



# SAFETY CULTURE

## DEVELOP SAFE HABITS



This talk discusses safe habits to prevent errors on the job that can lead to injuries.

**Materials to have on hand:** [N/A]

### Items for attendees to consider during the talk:

- What are some situations where you might be more likely to make an error?
- What safe behaviors are habits for you? Which ones do you need to work on?

## TALK

All of us take risks and shortcuts from time to time, both on and off the job, and most of the time, nothing bad happens. So, why is it so important to work to eliminate these shortcuts and do things the safe way every time? The answer has to do with habits.

When you're working at full capacity—your full attention is on the task, you have plenty of time to complete it, and you're not tired or distracted—you may be able to get away with operating a machine without a guard, or not wearing your personal protective equipment, or PPE, without hurting yourself. But, how often is that situation the reality? Most of us have at least some distractions to contend with every day, and there's always the potential for something unexpected that takes our attention away from the task at hand. When you combine distraction with an unsafe practice, tragic accidents can happen.

That's where habits come in. If you consistently wear your PPE, follow safe work practices, and avoid shortcuts, those behaviors will become routine, and you'll do them without thinking. When safety becomes automatic, distractions, fatigue, and other things that can interfere with your attention are less likely to lead to an accident.

Think about wearing your seat belt when you ride in a car. It's probably automatic; you get in the car, you close the door, and reach for your seat belt without pausing to consider whether it's really necessary. But, what if you had to think about wearing your seat belt every time? You might remember to put it on most of the time, but what if you were running late? Rushing to the hospital after you received a phone call that a family member had been injured? Your mind would be elsewhere, and the chances are higher that you'd forget about your seat belt.

You might get lucky and arrive at your destination unharmed. But nobody plans to get into an accident, whether you're on or off the job. And being distracted means that you're likely to make other careless errors, in addition to forgetting your seat belt, which increases the risk of an accident even more. On the other hand, if you've made it a habit to wear your seat belt, you'll do it every time, including when you're not thinking clearly, and even if you do get into an accident, you'll have that safeguard to reduce your risk of injury.

The same idea applies at work. If you choose safe behaviors every time and make them into ingrained habits, the protection they provide will be there when you need it most. So, get into the habit of choosing safety and avoiding shortcuts every day.

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**Talk Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Supervisor/** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

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# SAFETY CULTURE

## TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY



This talk reminds workers of the importance of taking responsibility for safety and making sure the workplace is safe for everyone.

**Material to have on hand:**

- Example of a recent incident or near miss that could have been prevented if someone spoke up about an unsafe condition (if applicable)

**Items for attendees to consider during talk:**

- Who is responsible for making sure our workplace is safe?
- What should you do if you notice a hazard in the workplace?
- What kinds of hazards do we need to particularly be aware of at our worksite?

### TALK

You’re probably aware of the safety rules we all need to follow at work. Most of you do a good job at wearing your personal protective equipment (PPE) and following safe work practices. But when you see something unsafe, what do you do? Do you think to yourself, “I’m following the rules, so it’s not my problem”? Or do you say or do something to make sure the hazard is fixed before someone gets hurt?

It’s important to watch out for your own safety, but it’s just as important to take a look around you and

make sure the workplace is safe for everyone. Safety isn’t just the job of the safety manager or the supervisors—it’s everyone’s job.

Consider this example [*or share a real example from your workplace if applicable*]: Steve was walking through a worksite one morning on his way to do some painting when he noticed a broken guardrail. He thought to himself, “Someone should fix that,” but he was in a hurry to get to work, so he continued walking and forgot about the guardrail. Several more people walked by the same area, but like Steve, they were all focused on their own tasks, so the guardrail remained broken.

Later that day, Bob was carrying some bulky materials through the area. He couldn’t see very well around the materials he was carrying, so he got a little too close to the edge of the walkway. Because the guardrail was broken, he fell 8 feet down and broke his leg.

This story is a good example of why you should always say something when you see something dangerous. It may not be your job to inspect guardrails, just like it wasn’t Steve’s job. But if Steve or any of the other people who noticed the broken guardrail had said something to a supervisor, the guardrail could have been fixed before Bob got hurt.

Whether you’re at work or at home, make it a point to look around with an eye toward safety. Do you see anything dangerous? Some hazards are very easy to overlook. For example, a loose extension cord in

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**Talk Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Location:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Supervisor/Presenter:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendees:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_

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a walkway is a trip hazard. A burned-out lightbulb makes it more difficult to see what you're doing, which can increase the chance of getting hurt. A machine with a broken or missing guard can easily cut off or crush someone's hand.

When you notice a hazard, don't assume that someone else will see it and fix it. Take the time to report it to a supervisor. If the hazard is something you can easily and safely fix, like a trip hazard in a hallway, go ahead and do so. It is still a good idea to tell a supervisor, though, so that he or she can take steps

to make sure it doesn't happen again. *[Review your specific procedures for reporting hazards.]*

Never put yourself in danger to fix a hazard. If you can't safely fix a hazard yourself, and no one who can fix it is available, the best thing to do is to put up a sign alerting your coworkers to the issue so they know to avoid the area or piece of equipment.

If we all make a little extra effort to be aware of workplace hazards and fix them or report them, the workplace will be a safer place for everyone. Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility.

