SHARP START

May 1 — You Won't Always See It

Had propane leak in hose worker was working by the hose smelled propane stopped work and notified supervisor.	**Supervision contacted the company responsible for the line. He shut the line off and had the wine repaired.**

A worker noticed the smell before anything else.

No alarm. No visible sign. Just something that didn't feel right.

It would've been easy to keep going. The task was already in motion. Nothing obvious was happening. No flame, no smoke, no urgency. But that's the part that matters most.

Not all hazards show themselves clearly. Some don't make noise. Some don't give you a second warning.

Propane doesn't need much. A small leak, the right mixture, and a source of ignition and the situation changes fast.

The worker didn't wait to confirm it. Didn't try to work around it. He stopped. Spoke up. Got it corrected.

Because when it comes to gas, if you can smell it - it's already there.

This wasn't about reacting to an emergency. It was about recognizing a problem early enough that it never became one.

Hazards

- Flammable gas exposure
- Fire or explosion risk
- Inhalation hazard
- Ignition from nearby sources
- Line of fire exposure to pressure and chemical energy.

Stats

- Flammable gas incidents can escalate rapidly with little warning.
- Many gas related incidents occur during routine work tasks.
- Early detection is one of the most effective ways to prevent escalation.
- Small leaks can create large hazards if not addressed immediately.

Words of Wisdom

- If you smell it, it's already a problem.
- Not all hazards are visible.
- Stop work before the situation decides for you.

Pause and Think

It's easy to rely on what we can see sparks, movement, equipment. That's what usually gets our attention. But some of the most serious hazards don't show up that way. They rely on you noticing something different — a smell, a sound, a feeling that something isn't right.

That moment matters. Because once you ignore it, you've already made the decision to accept the risk.

- Would I stop work if something didn't feel right, even if I couldn't see the hazard?
- Do I trust my instincts when something seems off?
- Am I willing to pause the job before confirming the risk?
- Would I speak up, or wait for someone else to notice?

SHARP START

May 4 – It Happens Fast

Employee trying to set a door stop to keep door open placed hand on the closer arm, as another employee quickly started opening the door.	**Tried to stop this, luckily the employee's hand was pushed away and not pinched in the closer arm. Told the employee opening the door to slow down.**

It was a simple task.

Hold the door open. Set the stop. Move on. Nothing complicated about it. But timing changed everything.

One employee had their hand on the closer arm while setting the stop. Another went to open the door. No warning. No pause. Just movement. And that's how it happens.

The door didn't look dangerous. The task didn't feel risky. But the moment two people acted at the same time, that space became a pinch point.

And once it starts moving, there's no time to react. This time, the hand slipped away. No injury.

But it doesn't take much. A second slower, a different angle, a little more force and it's a different outcome. This wasn't about doing something wrong. It was about being in a spot where control could be taken away instantly.

Hazards

- Pinch points between moving components
- Unexpected movement from others
- Hand and finger injuries
- Loss of control due to timing
- Line of fire exposure to mechanical motion

Stats

- Hand injuries are among the most common workplace injuries.
- Many pinch point incidents occur during routine tasks
- Most happen when multiple people are working in the same area
- Reaction time is often not fast enough once movement begins

Words of Wisdom

- If it can move, it can pinch
- Don't trust timing – control the space
- Hands don't belong where movement happens

Pause and Think

We get comfortable around simple tasks. Doors, tools, equipment we've used a hundred times. That's when we stop thinking about what could change.

Another person stepping in. A movement starting sooner than expected. A moment where control is gone. That's all it takes.

- Am I placing my hands where movement could happen?
- Do I assume others see what I'm doing?
- Am I controlling the space, or just working in it?
- Would I stop before putting myself in that position?

SHARP START

May 5 — Close Enough Isn't Safe

Contractor was sitting on top of 2 pipes with harness on but not tied off, probably 15ft up	**I said they should probably be tied off up there and they thanked me and tied off**

He had the harness on. That part was right. But it wasn't connected.

Sitting on top of two pipes, about 15 feet up, the setup looked controlled. Balanced. Familiar.

It probably didn't feel like a fall hazard in that moment. Because nothing was moving. Nothing felt unstable.

But fall protection doesn't depend on how stable it feels. It depends on whether you're actually tied off.

A harness without a connection doesn't stop a fall. It only gives the appearance of protection.

And when something shifts a foot slips, a surface moves, balance is lost there's no time to fix it.

The correction was simple. Tie off. Stay connected.

Because at that height, "close enough" doesn't change the outcome.

This wasn't about not having the right equipment. It was about not using it when it mattered.

