



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



Which Safeguard Makes the Difference? (Safety Message)

Every day the word “safety” is sung by safety managers, supervisors, and clients of projects throughout the world as the workday begins. At the same time, there are many employees who are tired of the constant barrage of safety discussions, rules, procedures, paperwork, inspections, etc. While safety can get repetitive at times and seem excessive, it is for good reason.

There are many safeguards we put into place every single day for a single hazard and many more for all of the other hazards that we face. Oftentimes, we cannot “see” or know what exactly prevents an incident from occurring. This is because injuries and incidents are prevented without any indication something would have occurred since the safeguards are in place during a work task.

Stopping Work

A prime example of a best practice that is effective but often times does not equate to knowing whether or not an incident was prevented is stopping work to address a hazard. For example, you see a new employee repeatedly struggle with picking up heavy boxes that a forklift operator has been setting down on the floor. Having more experience with the task, you stop the employee and have him move to an area where the forklift operator can safely set the boxes on an elevated surface. This allows the employee to pick up the boxes with the correct posture and without straining.

These kinds of stop-work situations occur all the time in a variety of forms, but many times they do not occur right before an obvious incident is about to happen. Because of this, you do not know if what you did prevented an injury that day or in the future. If the stop-work situation was you shouting to the forklift operator to stop before he reversed off of a ledge of a loading dock you know that you most likely just stopped a serious incident from occurring. Most often the stop-work situations look more like the first example of lifting boxes and it is never known for sure if an injury was prevented or not.

It is not just stop-work situations that can make the difference in preventing an incident. Literally, any single safeguard could be the one that makes the difference

Discussion point:

-What is an example of a safeguard that can prevent an incident without any indication something could have occurred?