

# 10 Safety Tips

## SAFETY: It's Your Job, Too.

If you were asked to come up with a one-word definition of safety, or a one-word key to achieving it, what would be your reply? Would you suggest alertness, meaning always being ready for the unexpected? Would your vote be for skill? Being especially adept? Would you define safety as experience, suggesting that the veteran never gets hurt? Perhaps you would settle on cooperation as the key to safety, meaning that it requires us to exercise patience and get along with our fellow worker. Or, after due deliberation, might you finally define safety by using the single word "thinking"?

Certainly alertness, skill, experience, and cooperation are all associated with safety, and contribute to it, but since they in turn require thought, they must be regarded as secondary characteristics.

Some years ago, a prominent business executive constantly urged his staff to "Think!" He had THINK! signs posted in numerous locations and made the word virtually a corporate slogan which became a symbol of his company's success. It can symbolize success in reducing accidents and injuries as well. It has often been said that about 90% of all accidents can be attributed to unsafe acts on the part of the worker, and failure to think before acting is the cause of practically all accidents in this category. For example:

- A carpenter removes a guard from a table saw for the purpose of expediency; an injury results. The carpenter has not given thought to the original purpose of the guard and has suffered the unfortunate consequences.
- A machinist, again for the sake of saving time, fails to don safety goggles for a project that will "only take a minute." Again, injury results because of the operator's failure to think of the possible negative result.
- A truck driver, exercising legitimate right of way, is nevertheless involved in an accident. Why? Failure to realize that the other party involved might not grant that right of way, whether as the result of ignorance or impatience.

Many accidents can be averted if we will only discipline ourselves to think carefully about consequences before acting. When we THINK safety, we act safely.

"What can I do about accident prevention, since I only work here?" Well, we all work here, and presumably everyone wants to be as safe and healthful as possible. That won't happen, though, if we pass the buck.

In reality, there's a great deal that every one of us can do about accident prevention. It has to do with being continuously alert to possible hazards and following safe work practices and procedures. Here are 10 easy guidelines to "what I can do" to keep myself and others safe:

1. **Know your job.** Follow all instructions, and if you are not sure of exactly how to carry out an assigned operation, ask your foreman before you begin.
2. **Use tools properly.** Select the right ones - the ones designed for the job. Be sure they're in good condition. Put them away when you finish.
3. **Practice good housekeeping.** Keep your work area clean and orderly, with nothing in the aisles to create a tripping hazard. Clean up spills promptly. Dispose of scrap properly.
4. **Develop good lifting habits.** Remember the training you've had in this, especially: lifting with your legs, not your back, and getting help for loads you can't easily handle alone. Likewise, be ready to team-lift with a co-worker.

5. **Avoid falls.** Watch where you're going. If using a ladder, set it up properly, face it when climbing up or down, using both hands, and don't overreach. Don't overload scaffolds, and keep them clear of excess materials.
6. **Dress safely for work.** Leave your jewelry at home or keep it in a pocket. Wear sturdy, low-heeled shoes. Wear short sleeves or keep long sleeves buttoned at the wrist. Don't wear loose-fitting gloves or a long hair style around machines.
7. **Use required personal protective equipment.** Wear a hard hat, gloves, safety shoes and glasses, or whatever specialized equipment the job calls for. That way you avoid both injury and disciplinary action.
8. **Be alert around machinery.** Stand clear of moving equipment and overhead loads. Never get on or off moving equipment. Never bypass machine guards. Follow lockout procedures as needed and observe all warning signs and tags.
9. **Report all accidents and near-miss incidents.** Determining the causes can help prevent further incidents that could have more serious results. Get prompt first aid for cuts and scratches"" minor injuries can become a major problem if infection sets in.
10. **Avoid horseplay and practical joking.** They can easily get out of control and cause serious harm. Discourage others from engaging in such activities.