

Tool Box Talk

WORKPLACE COMPLACENCY

JUNE 2013

COMPLACENCY IN THE WORKPLACE

Complacency can be defined as self-satisfaction, especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies. Complacency is extremely dangerous in the workplace. We get so used to things being done the same way that we do not always look at the hazards in our surroundings. We may also underestimate the risk of tasks that we perform regularly, or fail to notice a change in our environment when we become complacent in our daily routines.

When working on the job, there is danger when a person goes on auto-pilot. All too often we don't realize how complacent we are until we have a near miss or incident. When something like this happens, it jumpstarts our heart and then we refocus our attention.

Most incidents are caused by unsafe acts. Companies and employees work hard to create a safe workplace and eliminate unsafe acts. But what happens to one's own unsafe behaviour? If you read between the lines of incident reports, you may see that workers involved in the incidents had become complacent about safety. When workers begin to work in auto-pilot mode, and stop paying attention to what they are doing, that can lead to taking short cuts and taking risks.

WHAT COULD GO WRONG?

If employees aren't thinking about what could go wrong every day, all day while they work, they are not completing the task safely. Workers need to be trained to think ahead as they approach each task and consider:

- *What they are working with*
- *What they will be doing*
- *Where they will be going*
- *What could go wrong*

Encourage employees to examine equipment, procedures and the hazards that may exist. They need to focus physically and mentally on their work, no matter how many times they may have done the same job in the past.



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