Hazards

- Fall from elevation (~15 feet)
- Loss of balance or footing
- Working unprotected at height
- False sense of security
- Line of fire exposure to gravity

Stats

- Falls from heights remain a leading cause of serious workplace injuries3
- Many fall incidents involve workers who had protection available but not in use
- Even short-duration tasks account for a large portion of fall-related incidents
- Proper tie-off significantly reduces injury severity

Words of Wisdom

- Wearing it isn't the same as using it
- If you're not tied off, you're not protected
- "It'll only take a second" is when it happens

Pause and Think

It's easy to convince yourself you're fine when things feel stable.

You've got the harness on.
You're only going to be there for a moment.
You've done it before.

But those thoughts don't stop gravity. The only thing that does is being properly tied off before the exposure happens.

- Do I ever rely on balance instead of protection?
- Am I treating short tasks like they don't carry the same risk?
- Do I wait until I "need it" to tie off?
- Would I stop someone else in the same position?

SHARP START

May 6 — It Only Works One Way

Angle grinder use with no face shield	**Told worker to put face shield on**

The grinder was running. Sparks were flying. Work was moving forward. Everything looked normal. Except one thing was missing. No face shield.

It's easy to rely on safety glasses. They're already on. They feel like enough. And most of the time, nothing happens. But grinders don't give you much margin.

If that wheel binds, if it kicks, if something breaks loose it doesn't travel slowly. It comes straight back, fast, and without warning. Safety glasses protect your eyes. A face shield protects everything else.

The difference isn't comfort. It's coverage. The employee hadn't been hit. Nothing had gone wrong.

But once that grinder changes direction or throws debris, there's no time to add protection. It has to be there before it starts.

This wasn't about missing PPE. It was about choosing less protection than the task required.

Hazards

- Flying debris and sparks
- Grinder kickback
- Contact with rotating disc
- Facial injuries
- Eye injuries
- Line of fire exposure to mechanical energy

Stats

- Grinder-related injuries often involve loss of control or kickback
- Face and eye injuries are among the most common tool related injuries
- Proper PPE significantly reduces severity of injury
- Many incidents occur during routine, repeated tasks

Words of Wisdom

- The right PPE depends on the task, not the habit
- Safety glasses aren't a substitute for a face shield
- Protection only works when it matches the risk

Pause and Think

It's easy to stick with what's already on. Glasses, gloves, basic gear — whatever you started the day with.

But not every task carries the same risk.

Some require more.

And the moment you decide "this is probably enough," you've already made the decision to accept what it won't protect.

- Am I choosing PPE based on the task or convenience?
- Do I ever rely on "what I already have on"?
- Do I recognize when a task requires more protection?
- Would I stop someone else before they start that tool?

SHARP START

May 7 — More Force, Less Control

I saw a person tightening bolts and he did not have his gloves on and he was double wrenching hand tools which is not the right way to use hand tools.	**I stopped him and asked him to get his gloves on and only use one wrench because using 2 is very dangerous**

The bolt was tight. Too tight for one wrench. So more force was added. Two wrenches. More leverage. More effort. It works. It gets the job done. But it changes everything.

Double wrenching isn't controlled force. It's increased force without control. And when something gives a slip, a break, a sudden release all that energy goes somewhere. Usually into the hands. Now add one more piece to it. No gloves.

So when that force releases, there's nothing between the hand and whatever it hits next.

Sharp edges. Hot surfaces. Another piece of equipment. It happens fast. No time to ease into it. No time to pull back. The correction was simple.

Use the right tool. Use one wrench. Wear the gloves. Because the goal isn't just to get it tight.

It's to stay in control while you do it.

Hazards

- Sudden release of stored energy
- Slips causing hand and finger injures
- Impact against nearby surfaces
- Lack of hand protection
- Line of fire exposure to mechanical force

Stats

- Hand injuries are among the most common workplace injuries
- Improper tool use increases risk of sudden loss of control
- Many injuries occur during tightening/loosening tasks
- PPE significantly reduces severity of hand injuries

Words of Wisdom

- More force isn't more control
- If you have to force it, rethink it
- Protect your hands they're always in the line of fire

Pause and Think

When something doesn't move easily, it's natural to add more force.

Another wrench. More leverage. Just enough to get it done.

But that's where control starts to disappear. Because when it finally breaks loose, it doesn't do it slowly.

And whatever is in the path — your hands included takes that hit.

- Am I using tools the way they're designed?
- Do I add force instead of stepping back and reassessing?
- Am I protecting my hands before applying force?
- Would I stop before setting myself up like this?

SHARP START

May 8 — Doesn't Look Right

Mast on the forklift looked goofy after further investigation I noticed that the fork pockets were stretched and wallowed out. The weld where the fork is attached to the fork pocket had begun to crack	**Notified supervisor of the issue and new mast was going to be delivered**

It didn't fail. It didn't collapse. It just didn't look right.

