



August 3 — Trust...But Verify

Prior to our concrete subcontractor beginning work cutting a concrete slab and excavating a trench, we were assured that there should be nothing under the concrete as far as conduit or piping.

We requested a scan be performed to determine if there was anything under the concrete in the area we would be working. The scan revealed several conduits and pipes.

Just because someone says it's clear...

...doesn't mean it's safe to cut.

Before a concrete subcontractor began cutting a slab and excavating a trench, the crew was told there were no underground conduits or piping beneath the work area. It would have been easy to accept that information and begin work without asking another question.

Instead, the crew took the time to verify the work area before cutting into the concrete. That extra step helped prevent the possibility of striking hidden utilities that could have resulted in damaged equipment, service interruptions, costly repairs, or serious injury.

Assumptions are one of the most common contributors to workplace incidents. Information can be outdated, incomplete, or simply incorrect. Whether you're locating utilities, identifying energy sources, or reviewing a job plan, verification is what turns assumptions into facts. Taking a few extra minutes to confirm conditions before work begins is often what prevents an incident from ever occurring.

Hazards

- Hidden electrical conduit
- Buried process or utility piping
- Striking energized or pressurized systems
- Property damage and costly repairs
- Unexpected service interruptions
- Relying on assumptions instead of verification

Words of Wisdom

Trust the information you're given—but always verify it before acting. A few minutes spent confirming conditions can prevent injuries, equipment damage, and unplanned downtime.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever been told something was "clear" only to discover it wasn't?
- What tools or resources can you use to verify conditions before cutting, drilling, or excavating?
- Why can assumptions become more dangerous on familiar jobs?
- How can crews challenge information respectfully without slowing down the job unnecessarily?
- What other tasks on your jobsite require verification before work begins?

Closing Thought

Every safe job begins with one simple habit: **verify first, then proceed**. Assumptions don't prevent incidents—verification does.



August 4 – Look Out for More Than the Job

I was approached by a couple of our guys that were concerned about one of our other guys, they stated that he was not acting like himself and that his face looked different. I spoke to the gentleman in question and agreed. He told me that he felt a little sick but nothing major, I could clearly tell that something was off. He has worked here for 12 years and we all know him pretty well so I did not have any suspicions of drugs, I initially thought that it was heat related.

I called our safety department and we agreed that he needed to do a fit for duty. I had him sit in my office with me while we waited for his ride. Once at the clinic they checked his blood pressure and it was very high and advised that he go to the ER immediately. They performed multiple tests and got his blood pressure stable, he was able to go home later in the evening and has a follow up with his doctor. The crew here did a great job at looking out for each other and bringing it to my attention.

Sometimes the first sign of an emergency... ...is simply noticing that someone isn't themselves.

A couple of employees approached their supervisor because they were concerned about a coworker. They explained that he wasn't acting like himself and that something about his appearance seemed different. Although the employee said he only felt "a little sick," both the coworkers and supervisor recognized that something wasn't right.

The supervisor had worked with the employee for many years and knew his normal behavior. Rather than dismissing the concerns or assuming the employee would be fine, he trusted his instincts and took the situation seriously. His first thought was that the employee might be experiencing heat-related illness, but regardless of the cause, he understood that changes in a person's behavior or appearance should never be ignored.

One of the strongest indicators of a positive safety culture isn't how quickly hazards are identified—it's how well employees look out for one another. Equipment doesn't always give warning signs before it fails, and neither do people. When coworkers speak up because something seems different, they're not interfering—they're protecting a teammate. Sometimes, paying attention to the people around you can be just as important as paying attention to the work itself.

Hazards

- Heat-related illness
- Medical emergencies
- Changes in behavior or mental awareness
- Delayed recognition of symptoms
- Assuming someone is "fine" because they say they are
- Failure to speak up when something doesn't seem right

Words of Wisdom

Knowing your job is important. Knowing your coworkers may save a life. If something about a teammate doesn't seem right, trust your instincts, speak up, and check on them.

Pause and Think

- Would you recognize if one of your coworkers wasn't acting like themselves?
- Have you ever noticed something that didn't seem right but weren't sure whether to say something?
- Why do people sometimes downplay how they're feeling when they're sick or overheated?
- What signs might indicate that a coworker needs medical attention?
- How can we build a culture where checking on one another is viewed as a strength, not an inconvenience?

Closing Thought

The best crews don't just watch for hazards—they watch out for each other. A simple conversation, a question, or speaking up when something doesn't seem right may be the action that prevents a tragedy.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



August 5 — There Is No Such Thing as “Just for a Minute”

A Plant Contracted Electrician was working above 4 ft. without fall protection

We had a discussion with the contractor and plant safety about the 4' fall protection standard. Anything over 4' you must be tied off.

Falls don't happen because people plan to get hurt...

They happen because someone believes they'll be okay "just this once."

A contracted electrician was observed performing work more than four feet above the ground without using the required fall protection. Whether the task was expected to take thirty seconds or thirty minutes, the hazard remained the same—a fall from elevation can change a life in an instant.

Many fall incidents happen during routine tasks. Workers become focused on completing the job, retrieving a tool, making one connection, or finishing one last adjustment. As familiarity with the work increases, the perceived risk often decreases—even though the actual risk has not changed.

