Safety Matters

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Don't Gamble with Safety

Make sure the odds are in your favor

We all like to get our work done without unnecessary effort. Sometimes this attitude makes you more productive and helps you find better ways of getting things done. But other times, such as when it leads you to take a shortcut, it can put you on a direct route to trouble.

Take the case of a worker on a ladder who was almost finished with the job except for a little bit that could be done by reaching farther than he knew was safe. It was decision time. Should he get down and move the ladder and climb up again or save all that effort by taking a chance and overreaching?

You can imagine the possible outcomes of taking the shortcut. He could be lucky and finish the job without any trouble. Or leaning too far to the side could cause the ladder to topple and the worker to fall, resulting in a concussion, a broken leg, or a broken neck.

One way the odds are 100 to 1 in your favor. The other way, it's just gambling. You can never be sure what will happen when you take a shortcut. Risking your neck to save a few minutes or a little effort is always a bad bet.

Never gamble with your safety. Always follow procedures. They're designed to protect you. If they take a little longer, that's a small price to pay for safety.

Little Things Count

What you *don't* think is dangerous can be

A company became concerned when its accident rate climbed over a period of a few months. Management began an in-depth check of systems, equipment, and high-hazard items such as chemical substances and heavy machinery. To their surprise, none of these things was causing the problem. Chemicals were properly labeled and stored. Machines were in good repair and properly guarded. All the "big" stuff appeared to be in safe condition. Instead, what they discovered is that various "little" things were at the bottom of the rash of accidents.

For example:

- ➔ A patch of oil on the floor that no one worried about until an unsuspecting worker came along, slipped, and fell
- ➔ A power tool cord left lying across a walkway for "just a minute" while the worker went to get a soda—a cord that was sidestepped a dozen times before someone carrying a carton finally tripped over it
- ➔ A ladder placed by a worker changing a lightbulb in front of an outward-opening door that was toppled over when another worker came barreling through the unsecured door

All these situations were accidents waiting to happen. But they were ignored because they didn't strike anyone as dangerous. Keep alert to the "little" things. They can hurt you.

News & Notes

END-OF-THE-DAY SECURITY

When you leave work:

Be aware. Watch what's going on around you, particularly in areas of possible danger such as:

- ➔ Stairwells
- ➔ Alleyways
- ➔ Elevators
- ➔ Parking lots and garages

Stay alert. Don't be distracted by other concerns.

- ➔ Keep your car keys or bus fare ready, so you're not caught fumbling with your head down.
- ➔ Observe the people around you.
- ➔ Listen for unusual noises or movement.

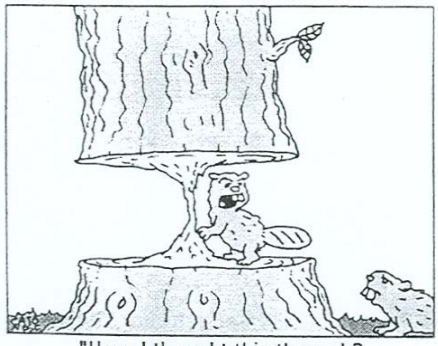
Be assertive. Avoid looking like an easy target. Instead, look confident, purposeful, and organized.

- ➔ Keep your head up.
- ➔ Look like you know where you're going.
- ➔ Limit your contact with strangers.
- ➔ Keep at least one hand free.
- ➔ Report suspicious characters or situations near the workplace to security, a supervisor, or the police.

PARKING LOT SAFETY TIPS

When walking through a parking lot or garage to your car—especially after dark—walk in the middle of the lane and stay away from parked cars and dark corners. Have your keys in hand.

Enter your car quickly, and lock your doors immediately upon entering the vehicle. Keep your cell phone ready and call for help if you feel threatened.



"Have I thought this through? What's THAT supposed to mean?"

Riddle of the Month

What has 5 (sometimes 4) hands but is normal?

Answer on Page 2 in Safety Bits & Pieces.

Yard Work Injuries

Take safety precautions off the job, too

April is **Prevent Injuries America Month** both on the job and at home. April is also the time when people are out doing yard work, so it's a good time to review home safety tips.

Every year hundreds of thousands of people are injured using lawn mowers, and the injuries are often serious. To prevent injuries:

- ☼ Wear sturdy shoes.
- ☼ Use eye protection to shield eyes from dust and flying debris.
- ☼ Survey the area before you mow for rocks, sticks, toys, and other items that can become dangerous missiles when thrown by your mower blade.
- ☼ Keep children and pets clear of the path of the mower when mowing.
- ☼ Wear hearing protection when you use power yard tools and lawn mowers.
- ☼ Allow the motor to cool before refueling.

Yard work often involves digging, raking, hoeing, and handling bulky materials such as bagged fertilizers, wood chips, and big, heavy bags of garden refuse. Take precautions to prevent back injuries by using the same safe lifting techniques you use on the job.

Also be careful when using pesticides, weed killers, and other chemicals. Keep them in their original containers, well out of reach of children. Follow directions for mixing, application, and required personal protective equipment.