Something was off in the way the mast sat. Not obvious at first just enough to catch attention. That pause made the difference. A closer look showed the issue. The fork pockets were stretched. The weld at the attachment point had started to crack. That's not something that fixes itself.

Equipment doesn't usually fail all at once. It gives signs first. Small ones. Subtle ones. And it's easy to ignore them.

The machine is still running. It's still lifting. The job is still moving. But structural damage doesn't stay the same. Under load, under stress, it gets worse. And when it lets go, it's not gradual. It's immediate.

The equipment was taken out of service and replaced before that could happen. Because recognizing the problem early is what prevents the failure later. This wasn't about something breaking. It was about catching it before it did.

Hazards

- Structural failure of equipment
- Dropped or shifting load
- Equipment instability
- Struck-by or crush injuries
- Line of fire exposure to mechanical and gravity energy

Stats

- Equipment failures often show warning signs before major incidents
- Structural defects increase risk significantly under load
- Many serious incidents involve equipment that had known issues beforehand
- Early reporting and removal from service prevent escalation

Words of Wisdom

- If it doesn't look right, it isn't right
- Equipment doesn't fix itself
- Catch it early or deal with it later
-

Pause and Think

We get used to seeing the same equipment every day. The same machines, the same sounds, the same movement.

That familiarity makes it harder to notice when something changes.

And when something feels "just a little off," it's easy to keep going. Because nothing has failed yet.

But that's the moment that matters.

- Do I stop when something doesn't look right?
- Am I paying attention to small changes in equipment condition?
- Do I assume it's fine because it's still working?
- Would I take it out of service — or keep using it?

SHARP START

May 11 — Holding the Risk

Employee was holding a piece of pipe in his hand and was grinding on it. Because he said he didn't have a vise.	**Had him use a chain vice.**

He didn’t have the tool he needed. No vise. No way to secure the pipe. So he made it work.

Held it in his hand. Got the grinder in position. Kept the job moving. It feels like a small adjustment. Just enough to get through the task. But that one change removed control completely.

Now one hand is holding the material. The other is controlling the grinder.

If the wheel binds, kicks, or catches — there’s nowhere for that movement to go except into the hand holding the pipe. And when that happens, it’s immediate. No time to react. No time to pull away.

The employee hadn’t been injured. But the setup made it possible before the grinder even touched the pipe.

The job was stopped. A chain vise was brought in. The pipe was secured before work continued.

Because the goal isn’t to “make it work.”

It’s to make it safe before it starts.

Hazards

- Grinder kickback or binding
- Loss of tool control
- Contact with rotating disc
- Hand and finger injuries
- Flying debris

Stats

- Many grinder injuries involve improper setup or unsecured materials
- Hand injuries are among the most common tool-related incidents
- Loss of control is a leading factor in grinder accidents
- Most incidents occur during routine tasks and adjustments

Words of Wisdom

- If you have to hold it, it’s not secured
- “Make it work” usually means adding risk
- Control the material before you control the tool

Pause and Think

When the right tool isn’t available, it’s easy to adjust and keep moving.

You’ve done it before. It feels manageable. It seems like a quick fix.

But that’s where the risk is created. Because once the tool is running, you’re committed to that setup.

And if something goes wrong, there’s no fixing it in the moment.

- Do I stop when I don’t have the right tool?
- Am I securing materials before starting work?
- Do I ever “make it work” instead of making it safe?
- Would I correct this before the tool is turned on?

SHARP START

May 12 — It Wasn't His Job…Until It Was

While going to turn in paperwork in control room, walking by sugar tracks, I noticed client working on railcar on the bottom, but none of the wheels were chocked.	**I went and mentioned to him he needs chock the wheels while working under a railcar**

He wasn't part of the job.

Just walking by. Heading to turn in paperwork. Could've kept going. But something didn't look right.

A worker was underneath a railcar. And the wheels weren't chocked. No movement at that moment. No immediate danger you could see. But that's not how this works.

Railcars don't need much to move. A slight grade. A bump. A shift in pressure. And once they do, there's no stopping it from underneath. The worker under that railcar wouldn't get a warning. No time to react. No second chance.

The person walking by caught it. Didn't assume someone else had it covered. Didn't think, "not my job." He said something. And that's what changed the outcome. Because hazards don't care whose task it is.

If you see it, it's yours.

Hazards

- Uncontrolled movement of railcar
- Crushing hazard
- Stored energy release
- Working beneath unprotected load
- Line of fire exposure to gravity and motion

Stats

- Many serious injuries occur during non-routine or overlooked conditions
- Uncontrolled equipment movement is a leading cause of fatal incidents
- Lack of proper securing (like chocking) is a common contributing factor
  Intervention by others is one of the most effective prevention actions

Words of Wisdom

- If you see it, you own it
- Not your task doesn't mean not your risk
- Secure it before you go under it

Pause and Think

It's easy to walk past something that isn't your job.