Fall protection isn't required because every elevated task results in a fall. It's required because no one can predict when a slip, a loss of balance, or an unexpected movement will occur. Taking the extra minute to properly protect yourself is always less costly than the consequences of a preventable fall.

Hazards

- Falls from elevated work surfaces
- Serious injury or fatality
- Overconfidence during routine tasks
- Working without required fall protection
- Assuming a short task doesn't require protection
- Complacency caused by familiarity

Words of Wisdom

The amount of time spent at height doesn't determine the risk. The distance to the ground does.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever been tempted to skip fall protection because the task would "only take a minute"?
- What shortcuts do people commonly take when working at height?
- How can coworkers respectfully intervene when they see someone working without proper fall protection?
- What factors cause experienced workers to become complacent around fall hazards?
- What can our crew do today to ensure everyone goes home safely after working at elevation?

Closing Thought

A fall doesn't care how experienced you are or how quickly you planned to finish. If the job requires fall protection, wear it every time.



August 6 — Never Assume the Operator Sees You

I was driving a manlift near the load station, and while I was in the air turning the manlift around without any warning the train was moving down the tracks. There was no alarm sounding and no spotter on the ground checking the area. So, as I let off the control to start reversing the lift it went in limp mode. I was stuck in the air unable to move the lift either way, and the rail car was steadily moving towards me. The rail car stopped within just a few feet of the lift. After a few more minutes I got the lift to finally move and I got out and parked it. Went to my truck because I was well shaken over the situation.

At the time of the observation, no immediate corrective action had been taken, my supervisor said the gentleman he spoke to said they had previous knowledge that the alarm that should have sounded had a short in it and they just hadn't gotten around to fixing it, but that they would come and get a written statement from me so they could take corrective actions. No one that day or the next day ever came to check on me or take a statement. Nothing to my knowledge was ever done about it.

Moving equipment and poor communication... ...are a dangerous combination.

While operating a manlift near the load station, an employee was repositioning the lift when a rail car unexpectedly began moving toward the work area. There was no audible warning and no spotter ensuring the travel path was clear. As the operator attempted to move away, the manlift unexpectedly went into limp mode, leaving him suspended in the air with no ability to move. The rail car continued approaching and stopped only a few feet away.

This close call wasn't caused by one mistake—it was the result of several failed safeguards happening at the same time. The operator had no warning that the rail equipment was moving, there was no one monitoring the travel path, and when the equipment malfunctioned, there was no immediate way to remove the operator from danger. Fortunately, the rail car stopped before contact occurred. The outcome could easily have been much different.

Whenever mobile equipment, rail traffic, and personnel share the same work area, communication becomes just as important as the equipment itself. Operators should never assume they have been seen, and equipment operators should never assume the path ahead is clear without verification. Clear communication, functioning warning systems, and designated spotters create the layers of protection that keep everyone safe when the unexpected happens.

Hazards

- Moving rail equipment
- Working near mobile equipment
- Equipment malfunction
- Blind spots and limited visibility
- Lack of communication between operators
- Missing warning alarms or spotters

Words of Wisdom

When heavy equipment is moving, communication isn't a convenience—it's a critical safety control. Never assume someone sees you or knows where you are.

Pause and Think

- How do you know equipment operators are aware of your location before they begin moving?
- What should you do if required warning systems or alarms are not functioning?
- When is a spotter necessary, and what responsibilities should that person have?
- If your equipment unexpectedly fails, what is your plan for getting to a safe location?
- What communication practices can our crew improve today when working around moving equipment?

Closing Thought

Near misses rarely happen because of one failure—they happen when several small failures line up. Strong communication and constant awareness keep those failures from becoming serious incidents.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



SHARP START



August 7 — The Most Important Part of the Job Happens Before the Engine Starts

Operating Gradall without inspection	Stopped task, fully inspected Gradall and continued work
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The safest equipment operator...

...is the one who finds the problem before the machine does.

A Gradall was observed being operated before a required pre-use inspection had been completed. While the equipment may have appeared to be operating normally, skipping the inspection eliminated the opportunity to identify mechanical issues, damaged components, fluid leaks, or safety system failures before they became hazards.

Pre-use inspections aren't about checking a box or satisfying a requirement. They give operators the chance to identify problems while the equipment is still parked instead of discovering them while lifting a load, traveling across uneven ground, or working near other employees. A few minutes spent inspecting equipment can prevent injuries, property damage, and costly downtime.

Every operator becomes the first line of defense before a piece of equipment goes to work. Taking ownership of that responsibility protects not only the operator but everyone working around the equipment. A thorough inspection today may prevent tomorrow's incident.

Hazards

- Mechanical failure during operation
- Hydraulic leaks or component failures
- Tire or steering defects
- Malfunctioning brakes or controls
- Equipment damage
- Injury to operators or nearby workers

Words of Wisdom

An inspection takes only a few minutes. Recovering from an equipment failure can take weeks—or much longer. Never assume yesterday's safe equipment is still safe today.

Pause and Think

- What problems could a pre-use inspection identify before work begins?
- Have you ever found a defect during an inspection that prevented a breakdown or incident?
- Why do operators sometimes skip inspections on equipment they use every day?
- How does completing an inspection protect not only you but everyone working nearby?
- What part of your equipment inspection deserves a closer look today?

