

Toolbox Talk

Dangerous Shortcuts

There are many ways to get hurt while using construction tools. Could be machine or material failure, could be other people around us, could just be a dangerous task. But an overwhelming majority of injuries and incidents happen because of shortcuts. Your company could have every piece of PPE and safeguard available and the rules typed out on a big poster, but how many times does the “short cut” take over?

Excuses for the “Easy Way”

You tend to hear a lot of reasons (a.k.a excuses) when you ask an injured person why they didn’t perform the task the right way.

- “We were trying to get out of here, it was the last quick cut I noticed as we were cleaning up”
- “All that safety nonsens and rules are unrealistic for this job, I just get it done”
- “I’ve been doing it this way for years”
- “It only takes 2 seconds with that saw, I wasn't about to walk back to the truck for the other one”

I would bet all four of those excuses you have either heard or said yourself in the past. We are all guilty of it at some point, at work or around the house. All of those excuses have a common theme though, it always comes down to time and getting it done. Trips to urgent care or the first aid station certainly don't save any time.

Would you Rather

You know your house better than anyone. If you wake up in the middle of the night to go to the bathroom, would you rather:

- a) Walk through your house in the dark, bang your knee on the table, dog barked and woke a kid up, and you stepped on three legos. You finally get back to bed in pain and mad.

-or-

- b) Turn the lamp on, walk through the house without concern or issue, back in bed in 3 min.

It’s an easy answer. So why would we treat a known dangerous task any differently? The hazard doesn’t stop just because you are leaving in 3 minutes, gravity doesn’t shut off because your task will only take a second.

Summary

Keeping yourself and your coworkers safe is just good business. There are a lot of direct costs associated with worker injuries, like insurance claims, new PPE, replacing material or equipment. Indirectly, carelessness and shortcuts can lose future business for you. Imagine working in an occupied home and 3 of your 4 guys get hurt throughout the day, is that customer going to refer you after bleeding all over their house?