You're not assigned to it. You weren't part of the setup. Someone else is already working there.
But that's how things get missed.

Because everyone assumes someone else has it handled.

The difference here wasn't knowledge. It was action.

- Would I stop for something outside my task?
- Do I assume someone else has already checked it?
- Am I paying attention as I move through the site?
- Would I speak up — or keep walking?

SHARP START

May 13 — Worn….But Wrong

Co-workers was observed wearing a hard hat backwards.	**They were corrected and turned it around**

The hard hat was on. That part was right. But it wasn't worn the way it was designed to be. Backwards.

It might not seem like a big deal. It still covers the head. It still feels like protection. But hard hats aren't just shells.

They're built with a suspension system that's designed to absorb impact in a specific direction.
Flip it around, and that protection changes.

The way it distributes force. The way it stays in place. The way it protects when something hits. It might stay on. But it may not protect the way you think it will. Nothing fell. Nothing struck him.

But PPE isn't about reacting after something happens. It's about being set up correctly before it does. The fix was simple. Turn it around. Because wearing it isn't enough if it's not worn the right way.

Hazards

- Reduced impact protection
- Improper force distribution
- Hard hat displacement during impact
- False sense of security
- Line of fire exposure to overhead hazards

Stats

- Head injuries remain a leading cause of serious workplace incidents
- Improperly worn PPE reduces its effectiveness
- Many injuries occur when PPE is present but not used correctly
- Proper fit and orientation are critical to performance

Words of Wisdom

- Wearing it isn't the same as using it right
- PPE only works the way it was designed
- Small details change protection

Pause and Think

It's easy to think that having PPE on is enough.

It's there. It's visible.
It checks the box.

But protection isn't just about wearing it — it's about wearing it correctly.
Because when something actually happens, there's no adjusting it in that moment.

It either works… or it doesn't.

- Am I wearing my PPE the way it was designed?
- Do I overlook small details because "it's still on"?
- Would I correct someone else — or ignore it?
- Am I relying on appearance instead of actual protection?

SHARP START

May 14 — In the Way

Someone drank a beverage in the forklift and did not dispose of the trash. When I used the forklift, the bottle rolled and ended up almost under the brake pedals, which could have caused an accident.	**Keep the vehicles clean**

It wasn't part of the task. Just a bottle. Something left in the cab. Something that didn't seem like a big deal. Until it moved. Forklifts don't stay perfectly still while operating. They bounce. They shift. They carry load.

And anything loose inside moves with them. The bottle rolled. And it ended up where it shouldn't be near the brake pedal. Now the operator doesn't just have to control the machine. He has to deal with something interfering with that control.

And when you need the brake, you don't get extra time to fix it. You hit it. Or you don't. There's no adjustment in that moment. Nothing happened this time. But if the brake is blocked, delayed, or limited the outcome changes fast. This wasn't about how the forklift was operated.

It was about what was left inside it before the job even started.

Hazards

- Obstruction of brakes or controls
- Delayed stopping distance
- Loss of control of mobile equipment
- Struck by or collision hazard
- Line of fire exposure to motion

Stats

- Mobile equipment incidents often involve loss of control
- Obstructions in operator areas are a well-known contributing factor
- Many equipment-related incidents occur during normal operation
- Housekeeping directly impacts equipment safety

Words of Wisdom

- Control the cab before you control the machine
- Small things become big problems fast
- If it can move, it can get in the way

Pause and Think

It's easy to overlook what's inside the cab.

A bottle. A tool. Something small that gets left behind.

It doesn't seem like a hazard sitting still.

But once the equipment starts moving, everything inside moves too.

And when it ends up in the wrong place, it doesn't give you time to react.

- Is my cab clear before I start operating?
- Am I thinking about what could move during operation?
- Do I treat housekeeping as part of equipment safety?
- Would I catch this before it becomes a problem?

SHARP START

May 15 — Still Connected

Noticed an Employee moving the mobile torch cart with the backflow meters still in the bottles.	**Told the employee of the hazards it creates and helped him right his wrong.**

It was just being moved. No cutting. No torch in use. No active work happening. Just relocating the cart.

So it didn't seem like a problem. Everything was still hooked up regulators, hoses, backflow meters all left in place to save time. It feels efficient. Move it as-is. Set it down. Keep going.

But those connections aren't meant to take that kind of movement. A bump. A catch. A shift in direction. And now the force isn't going into the cart it's going into the connections.

That's where things fail. Not when you're using it…But when it's being moved. And when something breaks loose, it doesn't stay a small problem.

It becomes a leak. A release. A fire hazard. Nothing failed here. But the setup made it possible.