Closing Thought

Every shift starts with a decision. You can either spend a few minutes looking for problems before work begins—or risk finding them when it matters most.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



August 10 — Hope Is Not a Rescue Plan

No lifelines or harnesses for retrieving	Stopped work and brought up harnesses and life lines for the guys working inside the confined space
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The time to prepare for an emergency...

...is before anyone enters the space.

During a confined space entry, it was discovered that the required retrieval lifelines and harnesses were not available for emergency rescue. Although the work may have appeared routine, one critical layer of protection was missing. If an emergency had occurred, rescuing the entrant quickly and safely would have been much more difficult.

Confined space work is unique because emergencies can develop rapidly, often leaving workers unable to exit on their own. That's why rescue equipment isn't optional—it's an essential part of the job. Every entry should begin with the mindset that if something goes wrong, the crew is prepared to respond immediately without losing valuable time searching for equipment or deciding what to do next.

Good planning isn't about expecting something bad to happen; it's about recognizing that unexpected events can happen to anyone. Taking the time to verify that rescue equipment is available, inspected, and ready to use ensures that if the unthinkable occurs, the crew has the tools and plan needed to respond safely.

Hazards

- Confined space emergencies
- Delayed rescue response
- Lack of retrieval equipment
- Oxygen-deficient or hazardous atmospheres
- Entrapment or medical emergencies
- Increased risk to would be rescuers

Words of Wisdom

The best rescue is the one you're fully prepared to perform before anyone enters the space. Preparation saves time—and time saves lives.

Pause and Think

- If an emergency happened right now, do we have everything needed to safely rescue the entrant?
- Is all required retrieval equipment available, inspected, and ready for use?
- Does everyone involved understand their role during a confined space entry?
- What happens if we assume we'll "figure it out" during an emergency?
- What other jobs require us to have emergency plans in place before work begins?

Closing Thought

Confined space safety doesn't begin when someone enters—it begins with the planning, equipment, and preparation that happen beforehand. When it comes to rescue, being ready isn't optional; it's part of doing the job safely.



August 11 — Smoke Is a Warning, Not an Inconvenience

An electrical cord was plugged in and began to smoke	Remove the hazard
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Electrical equipment usually gives us a warning...

...the question is whether we'll recognize it before something worse happens.

An employee plugged in an electrical cord, and it immediately began to smoke. Fortunately, the condition was recognized quickly, and the equipment was taken out of service before it could develop into a more serious incident such as an electrical shock, fire, or equipment failure.

Electrical problems rarely appear without warning. Smoke, unusual odors, excessive heat, sparks, or damaged insulation are all signs that something isn't right. It's easy to think a cord can "make it through one more job," but those warning signs are often the last opportunity to prevent an incident before a failure occurs.

Every employee has the authority and responsibility to stop using defective equipment. Taking a few moments to inspect cords, plugs, and electrical tools before use—and removing damaged equipment from service immediately—protects not only the person using it but everyone working nearby.

Hazards

- Electrical shock
- Fire caused by electrical failure
- Burns
- Damaged cords or plugs
- Faulty electrical equipment
- Continuing to use equipment after warning signs appear

Words of Wisdom

Electrical equipment often gives us one warning before it fails. Treat every warning sign as an opportunity to prevent the next incident.

Pause and Think

- What warning signs tell you an electrical tool or cord should be removed from service?
- When was the last time you inspected a cord before plugging it in?
- Have you ever continued using equipment even though you noticed something wasn't quite right?
- What should you do if you discover a damaged electrical cord on the jobsite?
- How can we make sure defective equipment isn't accidentally put back into service?

Closing Thought

Small warning signs often prevent big incidents—but only if we choose to act on them. If electrical equipment doesn't look, sound, smell, or operate normally, stop using it immediately and have it inspected.



August 12 — The Right Call Can Prevent the Wrong Outcome

Saw a coworker climbing the ladder to get on the mezzanine as he was moving from the 4th to 5th step I observed he wasn't tied off when there was a cheater wrapped around a upright and long enough to reach the third step from bottom

I stopped and informed him to please step down and tie off.

Co worker stepped down to 3rd step tied off and thanked me

Sometimes the most important safety action...

...is simply speaking up.

While accessing a mezzanine, a coworker observed an employee climbing a ladder without being tied off during the transition between steps. A proper tie-off point was available, but it was not being used. The employee was stopped before continuing and reminded to step down and properly connect their fall protection.

Fall protection equipment only works when we choose to use it. Having a harness, lanyard, or tie-off point available does not provide protection if it is not connected properly. Many fall incidents happen during transitions, climbing, or positioning—not necessarily while someone is performing the main task.

The most important part of this observation was that someone noticed and acted. It takes awareness and confidence to stop a coworker and have a safety conversation. Looking out for one another isn't about slowing someone down or pointing out mistakes; it's about making sure everyone gets home safely at the end of the day.

Hazards

- Working at elevation without proper fall protection
- Falling while transitioning on ladders
- Assuming a short climb does not require protection
- Failure to use available safety equipment
- Coworkers not intervening when they see an unsafe condition

Words of Wisdom

A good coworker doesn't walk past a hazard—they help remove it.

Pause and Think

- Have you ever seen someone take a shortcut because they thought it would only take a few seconds?
- Would you feel comfortable stopping a coworker if you saw them at risk?
- What makes it difficult for people to speak up when they see something unsafe?
- Are your fall protection systems ready and positioned before you begin climbing?
- How can we continue building a culture where everyone watches out for one another?

