

UNSAFE ACTS & CONDITIONS

“THE DEADLY DOZEN”

The one good thing about the topics on the list of unsafe acts is that, for the most part, they are in your power. You can make sure you never bypass a machine guard, fail to wear your safety glasses, or hearing protectors. You can have an effect on the potential unsafe acts of others. How? By refusing to engage in horseplay, or by reminding a co-worker of a safety rule that is seemingly ignored.

Unsafe Acts Are:

A deviation from generally recognized safe ways or specified methods of doing a job which increases the probability of an accident.

Unauthorized use or operation of equipment.

By OSHA Standards you must be properly trained to perform any task. That includes operating equipment. You must be familiar with the operation and safety concerns of any equipment before you operate it.

Failure to secure or tie-down materials to prevent unexpected movement.

The Federal Motor Carriers Safety Act is very specific on the use of tie-downs. If hauling materials, know the weight and length of the material! If you are hauling equipment know the weight of the equipment and the Grade of chains you are using to secure the equipment to the trailer.

Working or operating equipment too fast.

Operating equipment too fast can lead to roll-overs and injuries. Operate equipment at safe speeds especially when turning or going down slopes.

Failure to issue warnings or signals as required

Whenever using any type of accident prevention sign or tag, it is essential to understand all the requirements. If unapproved signs or tags are used, it not only puts those in the area at increased risk, but can also result in a citation from OSHA if it is discovered upon inspection.

Using defective tools or equipment

Keep your tools well maintained and in working order. Any tool that is found to be defective, not sharp, or with obvious damage shall be taken out of service, red tagged and reported.

Removing Guards

All guards are designed with a purpose! To prevent needless injuries do not remove or disable guards for convenience. Do not use equipment with missing guards. Any tool that does not have the proper guards in place shall be taken out of service, red tagged and reported.

Improperly using tools or equipment

Use the right tool for the right job! There are striking tools, prying tools and tools for specific tasks. Do not try to ‘make due’ with the incorrect tool. Injuries can occur when a tool is used improperly and not as designed.

Standing in an unsafe place or assuming an improper posture (as in lifting)

Not being aware that you are too close to traffic or equipment can cause a Struck-By or Caught-Between hazard. When lifting, make sure your back is straight and you bend at the knees. Keep the object close to your body, and if too heavy or bulky, get someone to help you lift the object.

Servicing moving equipment

Make sure any moving equipment is properly chocked and the brake is engaged. Use all body props provided by the manufacturer and secure those items properly. Take the key out of the ignition and put it in your pocket! This is your own personal Lock-out/Tag-out program.

Riding equipment not designed for passengers

Operators of equipment shall not allow unauthorized riders. Fellow employees who ride in buckets, on forks or on the body of a vehicle not designed for a rider, are at a high risk for falling off the vehicle and possibly under the vehicle.

Horseplay

Horseplay of any kind is not allowed. Especially when working close to traffic or around equipment. Seemingly innocent practical jokes at work can lead to accidents. Some deadly!

Failure to wear proper personal protective equipment

Your supervisor should assess the proper PPE needed for each task and provide it. It is up to each individual to properly inspect, wear and maintain the PPE provided.

Unsafe Conditions Are:

An unsatisfactory physical condition existing in a workplace environment immediately before an accident that was significant in causing the event.

Lack of proper guards

Not all missing guards are removed guards. Guards may not have been installed when they should have been, creating an unsafe condition. All equipment should be inspected prior to use. Equipment that is not properly guarded shall be red tagged and reported.

Lack of proper warning system

Signs and warnings are everywhere! We drive past warning signs and see warnings on tools and equipment daily. They are there for a reason. To remind you of a potential hazard. Employers should assess each work site and make sure that the proper warning signs are present. It is up to the employee to follow the guidance that each sign, label, bell or horn provide.

