



Don't Gamble With Your Safety



A nineteenth century author wrote, "Habit is the deepest law of human nature." Most of us would probably agree with that. Humans are quite often influenced by habit. Habit and job safety are closely related. If you form safe work habits, it's a big plus for safety. A research publication recently listed eight of the most common human elements involved in job safety. All are associated with habits, to some degree. Recognition of hazards was one of the elements mentioned.

By constantly being on the lookout for hazards, you enhance your own safety.

In watching for hazards you must consider not just the obvious ones, but also hazards which might suddenly appear, through some action of another employee or chain of unusual circumstances.

Indifference was another of the human elements listed. An individual might know the correct procedures for doing his or her particular job, and just ignore them. Or there might be persons who don't know safety procedures and just leave it at that, rather than finding out what they are.

Daring behavior is another obvious human element that can lead to a job accident. Working without guards and taking shortcuts are examples of daredevil tactics. Horseplay is in the same category. Setting a poor example also can lead to trouble.

The actions of all of us have an influence on the safety-mindedness of other workers particularly newcomers.

If a veteran employee is involved in an unsafe act of the job, a new worker might observe it and be swayed to adopt the same practice.

Another weak link in the chain of safety is someone who is impulsive or always in a hurry. Haste is a trait that often leads to accidents. We are using our time foolishly if we don't take time to be safe. Temper falls into the same category, as it usually flares up on the job in the form of impatience. Training, or lack of it, is also a safety factor.

The supervisor is responsible for training an employee to do a job safely.

However, as employees, we have to be responsible enough to ask questions if we don't understand instructions, or are in doubt about procedures. Also, it's very basic to safety that hazardous situations be called to the attention of the supervisor. One of the eight human elements listed by the author was work habits; Of course that is really the point of our talk. We do our jobs from day to day, and in the process, good work habits are formed. But so are unsafe habits, unless we make an effort to break them. Some habits good or bad, are formed early in the job, while others develop naturally as time goes on. A person might incorporate unsafe habits into the job and continue them for a long time before a mishap occurs. Other people might not be so fortunate. They could learn quickly how an unsafe act can catch up with them unexpectedly.

Gambling with the law of averages is a bad bet.

