



June 12 — What Else Is Going On?

Was asked to come look at some gear drives that appeared low on oil. When I got there 3 customer EEs were greasing the dumper. Before I looked at the gear drives, I stopped in the MCC and saw the dumper was not locked out.

Had EEs get off the dumper and explained to them that they should not be out on the dumper without being locked out.

Sometimes the most important hazard isn't the one you're looking for.

An employee was asked to investigate gear drives that appeared to be low on oil. As he made his way to the area, he stopped in the MCC before beginning his inspection. That's when he noticed three employees working on the dumper, greasing equipment that had not been locked out.

The focus of the assignment had been the gear drives. The bigger hazard was somewhere else.

The employee immediately stopped the work, had the employees get off the dumper, and explained that the equipment should not be serviced without proper lockout. What started as a routine inspection became an opportunity to prevent a potentially serious incident.

One of the challenges in any workplace is becoming so focused on the task in front of us that we stop paying attention to what's happening around us. We arrive with a job to do, a problem to solve, or a deadline to meet, and our attention naturally narrows to that objective. While focus is important, it can sometimes cause us to overlook hazards that are right in front of us.

This observation is a great reminder that safety awareness extends beyond our assigned work. The employee wasn't responsible for the greasing activity, wasn't asked to inspect the dumper, and wasn't looking for a lockout issue. He simply recognized an unsafe condition and took action.

That's what strong hazard recognition looks like.

Hazards

- Unexpected equipment startup
- Stored energy release
- Caught-between hazards
- Crushing injuries
- Serious injury during maintenance activities
- Inadequate energy isolation

Words of Wisdom

Situational awareness means paying attention to more than your own task. Some of the most important hazards you'll identify are the ones you weren't expecting to find.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever discovered a hazard while working on something completely unrelated?
- How can task focus sometimes reduce overall awareness?
- What signs help you recognize when equipment should be locked out?
- Would you be comfortable stopping work if you observed an unsafe condition outside your area of responsibility?
- What could have happened if the dumper had started while employees were working on it?

Closing Thought

The safest employees don't just look for the hazards they're assigned to find. They stay aware of the hazards around them.