Closing Thought

The few seconds it took to stop and speak up may have prevented a life-changing fall. Safety is everyone's responsibility, and sometimes the most important thing we do is look out for the person working beside us.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



August 13 — Don't Wait Until Heat Wins

I was up checking on the guys working on a decanter. After looking at their JHA's and permits I walked upon them and one employee said it was really hot. He had a long sleeve shirt over a short sleeve shirt. I asked him why he was wearing heavy long sleeves and he said it keeps him wet to try to stay cool. I told him to make sure they are staying hydrated and take cool down breaks, then I went out onto the dryers to look at some other jobs. When I came back in I seen they must have gone to cool down.

I walked over to the hut that was made with a A/C unit in it to be able to cool down and seen they were in there so I went in and asked them the question that when I walked back into the decanter deck I seen that there was 3 different fans running but none were at the job they

The best heat-related incident...

...is the one that never happens.

While checking on employees working on Decanter 1C, a supervisor reviewed the job documentation before walking the work area. During the visit, one employee mentioned how hot it was. The employee was wearing a lightweight long-sleeve shirt over a short-sleeve shirt and explained that keeping the shirt wet actually helped him stay cooler while working in the heat.

Rather than simply moving on, the supervisor took the opportunity to remind the crew to stay hydrated and take cool-down breaks throughout the day. When he returned a short time later, the crew had already stepped away from the work area to cool down. That simple decision demonstrated good judgment and an understanding that taking a break before becoming overheated is part of working safely.

Heat stress is much easier to prevent than to treat. Supervisors checking on their crews, employees speaking openly about how they're feeling, and crews recognizing when it's time to cool down are all examples of a strong safety culture. Looking out for one another and taking action early helps ensure everyone goes home healthy at the end of the day.

Hazards

- Heat exhaustion and heat illness
- Dehydration
- Fatigue
- Reduced concentration and decision making
- Delaying cool down breaks
- Ignoring early signs of heat illness

Words of Wisdom

You don't have to wait until someone is sick to take a break. The smartest crews cool down before heat becomes a problem.

Pause and Think

- Are you drinking water before you feel thirsty?
- Would you recognize the early signs of heat stress in yourself or a coworker?
- Do you feel comfortable taking a cool-down break before you reach your limit?
- How can supervisors encourage crews to speak up when conditions become more demanding?
- What can our crew do today to prevent heat stress instead of reacting to it?

Closing Thought

The strongest crews don't wait for someone to become overheated before taking action. They communicate, watch out for one another, and make smart decisions early. Preventing heat stress isn't about stopping work, it's about working in a way that keeps everyone safe and healthy.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



SHARP START



August 14 — Every Lift Begins with an Inspection

While preparing for the shutdown on a boiler. Had an employee gather rigging and noticed he grabbed a steel choker that was fraying.

Red taped the choker and explained the importance of inspecting our rigging before every use

A successful lift starts long before anything leaves the ground...

...it starts with inspecting the equipment that will carry the load.

While preparing for a boiler shutdown, an employee gathered the rigging needed for the job and noticed that one of the steel chokers was frayed. Instead of assuming it would be "good enough," the employee recognized the damage and removed it from service before it could be used.

Rigging equipment is exposed to heavy loads, sharp edges, weather, and daily wear. Damage often develops gradually, making it easy to overlook if inspections become rushed or routine. A few broken wires or signs of wear may seem minor, but they can be early indicators that the sling has reached the end of its safe service life.

This observation is a great reminder that inspections are one of the most effective ways to prevent incidents before they happen. Taking a few extra moments to carefully examine rigging before every lift protects employees, prevents equipment damage, and ensures every lift begins with confidence that the equipment is capable of doing the job safely.

Hazards

- Failure of damaged rigging
- Dropped loads
- Struck by hazards
- Pinch and crush injuries
- Equipment damage
- Using worn or defective lifting equipment

Words of Wisdom

The safest lift isn't the one that goes as planned it's the one that started with confidence that every piece of rigging was inspected and ready for the job.

Pause and Think

- When was the last time you found damaged rigging during a pre-use inspection?
- Would you recognize the warning signs that a sling or choker should be removed from service?
- Are inspections ever rushed because the crew is eager to get the job started?
- If you found damaged rigging, would you feel comfortable removing it from service immediately?
- How do our inspections help protect everyone involved in a lift—not just the person operating the equipment?

Closing Thought

Every safe lift begins with a simple decision: take the time to inspect before you lift. The few minutes spent checking your rigging today may prevent the incident that never happens tomorrow.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



August 17 — One Last Look Can Make All the Difference

Electricians were getting ready to change out a motor that involved removing some piping as well. When looking at the pipes ties into it I noticed one valve wasn't locked out.

Stopped the employees and had them get with customer to fix the lockout

The most dangerous hazard...

...is often the one we think has already been addressed.

While preparing to replace a motor, electricians reviewed the work area before beginning. Because the job also involved removing connected piping, the isolation points were checked one final time. During that review, it was discovered that one valve supplying the system had not been locked out.

This observation is a reminder that lockout/tagout is more than following a checklist—it's about understanding the entire system. Complex jobs often involve multiple energy sources, and it's easy to focus on the primary equipment while overlooking a secondary connection. Taking the time to stop and verify every isolation point can prevent an unexpected release of energy or product.