The employee was stopped, corrected, and the cart was handled the right way.

Because moving equipment safely starts before it ever moves.

Hazards

- Damage to regulators or backflow device
- Gas leaks from stressed connections
- Fire or explosion risk
- Equipment failure under movement
- Line of fire exposure to pressure energy

Stats

- Many gas-related incidents involve damaged or improperly handled equipment
- Regulators and connections are common failure points when stressed
- Equipment transport introduces risk even when not in use
- Most incidents originate from setup and handling not active operation

Words of Wisdom

- Disconnect before you move
- What's connected can be damaged
- Easy now can cost you later

Pause and Think

It's easy to leave things connected when you're just moving from one spot to another.

It feels like a small shortcut. Saves a few minutes. Avoids extra steps. But those steps exist for a reason.

Because once something gets damaged in the move, the risk doesn't show up right away it shows up later, when everything is back in use.

- Do I take shortcuts when moving equipment?
- Am I thinking about how movement affects connections?
- Do I assume "it'll be fine this time"?
- Would I stop and disconnect before moving it?

SHARP START

May 18 — The Wrong One

We were doing a walkthrough in the morning and I found that a lock was placed on the wrong valve and that's unsafe because the product can still go inside the decanter and burn someone	**I told the guys that they needed to correct the lockout**

The lock was on. Tags were in place. It looked right. From the outside, everything said the system was safe. But it wasn't. The wrong valve had been isolated.

Which meant the energy wasn't where they thought it was.

The product was still inside. Still under pressure. Still capable of moving. That's the danger with lockout.

When it's wrong, it doesn't fail slowly. It doesn't give you a warning. It creates a false sense of security.

You believe the system is safe…Right up until it isn't. And when energy is still present - pressure, motion, stored material it doesn't wait for you to realize the mistake.

It releases when it's able. The issue was caught before work continued. The lockout was corrected. Because lockout isn't just about placing a lock. It's about making sure the energy is actually controlled.

Hazards

- Store energy remaining in system
- Unexpected release of pressure or material
- Equipment movement or startup
- Exposure to hazardous products
- Line of fire exposure to multiple energy sources.

Stats

- Many LOTO-related incidents involve incorrect isolation points
- Stored energy is a leading cause of serious injuries during maintenance
- Verification failures are a common factor in lockout incidents
- Proper lockout procedures significantly reduce injury risk

Words of Wisdom

- Locking it out doesn't mean it's safe
- Verify before you trust
- The wrong lock is no protection at all

Pause and Think

Lockout can become routine.

Same equipment. Same valves. Same steps.

And that's when assumptions start to take over.

You think it's right because it usually is. You trust it because it looks correct.

But lockout isn't about what it looks like.

It's about what's actually been controlled.

- Do I verify the correct isolation points every time?
- Am I relying on habit instead of checking?
- Do I confirm the energy is gone — or assume it is?
- Would I catch this before starting work?

SHARP START

May 19 — Before You Step In

Client had a rep visiting and was accompanied by to people from the client . While we were pulling cages and socks the rep walked right into the baghouse no harness or warning he was entering.	**I asked him to step back out because he needs to have a harness on before entering and let us know so we can be in compliance.**

He wasn't trying to do the work. Just walking in. Checking on progress. Seeing how things were going.

But the space didn't change just because he wasn't part of the task. The exposure was still there. No harness. No tie-off. No preparation for where he was stepping. It happens fast.

You're not thinking about fall protection because you're not "doing the job." You're just stepping in for a moment. But the hazard doesn't care why you're there. It doesn't care how long you plan to stay.

If you're exposed, you're exposed. And once you're in that space, it's already too late to prepare.

The employee was stopped before entering further. The expectation was made clear.

Because fall protection isn't something you figure out after you're in position.

It has to be in place before you ever step into the hazard.

Hazards

- Fall from elevation
- Unprotected entry into hazardous area
- Lack of tie-off or anchor point
- Misjudging exposure due to "not working"
- Line of fire exposure to gravity

Stats

- Many fall incidents occur during non-routine or brief exposures
- Visitors or non-task personnel are at increased risk due to lack of preparation
- Falls from relatively low heights can still result in serious injury
- Proper planning and access control significantly reduce fall risk

Words of Wisdom

- Exposure doesn't care why you're there
- Don't step into it until you're protected
- Plan before you enter

Pause and Think

It's easy to separate "doing the work" from "just checking it."

You tell yourself you're only going in for a second.
You're not performing the task.
You'll be careful.

But that doesn't change the environment.

If the hazard is there, it applies to everyone not just the person doing the job.

- Do I prepare before entering a hazardous area?
- Do I treat short visits differently than full tasks?
- Am I relying on awareness instead of protection?
- Would I stop someone else before they stepped in?

