



June 2 – The Shortcut Isn't Shorter

<p>I was walking around the conveyor to get to the other side to help install lids. As I was 3/4 of the way back up the other side I seen an employee that was locked out on the conveyor climb over the belt.</p>	<p>I told him I was walking all the way around to help instead of climbing over and when he climbed over, he was close to the handrail. I told him not to ever do that again.</p>
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Most shortcuts don't feel dangerous. In fact, they usually feel efficient.

During a job, an employee was walking around a conveyor to reach the other side and assist with installing lids. As he made his way around, he noticed another employee, who was working under lockout, climb directly over the conveyor belt instead of using the designated path.

The employee immediately addressed the behavior. He explained that he was taking the time to walk all the way around rather than climb over the conveyor and pointed out how close the individual came to the handrail while crossing. The employee was reminded not to repeat the action.

At first glance, climbing over a conveyor may not seem like a significant risk, especially when the equipment is locked out. But the hazard isn't limited to unexpected equipment movement. A slip, loss of balance, misstep, or contact with nearby structures can quickly turn a shortcut into an injury.

What makes shortcuts challenging is that they often appear to save only a few seconds. Over time, when employees perform the same task repeatedly without consequences, it becomes easier to justify taking the quicker route. Eventually, the unsafe choice begins to feel normal.

The employee who observed this situation had the same destination and the same opportunity to take the shortcut. Instead, he chose the safer path and then spoke up when he saw someone else taking an unnecessary risk. That's exactly the type of intervention that helps prevent injuries before they happen.

Hazards

- Slips, trips and falls
- Loss of balance while crossing equipment
- Contact with nearby structures or handrails
- Caught-between hazards
- Exposure to unnecessary risk during routine tasks

Words of Wisdom

Safe work practices are often designed around lessons learned from previous incidents. Taking a few extra steps may seem inconvenient in the moment, but it is often the difference between a routine task and an injury.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever taken a shortcut because it only seemed like a small risk?
- What shortcuts are employees most tempted to take in your area?
- Why do shortcuts become easier to justify over time?
- How comfortable are you speaking up when you see someone taking an unnecessary risk?
- What could have happened if the employee had slipped while climbing over the conveyor?

Closing Thought

Shortcuts save seconds. Injuries can change lives. Choose the path that gets you home safely.