

SAFETY NOTES

COMPLACENCY IN SAFETY

Complacency is a dangerous mindset that can result in an injury or accident.

Complacency affects every employee in the workplace differently. We tend to have a feeling of security, which may lead to a lack of awareness of our surroundings. When working on routine, repetitive tasks, or driving to familiar sites, often we go into “auto-pilot” mode. This stops us from paying attention to what we are doing and leads to taking shortcuts. From a safety perspective, complacency can create serious risks for yourself and others in your workplace, also affecting quality and productivity as well.

“I’ve been doing it this way for 20 years, and nothing has ever happened to me.” This type of complacent attitude may well increase the risks of an accidents or injuries, regardless of experience. A false sense of security is often the result of poor training and following bad practices, which leads to accidents. In a constantly changing environment, extra vigilance is needed to prevent accidents, but workers still tend to become complacent.

TIPS TO AVOID COMPLACENCY:

- **AVOID ROUTINES** — Repetition can be related to complacency. If possible, change some of the tasks to break up the monotony of the workday to add variety in completing required tasks.
- **CORRECT POOR PERFORMANCE** — Coaching others can help identify and change practices of potential problems that occur when complacency sets in.
- **ENCOURAGE OBSERVATION** — Briefly stop work and observe the actions of other as they work, observing others raises one’s own awareness as well as the awareness of coworkers.
- **EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT** — Focus on your tasks and dismiss distractions when they come up.

Also, look for improvements in your routine or the way you approach your tasks.

Don’t ignore the signs of complacency, and don’t be afraid to voice your concerns when you see them in your fellow employees. We are all susceptible to these risks, and it doesn’t hurt to look at how our own behaviors have changed toward tasks in the workplace.

ZERO IS POSSIBLE

City of Houston Safety Program