SHARP START

May 20 — Bare Hands, Sharp Edges

Road Electricians didn't have thinner knit gloves and were using bare hands to strip wire.	**Went down and got them the appropriate gloves for their task.**

The task wasn't complicated. Strip the wire. Move on. It's something that gets done all the time.

Quick. Routine. Familiar. And that's where the risk gets overlooked. Bare hands feel easier. Better control. More precision.

But wire doesn't stay smooth once it's cut. It frays. It splinters. It leaves sharp edges that don't give warning.

And once your hand slips, or pressure changes, or the material shifts. You find it fast. Cuts. Punctures. Snags that turn into something worse. Nothing happened here.

But the setup made it possible before the work even started. The correction was simple.

Use the right gloves. Protect your hands before the task begins.

Because when your hands are the closest thing to the work, they're also the first thing exposed.

Hazards

- Cuts and lacerations from sharp wire
- Puncture injuries
- Hand and finger injuries
- Loss of grip or control
- Line of fire exposure to sharp materials

Stats

- Hand injuries are among the most common workplace injuries
- Many occur during routine tasks involving sharp materials
- Lack of proper gloves increases severity of injury
- Task-specific PPE significantly reduces risk

Words of Wisdom

- If it's sharp, your hands are at risk
- Bare hands aren't better control
- Protect them before you need them

Pause and Think

It's easy to take gloves off for tasks that require precision.

You feel like you have better control.
Better grip.
Better accuracy.

But that control doesn't matter when something slips.

Because your hands are the first thing to take the hit.

And once it happens, there's no going back and putting protection on.

- Am I choosing comfort over protection?
- Do I remove PPE to make the task easier?
- Am I using the right gloves for the job?
- Would I correct this before the work starts?

SHARP START

May 21 — It'll Hold….Until It Doesn't

There was an employee working up high on some stacks with an extension ladder next to him. He wanted to come down, but the ladder was not secured, and no one was holding it. I told his coworker that he needed to hold the ladder while he climbed down	**His coworker took it well and held the ladder while the worker climbed down**

The ladder was in place. It was set up. It looked usable. So the work continued. No tie-off. No one holding it. No stabilization. It feels steady at first.

You climb up. You climb down. Nothing moves. That builds confidence. But ladders don't fail slowly. They shift. They slide. They lose contact.

And when they do, it happens all at once. There's no catching yourself halfway down. No time to correct it mid-step. You go where the ladder goes. Nothing slipped this time.

But the setup allowed it to happen before the climb even started. The fix was simple.

Secure it. Have someone hold it. Make sure it's stable before using it.

Because ladders don't need a big mistake. They just need one moment without control.

Hazards

- Ladder shift or slide
- Fall from elevation
- Loss of balance while climbing
- Improper ladder setup
- Line of fire exposure to gravity

Stats

- Falls from ladders are a leading cause of workplace injuries
- Many incidents involve improperly secured ladders
- Short duration tasks account for a large portion of ladder-related injures
- Proper setup significantly reduces fall risk

Words of Wisdom

- If it's not secured, it's not safe
- "It feels stable" isn't protection
- Set it right before you climb

Pause and Think

It's easy to trust a ladder that hasn't moved yet.

You've used it. It feels solid. You don't expect it to shift.

But that's not how failure works.

It doesn't give you a warning first.

And once it moves, you're already committed.

- Do I secure ladders before using them?
- Am I relying on how it feels instead of how it's set?
- Do I take shortcuts on setup for quick tasks?
- Would I stop before climbing in this situation?

SHARP START

May 22 — Right in the Path

Employee standing in the wrong space when using a comealong.	**Work was placed on hold for a moment and explained the line of fire scenario before returning to work.**

The setup was holding. The line was tight. The load wasn't moving. Everything looked controlled. So, the position didn't seem like a problem.

Standing close. Right where the work was happening. Right where the force was being applied. But that's exactly where the risk is. Tension doesn't show itself when everything is holding.

It shows itself when something fails.

A slip. A break. A sudden release. And all that stored energy has to go somewhere. Fast. And it goes in the direction it's been pulled. Right through the space the employee was standing in.

Nothing let go this time. But if it had, there wouldn't have been time to move.

The correction was simple. Step out of the path. Reposition before continuing.

Because with stored energy, safety isn't just about the tool. It's about where you stand.

Hazards

- Sudden release of stored energy
- Snapback or recoil from tensioned line
- Struck-by injuries
- Crushing or impact injuries
- Line of fire exposure to mechanical force

Stats

- Many line of fire incidents involve stored or released energy
- Workers positioned in predictable energy paths are at highest risk
- Tensioned systems can release energy instantly if compromised
- Reaction time is not sufficient once failure occurs

Words of Wisdom

- Don't stand where energy will go
- Tension doesn't give warnings
- Position is protection

Pause and Think

When something is under tension and holding steady, it's easy to trust it.