One final check made the difference. Before the first bolt was loosened or the first piece of piping was removed, the missing isolation was identified and corrected. That's exactly what we want to see: employees taking ownership of the job, asking questions, and verifying that every source of hazardous energy has been controlled before work begins.

Hazards

- Unexpected release of stored energy
- Pressurized piping
- Incomplete lockout/tagout
- Contact with hazardous materials
- Line of fire hazards
- Equipment damage or injury during maintenance

Words of Wisdom

The best time to find a missing lockout is before the work starts, not after the system is opened.

Pause and Think

- When you perform a lockout, how do you verify that every energy source has been identified?
- Have you ever discovered an isolation point that was initially overlooked?
- What makes complex jobs more likely to have missed lockout points?
- How can coworkers help verify that the lockout is complete before work begins?
- What steps can we take to ensure we never rely on assumptions during hazardous energy control?

Closing Thought

Safe work isn't built on assumptions—it's built on verification. Taking one last look before the job begins may only take a minute, but it can prevent an incident that lasts a lifetime.



August 18 — Electricity Always Finds a Path

I was helping a welder fitter team tack up a piece of pipe. The welder struck an arc and I received a shock. We discovered that he had his ground clamp on a different pipe than the one that was being welded on. This happened to be the pipe I was leaning on to steady myself while helping with the fit up. A combination of wet sweaty gloves and poor ground placement contributed to a decent shock for me as I completed the circuit for him.

We asked the welder to make sure he has proper ground clamp placement before striking an arc, to protect equipment and personnel. I will also try to bring extra gloves when helping in the field.

Electricity doesn't know who's welding...

...it only knows the easiest path to travel.

While helping position a piece of pipe for fit-up, an employee received an electrical shock the moment the welder struck an arc. After investigating, the crew discovered the welding ground clamp had been attached to a different section of pipe than the one being welded. Because the employee was leaning against that pipe with wet, sweaty gloves, his body became part of the electrical path.

This incident is a reminder that electricity follows the path of least resistance—it doesn't recognize job titles, experience, or intentions. Something as simple as an incorrectly placed ground clamp or wet PPE can create conditions where current travels through an unexpected path. That's why proper grounding and maintaining awareness of where current can flow are critical before striking the first arc.

Good planning involves more than inspecting the welding machine. It means asking, "Where will the electricity travel?" Taking a few extra moments to verify ground clamp placement, inspect cables and connections, and ensure no one is in the potential current path can prevent an incident before welding even begins.

Hazards

- Electrical shock
- Improper grounding
- Wet gloves or damp working conditions
- Unexpected electrical current paths
- Burns
- Loss of balance or secondary injuries following a shock

Words of Wisdom

Electricity always completes a circuit. Make sure that circuit never includes you.

Pause and Think

- Before welding, do you verify that the ground clamp is attached to the correct workpiece?
- Could your body accidentally become part of the electrical path?
- How do wet gloves, sweaty clothing, or damp conditions increase electrical hazards?
- What should you check before striking the first arc?
- How can crews communicate to make sure everyone understands where welding current will travel?

Closing Thought

Every weld begins with more than striking an arc—it begins with understanding where the electrical current will go. Taking a moment to verify the setup protects everyone working around the job, not just the person holding the stinger.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



August 19 — Being Tied Off Isn't Enough

Employee was using wrong tie off points on scaffolding.

Supervisor told employee that he shouldn't be using the handrails on scaffolding as tie off point and directed him to correct tie off point which employee then started using.

Fall protection only works...

...when every part of the system works together.

While observing work from scaffolding, an employee was found tied off to an improper anchor point. Although the employee was wearing the required fall protection, the connection point was not designed or approved to safely arrest a fall.

It's easy to think that clipping in anywhere is better than not clipping in at all, but fall protection systems are only as strong as the anchor supporting them. An improper tie-off point can fail during a fall, leaving the employee with little or no protection when it's needed most. Wearing the equipment is only one part of the process—selecting the correct anchor point is just as important.

This observation reminds us that safe work is about understanding the entire system, not just following one step. Before leaving the ground, take a moment to verify that your harness, lanyard, and anchor point are all compatible and designed for the task. A few extra seconds of verification can make the difference when it matters most.

Hazards

- Improper anchorage points
- Falls from elevation
- Failure to fall arrest systems
- False sense of security
- Serious injury or fatality
- Inadequate pre-job verification

Words of Wisdom

Wearing a harness doesn't stop a fall. A properly connected fall protection system does.

Pause and Think

- Do you know which anchor points are approved before starting work?
- Would your tie-off point safely support you during a fall?
- Have you ever assumed a structure was suitable without verifying it?
- Who should you ask if you're unsure whether an anchor point is approved?
- How can our crew verify proper tie-off locations before work begins?

Closing Thought

Fall protection is more than wearing the right equipment, it's using the entire system correctly. Before every job, verify that your anchor point is just as dependable as the harness you're wearing.



August 20 — When Something Doesn't Feel Right, Stop and Evaluate

We finished up retrieving our cart from the second floor. We headed out to the trucks. When we exited the building, we were immediately greeted by our breath getting taken away from the chemical smell in the atmosphere.	We immediately got in the trucks and left the area. We went to an area where the smell was not overwhelming and called the insulation foreman to let him know of the situation. We then called Jacob W. with fructose to let him know.
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Your senses are one of your best safety tools...

