



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members



The Significance of Critical Steps at the Work Site Safety Message

A “critical step” is an action that can trigger immediate, irreversible harm to people and assets if it is improperly performed. Such a step occurs in our industry whenever an action involves a substantial transfer of energy, movement of weight, or transference of something else that could cause or result in harm to a person or asset.

Routine vs. Critical

Detecting the difference between routine steps versus critical steps works similarly to detecting anomalies at the work site. A step can be routine, but a routine step can also become a critical step. For instance, how about wearing your seat belt? That’s an important routine step you take whenever you get inside a vehicle, right? But if you end up crashing your vehicle into a tree during your drive, fastening your seat belt before starting the engine just became the most critical step you’ve taken recently.

Let’s take that example a bit further. Is walking something you would normally put on your job briefing as a critical step? No, but what if you only had icy swamp mats to walk on throughout your entire work site? You would expect that slips and falls could occur, and that extra attention while walking would be necessary. So, how should you respond to the prospect of having to walk and work on icy swamp mats? Use extra caution and ask for Yaktrax or a similar traction system – because the simple act of safely walking around the site has been elevated from a routine activity to a critical one.