

Don't Take Anything For Granted

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The heading over an article in a newspaper said: “Man Seriously Burned At Work.” The story went on to say that the man was burned when his clothes were set fire by an explosion.

But there was more to the story than that. What actually happened was that an oxygen line was mistakenly connected to a water tank on the rear of a jet drill. The operator opened the valve, an explosion occurred, and his clothing was ignited.

Behind the headlines of another story, a man was priming the carburetor on a truck. He poured some gasoline, then stepped back with the open fuel can in his hand. Another person walked up behind with a lit cigarette. The can touched the cigarette and the explosion burned both men.

And in another incident, which you might think could never happen, a man was inside a machine with the power on. You’ve probably guessed the rest. Another employee activated the machine and guy inside was caught between the male and female dies.

There is one thing that the three accidents had in common. In each case someone made a false presumption. This violated a very basic safety rule – “Don’t Take Anything For Granted.”

- One man figured he hooked up the right line. He didn’t check it out.
- Another man thought no one else was around, and backed into trouble.
- The third man supposed no one else would start his machine.

All three presumptions were incorrect and resulted in serious accidents.

Taking things for granted actually involves many safety violations.

To name a few:

- ✓ Poor communications,
- ✓ Not being alert, and
- ✓ Taking chances.

Check and double-check when necessary. Check tools for flaws before you use them. They may have been O.K. yesterday, but today's another day. Look before you blindly put your hands anywhere. Boxes are usually clean, but this time there might be protruding nails. Look before you step out into an aisle. Power trucks may not usually travel that route, but this time a new driver may have wandered off course.

On the way to and from work, you've seen the wreckage at intersections where a driver presumed everyone would stop on the red signal and then charged into the intersection only to discover that his presumption was wrong.

The problem may involve poor communications, too. If someone asks where he can get some soda, he might want a soft drink, or maybe he has indigestion, or maybe he's got some scotch in his thermos. Depending on what you thought he asked for, your directions might ruin his lunch.

In a recent study of characteristics of accident-prone employees, one of the personality factors associated with the tendency to have repeated injuries was self-assurance. The accident repeater believes that he is able to cope with all problems; he is convinced of his superiority. Over-confidence makes him take unnecessary chances which are followed by frequent accidents and injuries.

Another accident factor was found to be the desire for dominance. The accident repeater has decided opinions of his own, combined with comparatively little regard for the opinions of others. He usually decides that his way is the right way.

So accident-prone people take it for granted that they will always make out O.K. and that they're right. The fact that they're accident repeaters proves how wrong they are.

Perhaps the answer to the problem is in developing a safe attitude. You have to want to be safe.

If any misunderstandings or questions develop concerning your job, clear them up right away by consulting your supervisor.

NEVER TAKE SAFETY FOR GRANTED.

Disclaimer: Information contained in this handout is considered to be correct. If there are questions, please contact the Arkansas Workers' Compensation Commission/Health and Safety Division.