...if something doesn't seem right, pay attention.

After completing work and exiting the building, employees were immediately met with a strong chemical odor that took their breath away. The sudden change in air quality was an obvious indication that conditions outside the building were different than expected.

One of the first signs of a chemical release or process upset is often what we can see, smell, or feel. While we should never rely solely on our senses to identify hazardous substances, they can alert us that something has changed and prompt us to stop, move to a safe location, and notify the appropriate personnel. Ignoring those warning signs or assuming someone else has already reported them can increase the risk of exposure.

Situational awareness means constantly evaluating your surroundings not just the task you're performing. Every time you move into a new area, take a moment to look around, notice what's different, and trust your instincts when something seems out of the ordinary. Recognizing an abnormal condition early gives everyone the opportunity to respond before it becomes a more serious incident.

Hazards

- Chemical exposure
- Airborne contaminants
- Respiratory irritation
- Unexpected process release
- Reduced visibility or awareness due to strong odors
- Delayed reporting of abnormal conditions

Words of Wisdom

Your job doesn't end when the task is complete. Stay aware of your surroundings until you're safely out of the work area.

Pause and Think

- If you suddenly noticed an unusual odor or atmosphere, what would your first action be?
- Do you know how to report an unexpected chemical release or abnormal condition?
- What changes in your work environment should immediately get your attention?
- How can we avoid becoming so focused on our task that we miss hazards around us?
- What role does situational awareness play after the work is finished?

Closing Thought

The safest employees aren't just focused on the job, they're constantly aware of the environment around them. When something doesn't look, smell, or feel right, stop, evaluate the situation, and take action. Recognizing a hazard early may prevent a much more serious incident.

See Something • Say Something • Do Something



August 21 — Watch Out for Each Other

A customer's employee was driving a fork truck in a load out tunnel. My coworker and I were working on lights in the same area. I was backing off the ladder, and my coworker grabbed me and pulled me toward him. At that time A fork truck drove right past me through the overhead door with no sound of the horn, letting people know he was coming through. This could have been a serious accident, and I could have potentially walked into the line of fire causing serious injury, if not for my coworkers help.

I stopped the fork truck driver on his next pass and asked him if that fork truck was equipped with a horn. He replied yes. I then told him that when driving through doors he should sound the horn to let people in the area know he is coming. I think that is SOP Anyway.

Sometimes the person who keeps you safe...

...is standing right beside you.

Two employees were working together in a load-out tunnel, replacing lights near an overhead door where forklift traffic was common. As one employee stepped backward off a ladder, unaware of what was approaching behind him, a customer-operated forklift entered the area without sounding its horn. Fortunately, his coworker saw the danger, reacted immediately, and pulled him out of the forklift's path before a serious incident could occur.

Near misses like this remind us that our attention can become focused on the task in front of us. Climbing down a ladder, carrying tools, or concentrating on the work can make it easy to lose awareness of what's happening around us. That's why communication, warning signals, and teamwork are critical whenever people and mobile equipment share the same work area.

One quick decision by a coworker changed the outcome of this event. Looking out for one another isn't just being helpful—it's one of the strongest safety controls we have. Every employee has the ability to recognize a hazard, speak up, or take action before someone gets hurt.

Hazards

- Struck-by hazards from mobile equipment
- Blind spots around forklifts
- Lack of audible warning signals
- Line-of-fire hazards
- Distractions during work activities
- Limited situational awareness

Words of Wisdom

The best safety partner isn't just someone who works beside you, it's someone who watches out for you.

Pause and Think

- If someone near you was about to step into danger, would you recognize it in time to act?
- Are you aware of forklift routes and traffic patterns where you're working?
- What can operators and pedestrians do to communicate effectively in shared work areas?
- How can we avoid becoming so focused on the task that we lose awareness of our surroundings?
- When was the last time a coworker helped prevent a mistake—or you helped prevent one?

Closing Thought

Safety is a team effort. We all have moments when our attention is focused on the job at hand, and that's when a coworker can make all the difference. Watching out for each other, speaking up, and taking action when something doesn't look right are the behaviors that prevent incidents before they happen.



August 24 — The Hazard You Can't See

Observed vacuum trucks removing DDGS product from the silo. I did not observe a visible grounding/bonding connection or static control verification during the operation. Vacuuming combustible dust can generate static electricity

Notify the area supervisor and review the vacuum truck setup to ensure static control measures have been evaluated, required grounding/bonding or approved alternatives are in place, and the operation complies with the site's combustible dust safety procedures.

Not every hazard is visible...

...but every hazard deserves our attention.

During an observation of vacuum trucks removing DDGS product from a silo, it was noted that no visible grounding or bonding connection or static control verification could be observed. While the operation appeared routine, transferring combustible dust can generate static electricity. If that static charge is not properly controlled, it has the potential to become an ignition source.

Static electricity builds quietly and without warning. You can't see it accumulating, hear it forming, or always feel it until it's too late. That's why grounding and bonding procedures are so important. They aren't simply another step in the process—they're engineered controls that safely dissipate static energy before it becomes a hazard.

This observation reminds us that some of our most serious hazards are the ones we can't detect with our senses. Safe work requires more than looking for what's obvious. It means verifying that critical controls, such as grounding, bonding, and static control measures, are in place before work begins. Taking the time to confirm those protections today can prevent a catastrophic event tomorrow.