It feels controlled. Predictable. Safe enough.

But the risk isn't when it's holding.

It's when it stops holding.

And that moment doesn't give you time to react.

That's why position matters before anything happens.

- Am I standing in the path of potential energy?
- Do I think about where things will go if something fails?
- Am I trusting the setup instead of respecting the risk?
- Would I reposition before continuing the work?

SHARP START

May 25 — You Don't Always Notice It

While I was working on 3-4-5 WFD inside I was just tightening bolts on the drag from the head all the way down to the tail when my supervisor all the sudden grabs me and helps me get out of the room because it's filled with thick smoke making me unable to see anywhere. Apparently, I was in there for a decent length of time by myself before noticing which caused me to feel a little sick after I was out	**Remove the hazard by removing myself and getting the heck out of the area because if I was in there any longer I could have passed out genuinely and it could've been a very bad situation.**

He was just working. Tightening bolts. Moving from one end to the other. Focused on the task. Nothing out of the ordinary. No alarm. No immediate signal to stop. And that's the problem.

The environment changed…but it didn't demand attention right away. The smoke built up. Slow enough to miss. Gradual enough to ignore. Until it wasn't.

By the time it was obvious, visibility was gone. Air quality was compromised. And he had already been in it longer than he realized. That's the danger with atmospheres.

They don't always hit you instantly. They build. And when you're focused on the job, that change can go unnoticed. It took someone else stepping in physically pulling him out to break that moment.

Because once you're affected, your ability to recognize the hazard drops even more. This wasn't about doing something wrong. It was about not recognizing how quickly conditions can change around you.

Hazards

- Reduced visibility from smoke
- Inhalation of harmful atmosphere
- Oxygen displacement / air quality issues
- Working alone in changing conditions
- Delayed recognition of hazard

Stats

- Many atmospheric incidents occur due to delayed recognition
- Workers in enclosed or semi-enclosed spaces are at higher risk
- Exposure effects can begin before the hazard is fully recognized
- Working alone increases time to intervention

Words of Wisdom

- If it's changing, it's already a problem
- You won't always notice it in time
- Pay attention to the environment not just the task

Pause and Think

When you're focused on the job, everything else fades into the background.

Sounds. Smells. Changes in the environment.

That's when conditions can shift without you realizing it.

And the longer you stay in it, the harder it is to recognize what's happening.

- Am I paying attention to the environment around me?
- Would I recognize a slow change in conditions?
- Do I rely on others to catch what I might miss?
- Am I working in a way where someone can reach me if something goes wrong?

SHARP START

May 26 — Almost Done Isn't Done

Guy was coming down on a lift and was slowly taking off his harness before reaching the ground	**I got his attention and told him he needed to have it on at all times while on a lift**

The work was basically finished.

Coming down. Wrapping up. Getting ready to move on.

That's when the harness came loose. Not all the way. Just starting to take it off. Because the hard part was already done.

That's what it feels like. You're on your way down. You're almost out of it. The risk feels like it's behind you.

But it's not. You're still elevated. Still exposed. Still one movement away from losing balance.

And once that connection is gone, there's nothing left between you and the fall.

No second chance to clip back in. No time to fix it. But the decision was made before the exposure was gone.

The correction was simple. Stay tied off until you're completely out of the hazard.

Because "almost done" is where people let their guard down. And that's when it still matters.

Hazards

- Fall from elevation
- Loss of balance while descending
- Premature removal of fall protection
- Misjudging when exposure ends
- Line of fire exposure to gravity

Stats

- Falls often occur during access/egress, not just active work
- Many incidents happen at the end of tasks when focus drops
- Removing protection early is a common contributing factor
- Proper use of fall protection must continue until fully clear

Words of Wisdom

- Almost done isn't done
- Stay tied off until you're clear
- The last step still counts

Pause and Think

The end of a task feels different.

You're already thinking about what's next.
Mentally moving on.
Letting your guard down just a little.

That's when mistakes show up.

Because the exposure hasn't changed only your focus has.

- Do I stay protected all the way through the task?
- Do I start removing PPE before I'm clear?
- Am I mentally checking out before the job is finished?
- Would I catch this before it becomes a problem?

SHARP START

May 27 — When You Need It, It Better Work

Eyewash station nozzle was missing its protective cover, creating a risk of contamination.	**The issue was corrected by replacing the cover.**

Nobody was using it. No emergency. No exposure. Just sitting there. An eyewash station something you hope you never need. But the cover was missing.

Doesn't seem like much. Just a small piece. Easy to overlook. But that cover is what keeps the nozzle clean.

