Be a Safety Leader



WHAT’S AT STAKE

An employer or supervisor can’t stand by you every second to see that safety rules are followed. You must take charge of your safety because you have the most to gain – and the most to lose.

WHAT’S THE DANGER

Injuries result when a worker fails to take responsibility for safety – by ignoring safety procedures or consuming drugs or alcohol at work, for example. You could suffer burns, broken bones, electrocution, crushing, chemical injuries, concussion or other injuries if you don’t take safety precautions.

EXAMPLE

Joe is an experienced construction worker, but he suffered a painful knee injury after he fell from a ladder. Although he knew better, he had leaned too far to retrieve a hammer.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Break your own unsafe habits
Don’t rush a job. Take time to maintain tools and equipment according to the manufacturer’s instructions and follow all safety procedures and policies.

Train and participate
Take safety training and learn the health and safety standards that apply to your work. Before operating equipment, get trained for it. Support or join workplace safety and health committees.

Gear up
Take personal protective equipment (PPE) and other safeguards seriously. When other employees understand you really believe in these things, they are more likely to become believers, too.

Don’t be the fall guy
If you spill liquid on the floor, mop it up immediately. If you find a piece of equipment leaking fluid, report or repair it. Regularly check around your work area and look for material which could cause someone to trip.

Clean up
Remind yourself about cleaning up the work area regularly and removing debris continually, or at least as each task ends. Don’t wait for the boss to point out fire hazards.

Take responsibility
Report any hazardous conditions. Ensure that emergency equipment is readily available, ventilation equipment is working properly, cords and cables are routed away from traffic areas, light fixtures are maintained and hazardous materials are correctly labeled and stored where they cannot ignite or contact workers.

You’re not Superman or Wonder Woman
Refuse unsafe work. Lift correctly and don’t lift something heavier than your capacity. Get enough rest before you come to work.

FINAL WORD

If you have a positive attitude toward safety measures, your co-workers are more likely to do the same. A good role model maintains a safety leader viewpoint at all times, because workers need to depend on themselves and each other.