Hazards

- Static electricity buildup
- Ignition of combustible dust
- Fire or explosion
- Inadequate grounding or bonding
- Dust transfer operations
- Failure to verify critical safety controls

Words of Wisdom

The most dangerous hazards are often the ones you can't see. That's why verification matters.

Pause and Think

- Before beginning a product transfer, how do you verify that grounding and bonding requirements have been met?
- Do you understand when static electricity can become an ignition source?
- What critical safety controls do we rely on that aren't always visible?
- If you can't verify a required control is in place, what should you do?
- How can our crew make verification part of every high-risk task?

Closing Thought

Safe work isn't just about seeing hazards—it's about confirming the protections that control them. When critical safeguards like grounding and bonding are involved, never assume they're in place. Take the time to verify before the work begins.



August 25 — Don't Just Lock It...Verify It

A valve was locked in the open position, the valve was supposed to be locked in the closed position.

Operations and management was notified, the valve was unlocked and closed then re locked.

A lock doesn't make equipment safe...

...it only secures the position it's in.

During a routine work observation, a valve was found locked in the open position when it should have been locked in the closed position to safely isolate the system. Although a lock was installed, the valve was not in the position needed to control the hazardous energy.

It's easy to see a lock and assume everything has been done correctly. However, a lock is only one part of the lockout/tagout process. Before installing a lock, the equipment or valve must first be placed in the correct position to isolate the energy source. Taking a moment to verify the valve's position before locking it can prevent unexpected energy releases and protect everyone working on the system.

This observation is a reminder that effective lockout/tagout isn't measured by the number of locks installed—it's measured by whether hazardous energy has truly been controlled. Slowing down to verify the correct valve position, checking isolation points, and confirming zero energy before work begins are the steps that make the process effective.

Hazards

- Incomplete lockout/tagout
- Unexpected release of hazardous energy
- Failure to isolate equipment
- Line of fire hazards
- Equipment damage
- Serious injury during maintenance

Words of Wisdom

A lock secures the equipment but only verification confirms it's safe.

Pause and Think

- Before locking a valve, how do you verify it's in the correct position?
- Do you rely on seeing a lock, or do you confirm the system has actually been isolated?
- What could happen if a valve is locked in the wrong position?
- How can coworkers help verify critical isolation points before work begins?
- What steps do you take to confirm hazardous energy has been eliminated before starting work?

Closing Thought

Lockout/tagout is more than placing a lock on equipment—it's making sure the equipment is in a safe condition before the lock is ever applied. A few extra seconds spent verifying valve position can prevent an incident that no one saw coming.



August 26 — Don't Wait Until Someone Asks for Help

We were getting ready to set up our retractable from the floor above and looked at the length for reference and realized the retractable was not long enough for our job	We went to warehouse 4 and got the right retractable for the job.
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The safest time to find a problem...

...is before the work begins.

As a crew prepared to work at height, they began setting up a retractable lifeline from the level above. Before anyone climbed or connected to the system, they checked the required length and quickly realized the retractable was too short to provide continuous fall protection for the work they were about to perform.

Instead of trying to "make it work," they stopped the setup, obtained the correct equipment, and only began work after they had the proper fall protection in place.

Many fall incidents don't happen because workers ignore safety—they happen because someone convinces themselves that an existing setup is "close enough." Taking a few extra minutes to verify anchor points, lifeline length, equipment compatibility, and rescue considerations before leaving the ground eliminates unnecessary risk and prevents crews from having to improvise while exposed.

Good planning isn't about slowing the job down—it's about preventing situations where workers have to make unsafe decisions after work has already started.

Hazards

- Inadequate fall protection
- Insufficient lifeline length
- Improper equipment selection
- Working outside the protected area
- Increased fall exposure
- Rushing to make equipment "fit" the job

Words of Wisdom

The best time to discover your fall protection won't work is **before your feet leave the ground.**

Pause and Think

- Have you confirmed your fall protection equipment is appropriate for today's task?
- Will your lifeline allow you to work safely throughout the entire job?
- Are your anchor points, connectors, and equipment compatible?
- If your equipment doesn't fit the job, will you stop and get the correct equipment?
- What can you verify before climbing that could prevent an incident later?

Closing Thought

Fall protection starts long before you clip in. Taking a few minutes to verify you have the right equipment for the job can prevent dangerous shortcuts and ensure everyone goes home safely at the end of the day.



August 27 — Know When to Stop

Employees working in a baghouse compartment on 81' level trying to change out filter bags in extreme heat conditions. Serious potential for heat related illness. Wet bulb temp: 100.4 Actual temp 135.

I stopped the job and told them we'd try in the morning. Despite many cool off breaks, the work wasn't worth their health. No job is.

Sometimes the safest decision...

...is deciding not to do the job today.

A crew was preparing to replace filter bags inside a baghouse compartment on the 81-foot level when conditions became dangerously hot. With a wet bulb temperature of 100.4°F and an actual air temperature of 135°F, the potential for heat exhaustion or heat stroke was extremely high.

Rather than pushing through the work to stay on schedule, the supervisor made the decision to stop the job. The crew was removed from the area, and the work was rescheduled for a safer time.

