very distracting unless you learn to control it. There is no magic formula for controlling worry, but if you have a serious problem that you are preoccupied with – talk to your supervisor about it. He may not be able to completely solve it for you...

Think about the last accident you had at work. Where was your mind immediately before the accident? Was it focused on what you were doing? Or were you thinking about the past or some event in the future? Maybe your thoughts were just drifting. Were you bored, angry, or tired?

Keeping your attention focused on what you are doing will enable you to work safely, more enjoyable and more productively.

Toolbox Topic:	Make Safety Personal	
Work Unit:		March 2018
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