

City of Niceville
Safety Committee Update - January 2012

Employee Responsibility for Safety. Today is about you. We can talk about working safely and what procedures to follow until we're blue in the face. But until you understand the need for working safely, until you are willing to be responsible for your safety, it doesn't mean a whole lot. Our real motive is simple. We care about each and every one of you and will do what is necessary to prevent you from being injured.

However, keeping our workplace safe takes input from everyone. Management, supervisor, and all of you have to come together on this issue, or we're in trouble. For example, upper management has to approve the purchase of safe equipment. Supervisors have to ensure that each of you knows how to use that equipment safely. Then it's up to you to follow through and use the equipment as you were trained. If any one part of this chain fails, accidents are going to happen and people are going to get hurt.

I. Responsibility Number One - Recognize Hazards. At the core of your safety responsibilities lies the task of recognizing safety and health hazards. In order to do that, you must first understand what constitutes a hazard. Extreme hazards are often obvious. Our hopes are that you won't find too many of those around here. There are, however, more subtle hazards that won't jump up and bite you. As a result of your safety training and meetings, some things may come to mind. For example, a machine may not be easy to lock out. Common practice may be to use a tag. This is a potential hazard and should be discussed. Maybe something can be changed to make it easier to use a lock. Other subtle hazards include such things as frayed electrical cords, a loose machine guard, a cluttered aisle, or maybe something that just doesn't look right.

II. Responsibility Number Two - Report Hazards. A big part of recognizing hazards is using your instincts. Nobody knows your jobs as well as you do, so we're counting on you to let us know about possible problems. Beyond recognizing hazards, you have to correct them or report them to someone who can.

Additional Employee Responsibilities - Good Housekeeping is a major part of keeping your work area safe. For example, you should take a few minutes each day to ensure that aisles, hallways, and stairways in your work area are not obstructed. If boxes, equipment, or anything else is left to pile up, you have a tripping hazard on your hands. **Keep Thinking.** Even if you're doing your job safely and you are avoiding hazards, there are often even better ways to work safely. If you have ideas for improving the safety of your job or that of co-workers, share them.

Conclusion - While nothing we do can completely eliminate the threat of an incident, we can work together to improve our odds. As said many times, this must be a real team effort and were counting on input from all of you. Let's keep communicating and continue to improve safety.

Safety is Job #1

Wes Lassiter, Safety Director