It can be difficult to pause work when deadlines are approaching, but good safety leadership means recognizing when conditions have changed beyond what can be safely managed. Hydration, breaks, and cooling measures are important controls, but there are times when the environment itself becomes the hazard. Knowing when to stop is just as important as knowing how to work safely.

Making the decision to stop work isn't a sign of weakness or lost productivity—it's a demonstration of sound judgment and a commitment to sending everyone home healthy.

Hazards

- Heat exhaustion
- Heat stroke
- Dehydration
- Fatigue and impaired decision making
- High wet bulb temperatures
- Reduced physical performance

Words of Wisdom

Good judgment isn't knowing how much you can endure—it's knowing when it's time to stop.

Pause and Think

- Are today's weather and work conditions increasing your risk of heat illness?
- Have you and your coworkers been drinking water and taking cool-down breaks?
- Do you recognize the early signs of heat stress in yourself and others?
- If conditions become unsafe, would you be willing to stop the job?
- Who on your crew might need someone to speak up on their behalf today?

Closing Thought

The best safety decisions aren't always the easiest ones. Sometimes the most professional thing you can do is recognize that conditions have become too hazardous and stop the work. Jobs can be rescheduled, lives cannot.



August 28 — No PPE...No Work

We were tasked with testing live power on a breaker that was not tripped but appeared to not be energized as the cabinet in the field had no power. The entire MCC is Class 3 arc-flash and requires a 40-cal suit. We could not find this.

We took the time to hunt around the MCC in various cabinets until we found the 160-cal suit inside the general work-bench/storage cabinet. While this is a safe enough area to store the large PPE bag (which will not fit nicely in the normal PPE cabinet) it does create an issue for those unfamiliar with the plant (our normal area is Wet Mill) and need the PPE. Also, I believe that PPE is required to be stored in dedicated PPE cabinets so it is both readily available and not damaged or soiled by other tools and equipment. As it does fit in the normal cabinet it should be kept there until a larger cabinet can be acquired for it.

The absence of power...

...doesn't mean the absence of danger.

A crew was assigned to troubleshoot an electrical issue after discovering a field cabinet had no power. Although the cabinet appeared to be de-energized, the breaker feeding the circuit had not been tripped. Because the work involved an energized Motor Control Center (MCC), the task required a Category 3 Arc Flash suit to safely perform voltage testing.

When the crew realized the required 40-calorie arc flash suit could not be found, they made the right decision—they stopped the job.

Electrical work requires more than technical knowledge. It requires discipline. Equipment that appears to be de-energized can still present significant electrical hazards until it has been properly tested and verified. Just as important, the required PPE must be available before any energized work begins. If one critical piece is missing, the job is not ready to proceed.

Stopping work isn't a delay—it's a demonstration of professionalism and sound judgment. Every employee has the authority and responsibility to pause work until the proper controls are in place.

Hazards

- Arc flash exposure
- Electrical shock
- Assumed de-energized equipment
- Missing required PPE
- Inadequate job preparation
- Serious burn injuries

Words of Wisdom

The safest electrical work begins with verification—not assumptions.

Pause and Think

- Do you verify electrical equipment is de-energized before beginning work?
- Is all required arc flash PPE available before energized testing begins?
- If critical PPE is missing, are you willing to stop the job?
- Have you identified all electrical hazards before opening the equipment?
- What other critical safety equipment should be verified before starting work?

Closing Thought

Every electrical task starts with one simple question: **"Do we have everything we need to perform this safely?"** If the answer is no, the right decision is to stop, get the proper equipment, and then proceed. No schedule or task is worth bypassing the protections designed to keep us safe.



August 31 — Don't Assume the Inspection Was Done

When I went to get the sky track and do its inspection, I noticed that no one had filled one out for this week. I did notice that others had been operating it the day before by 2 different contractors.

So went and got a new inspection sheet and inspected and filled out the sheet. There is a reason this needs to be done daily and that helps prevent failure in the equipment.

Just because someone used it...

...doesn't mean it's ready to use.

Before operating a SkyTrak, an employee went to perform the required pre-use inspection and noticed that the weekly inspection had not been completed. Even more concerning, the equipment had already been used the previous day by two different contractors without anyone documenting the required inspection.

It's easy to assume that because equipment has been operating, someone else has already completed the inspection. That assumption can allow mechanical defects, safety system failures, or other hazards to go unnoticed. Inspections aren't simply paperwork—they're an opportunity to identify problems before they result in equipment damage or serious injury.

The employee did exactly what we expect. Rather than assuming everything was acceptable, they verified the inspection status before putting the equipment into service. That simple act of stopping to check prevented the possibility of operating equipment that had not been properly inspected.

Hazards

- Operating uninspected equipment
- Mechanical failures
- Equipment malfunction
- Missing documentation
- Complacency and assumptions
- Potential struck by or caught between incidents

Words of Wisdom

Never let someone else's assumption become your risk.

Pause and Think

- Do you complete and document required inspections before operating equipment?
- Have you ever assumed someone else already performed an inspection?
- What could happen if a defect goes unnoticed because an inspection was skipped?
- Are you verifying equipment is safe, or simply trusting that it is?
- What responsibility do we each have before putting equipment into service?

Closing Thought

Every inspection is an opportunity to prevent an incident. Don't assume the person before you completed the inspection or noticed a problem. Take ownership, verify the equipment is safe, and document the inspection before putting it into service.