



### **SORT Your Way to a Safer Work Environment Message**

There is an endless number of acronyms when talking about safety. The acronym S.O.R.T. is a tool that can help remind us to take steps to address hazards and create a safe work environment. S.O.R.T stands for Stop, Observe, Recognize, and Take Ownership.

- 1. Stop-** It is necessary to take time not only at the beginning of the work shift to evaluate both the work area and equipment for hazards, but also as conditions change. When we are rushed, we miss the small details that matter. Anytime conditions change or things are not going as planned, stop work and evaluate what needs to be done to correct the situation.
- 2. Observe-** Take time to evaluate the environment around you. How are weather conditions, lighting, and temperature at the work area? Are the needed personnel and tools in the work area ready to go? Has all equipment been thoroughly inspected prior to starting the work task?
- 3. Recognize-** Once you have stopped and observed the work area what hazards do you see? Your ability to recognize hazards comes down to utilizing training, safety meetings, company policies, lessons learned, safety shares, and past experiences.
- 4. Take Ownership-** Ownership is the most important part of the process. Once you recognize hazards or potential issues while on the job, own them. See through that they get properly corrected in a timely manner. It is easy to just walk past an issue and think that it is not your problem. Any hazard on the job is your problem.

### **Summary**

While these four steps are very basic, it is easy to skip some of them and just go through the motions due to complacency or time restrictions when at work. We often complete many of the same work tasks in the same way every day. This makes it easy to fall into a trap of having blinders on to hazards that could lead to an injury. Use the S.O.R.T. tool to remind yourself to take the time to really evaluate your work area for hazards and to take ownership of them.