HEADS UP!

Injuries to the head and face are among the most common in U.S. workplaces. Estimates place the number of disabling head injuries at over 100,000 a year, plus thousands more injuries to the eyes and face.

Head and face injuries can be extremely serious because they often involve two of the most important organs in your body—your brain and your eyes. A hard blow to the head can cause a concussion, a skull fracture, brain damage, and even death. An eye injury can cause blindness. Injuries to the face can leave lasting scars.

Hazards to the head include falling tools, metal, and other hard objects. Hazards to the eyes and face include chemical or hot liquid splashes, sparks, and flying wood, metal, or stone particles.

Here's how to protect your head and face:

- ☺ Wear safety glasses or goggles to protect your eyes.
- ☺ Wear a hard hat to protect your head.
- ☺ Wear a face shield or helmet to protect your face.

On the Lighter Side...

A person went to a doctor and told him that he had swallowed five silver dollars about three years before. The doctor was puzzled and said, "If you swallowed them three years ago, why are you just coming to me now?" "It's like this, doc," said the person, "I never needed the money before now."

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Son: Dad, guess what? I can say please and thank you in Spanish.

Father: That's more than you ever learned to say in English!

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Q: What's more clever than speaking in several languages?

A: Keeping your mouth shut in one!!

Notable Quotation

"Consult not your fears but your hopes and your dreams. Think not about your frustrations, but about your unfulfilled potential. Concern yourself not with what you tried and failed in, but with what is still possible for you to do."

Pope John XIII

Safety Tip of the Month

Your car should have an emergency road kit. Your kit should be equipped with the following basic supplies:

Medical: Bandages, band aids, gauze wrap, anti-bacterial cream or ointment, medical ace bandages.

Automotive: Road flares, a can of flat tire stop leak (will temporarily fix and inflate a flat tire), reflectors, water bottles (for both you and your radiator), small blanket, dried food (in case you get stranded), Tools - an adjustable wrench, screw drivers, duct tape, disposable gloves and safety glasses.

Home Safety

Did you know that falls account for about half of all accidental deaths in the home? Follow these home safety tips to prevent falls around the house:

* Keep floors in good repair
* Use throw rugs heavy enough to lie flat, and tape their edges down to keep them from skidding
* Wipe up spills immediately
* Don't stretch electrical cords across rooms
* Arrange furniture so your family can move through the house safely
* Keep stairs well lit and clear
* Fasten all stair coverings securely
* Provide sturdy handrails
* Don't use stairwells for storage
* Never use small rugs at the top or bottom of stairways.

Safety Bits & Pieces

HOME SECURITY TIPS

The following tips can help you secure your home and prevent you from becoming a victim of crime while home. By taking a few simple precautions, you can reduce the risks to your home and yourself, and discourage those who commit crime.

Home Security

* Know your neighbors and learn who can be called for assistance.
* Use only your first initials and last names on mailboxes and in phone books.
* Change the locks when you move into a new residence or any time house keys or duplicates have been lost or misplaced.
* Don't hide spare keys outside. If you choose to do so, don't put them near the door. Make the hiding spot as obscure as possible, and don't tell anyone where it is.
* Check identification when repair people, salespeople, utility workers, or others come to the door. Don't hesitate to call and check them out or refuse entrance if something feels wrong or if they cannot provide proof of their identity.
* If you let someone in and have second thoughts, be assertive. Tell them to leave or leave yourself. Pretend that you are not alone.
* Instruct children and babysitters not to give out information about who is home, who is out, or how long the situation will last.
* Don't leave notes on your door for others or allow solicitor's material to remain on your doorknob since they advertise your absence.
* If you suspect that your home has been broken into, don't go in; go someplace else and call 911.
* Always lock doors when doing yard work or otherwise spending time in the yard. Keep your keys with you at all times. If you have a portable or cell phone, take it with you.
* While on vacation make sure to stop both newspaper and mail deliveries. Also, it is a good idea to set several timers throughout your home to activate both lights and some small appliances (radios, TVs, etc.) for different time intervals to give the appearance that the home is occupied.
* Pretend to be a burglar. Walk around your property and ask yourself: How would I break in? Examine your house from the street, where are the blind spots? What are the most vulnerable areas and, therefore, likely to be attacked? Stand outside the windows and look in, make sure no valuables, like expensive electronics or artwork, are visible. If you can see your belongings doing this, so can criminals.
* We often believe that locks provide security, but this may not be the case if the area around the locking mechanism is susceptible to being easily jimmied or destroyed in order to gain access. You need to extend your thinking about security measures to 18 to 24 inches around the lock itself. That is the area you must protect.
* Plant rosebushes or cactus in front of all vulnerable windows. Thorny landscaping not only adds beauty to your home, but makes even getting close to such windows an unappealing prospect.

Additional personal safety tips will be provided in upcoming **Safety Matters** issues.

Riddle of the Month Answer:

A person wearing a non-digital watch. The average person has 2 hands, plus a minute hand on the watch, plus an hour hand, and sometimes a second hand.