



Toolbox Talk

Accident Causation and Prevention

Workplace accidents cause too many painful injuries and claim far too many lives. Our primary concern when we discuss the factors or causes behind an accident is to find a way to prevent a recurrence. The cause of an accident can be found in two areas:

- Unsafe acts
- Unsafe conditions

As a worker, you control the first cause, **unsafe acts**. For example: a worker uses equipment that is defective or damaged, or they may use good equipment in a careless or other unsafe manner. Other examples of unsafe acts include:

- Disregarding posted warning signs
- Failure to wear personal protective equipment
- Smoking near flammables or explosives
- Working too close to power lines
- Handling chemicals or other hazardous materials improperly
- Putting your body or any part of it onto or into shafts or openings
- Lifting heavy material incorrectly or without assistance

The second accident factor or cause is **unsafe conditions**, which can be found on many worksites. Examples include:

- Inadequate or improperly installed guard rails or a lack of any guarding at all
- Insufficient illumination
- Poor ventilation
- Not observing electrical grounding requirements
- Too few fire extinguishers available
- Containers that are not labeled
- Careless disposal of waste or excess material

You can make a difference by taking the time to perform your work safely and reporting any unsafe condition you discover to your supervisor immediately.

When the cause behind the accident is found, you'll find that safety on the job plays a major part in preventing that accident from occurring again. If everyone on the job cooperates, injury and death statistics will be reduced and it will be much safer for you to do your job.

Remember, safety is no accident.