Fire and explosion hazards

More lives are lost through fires and explosions than any other industrial accident. Conditions that are conducive to fires and explosions cannot be tolerated in the workplace. Housekeeping is the primary preventive measure. Proper storage and an understanding that we must keep flammables and combustibles separated from heat sources is essential

Poor Housekeeping

The injuries that result from poor work area conditions simply do not have to happen. These types of injuries are **100% preventable**. Take time to evaluate your work areas. Look for these three common hazard types,

sharp objects, slipping/tripping hazards and fall hazards. Take action to eliminate them so they do not have the chance to injure you or a coworker.

Unexpected Movements

Unexpected movements are the opposite of expected movements. When we hear a back-up alarm, we expect the vehicle to start backing up; when we see brake lights coming on, we expect the vehicle in front of us to stop or at least slow down. When back up alarms don't work, brake lights fail to come on, accidents happen.

The same thing applies in the workplace, not only with vehicles but with machinery, equipment and loads. When an item is expected to remain stationary and suddenly shifts, accidents and injuries can occur. When you know that a load is going to shift, get out of the way and make sure that you are clear.

Protruding objects such as nails, wire, or other metals

Protruding objects tie in closely to housekeeping issues. Objects that protrude into walkways, off of shelves or out of vehicles cause clearance problems and can cause an assortment of injuries related to trips, falls and lacerations. Objects protruding from equipment can cause bodily injury and property damage.

Improper clearance or congestion at aisles or passageways

Forklifts, pedestrians, hand-trucks, pallet jacks... they all need to have clearance both overhead and side to side. Pallets that are sticking out, boxes piled in the aisles or passageways, garbage that hasn't been thrown away... all of these are potential recipes for an accident.

Poor placement, storage or arrangement of materials

Handling and storing materials involve diverse operations such as hoisting tons of steel with a crane; driving a truck loaded with concrete blocks; carrying materials manually and stacking palletized bricks. Inspect all slings and chains prior to use. Know the Working Load Limits of the chain or sling. Know basic rigging requirements. Improper handling and moving of materials often result in costly injuries.

Hazardous tools

Hand tools include anything from axes to wrenches. The greatest hazards posed by hand tools result from misuse and improper maintenance. If a chisel is used as a screwdriver, the tip of the chisel may break and fly off, hitting the user or others. If a wooden handle on a tool is loose, splintered, or cracked, the head of the tool may fly off and strike the user or other employees. If the jaws of a wrench are sprung, the wrench might slip. If impact tools such as chisels, wedges, or drift pins have mushroomed heads, the heads might shatter on impact, sending sharp fragments flying. Repair or replace damaged tools as necessary.

Poor lighting and high noise levels

When a room has inadequate lighting, it can be difficult to see objects that may be on the floor that are obstructing a walking path. Poor lighting conditions also make it difficult to assess where there are any sudden changes in the elevation of the floor, a slight step down, or a staircase. Darkness often affects a person's depth perception.

High noise levels can cause permanent ear damage. Assessments should be performed and policies related to hearing protection instituted by the employer. Employees shall properly wear hearing protection in high noise areas or around loud equipment.

Hazardous atmospheric conditions

Confined Space monitoring, respiratory protection, air sampling... all of these have to do with hazardous atmospheric conditions. Humans were meant to breathe clean air, not contaminated air. Particulates in the air

that have the potential for explosion or airborne contaminants that are harmful when inhaled expose workers who are often unaware of the hazards. Many substances are odorless and undetectable except through careful and regular monitoring.

Improper personal attire

As a worker, you have a right to protect your health and with that right comes the obligation on the part of the employer to provide workers with the proper PPE. Make sure that the level of PPE is adequate. Your health and safety are your responsibility. Laws and regulations are constantly made and enforced to make sure that employers do what they should to protect workers. Ultimately, it's up to you, to make sure that everything necessary is being done to protect yourself.

Remember: Be able to recognize the acts or conditions we just discussed, you can effectively correct or avoid them and reduce your personal exposure to the general causes of accidents.

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTE: Promote discussion on any of the topics covered in the Tailgate Talks. Should any question arise that you cannot answer, don't hesitate to contact your Supervisor.

Source: Z. McGee, Morgan Co.