Without it, dust… debris… contaminants…All have a chance to build up. And when it's finally needed — when someone gets something in their eyes. That's not the time to find out it's not clean.

Because in that moment, there's no backup. You don't get to check it first. You don't get to clean it. You use it immediately. And whatever is sitting there goes straight where you're trying to protect.

The fix was simple. Replace the cover. Make sure it's ready before it's needed.

Because emergency equipment doesn't get a second chance to work right.

Hazards

- Contaminated eyewash water
- Increased eye injury severity
- Delayed response during emergencies
- Failure of emergency equipment
- Secondary exposure during treatment

Stats

- Emergency equipment failures often go unnoticed until needed
- Proper maintenance is critical to effectiveness
- Eye injuries require immediate response to reduce severity
- Contamination can worsen initial injury

Words of Wisdom

- Emergency equipment must be ready before the emergency
- If it's not maintained, it won't protect
- Small misses become big problems later

Pause and Think

We don't think about emergency equipment often.

It's there. It's in place. We assume it's ready.

But that assumption only holds if it's been checked and maintained.

Because when the moment comes, there's no time to question it.

- Do I check emergency equipment or assume it's good?
- Would I trust it right now if I needed it?
- Am I catching small issues before they become big ones?
- Would I fix this before walking away?

SHARP START

May 28 — It's Not Just Your Space

Cleaning concrete debris from floor above and debris falling off through grading no barricade under it.	**Barricade area from falling debris.**

The work was happening above. Cleaning. Moving material. Things coming off the floor.

And as it came down…It didn't stay contained. Debris was falling below. Not intentionally. Not aggressively.

Just gravity doing what it does. And underneath? That space was open.

Anyone walking by could pass right through it. Right into it. That's the part that gets missed.

You're focused on your work. Your area. Your task. But the hazard doesn't stay where you're working.

It travels. Downward. Outward. Into shared space. Nothing struck anyone. But the exposure was there the entire time. The correction was simple. Set the barricade. Control the area below.

Because safety isn't just about protecting yourself. It's about protecting the people who don't even know they're at risk.

Hazards

- Falling debris from elevated work
- Struck by injuries
- Uncontrolled work zone
- Exposure to others in shared space
- Line of fire exposure to gravity

Stats

- Struck-by incidents are a leading cause of workplace injuries
- Many involve falling objects from elevated work
- Unbarricaded areas increase risk to unaware workers
- Proper barricading significantly reduces exposure

Words of Wisdom

- What goes up will come down
- Control the space below your work
- Protect the people who don't see it coming.

Pause and Think

When you're working at height, your focus stays up there.

On the task. On the material. On what you're doing.

But the hazard doesn't stay with you.

It moves into areas where others are walking, working, and not expecting it.

And they don't get a warning.

- Am I controlling the area below my work?
- Would someone walking by know there's a hazard above?
- Am I protecting others not just myself?
- Would I set the barricade before starting?

SHARP START

May 29 — It Was Telling Him

Hole watch was not paying attention to the monitor, even though it was flashing red.	**I told him his air monitor was going off then helped him.**

The monitor was doing its job. Flashing. Warning. Trying to get attention. But it wasn't being watched. That's the part that matters. Because a gas monitor doesn't stop the hazard. It only tells you it's there.

And if no one is paying attention, that warning doesn't mean anything. The environment can change fast.

Oxygen levels drop. Toxics build. Flammables rise.

And the monitor will tell you — But only if someone is actually listening. In this case, it was already in alarm. Already signaling a problem. And the person responsible for watching it didn't catch it. That's how quickly things can turn.

Because once the atmosphere changes, you don't get much time. And if the warning is missed, the next sign isn't a light or a sound. It's the effect. The work was stopped. The issue was corrected.

Because confined space safety doesn't rely on the monitor alone. It relies on someone paying attention to it.

Hazards

- Toxic or hazardous atmosphere
- Oxygen deficiency
- Flammable gas buildup
- Delayed response to alarm conditions
- Confined space exposure

Stats

- A large percentage of confined space fatalities involve atmospheric hazards
- A large percentage of confined space fatalities involve atmospheric hazards
- Atmospheric changes can occur rapidly with little visible indication
- Continuous monitoring is only effective if actively observed

Words of Wisdom

- The monitor only works if you're watching it
- Warning don't matter if they're ignored
- Pay attention before it becomes an emergency

Pause and Think

It's easy to treat monitoring like a background task.

The device is on. It's working. It will alert you if something changes.

But that only works if you're engaged.

Because once the alarm is missed, you've lost your early warning.

And what comes next doesn't give you time to react.

- Am I actively watching my monitor?
- Do I treat alarms as immediate action points?
- Am I distracted from the responsibility I've been given?
- Would I catch the warning before it becomes a problem?