



Safety Message of the Day for IMEA Members

Half-Attention Mindset Safety Message

The human imagination leads to invention, invention leads to innovation, and innovation leads to progress. The brainpower of humanity is why we have space travel, the electric grid and a cellphone in nearly every pocket. Who knows what we will come up with in another 50 years.

Humans also have an amazing capacity for making ourselves believe things that may or may not be true. Self-awareness and rationalization are two of the most fundamental differences between humans and other animals.

Because humans are capable of so much, we sometimes think we can do things that we simply cannot. One issue that we confront every day is the categories of complacency and risk tolerance. By now, most if not all of us know what it means to be complacent; essentially, it means that a person's full attention or care is not being applied to the task they are performing.

Each of us is complacent every day. For some of us, we pull into our driveway after work, not remembering much of the drive home because our brain was on autopilot. Others try to perform additional tasks while driving a car, such as talking on the phone, eating food or applying makeup. Sometimes we're checking our child's homework while cutting up veggies for dinner. Humans rationalize these actions as multitasking, but – spoiler alert – multitasking is not something humans can actually do. Your brain is not focused on two things at once but rather one thing at a time for a short period of time.

Multitasking is the “half-attention mindset.” In our line of work, this mindset is incredibly and increasingly hazardous.

