Complacency Lead to Accidents

Introduction:

Accidents can happen at any time. It is important that all workers focus on the task they are performing. Awareness is the ability to understand something exists, and a concept that should be part of each employee's mindset while on the job. When one loses that focus, there is a loss of self-confidence and, when combined with a lack of awareness, the probability of injury increases, and much of this is due to complacency. Injuries are often a result of workers' actions, such as taking short-cuts or unnecessary risks, rushing, frustration, or fatigue. These tips are simple, basic, and might seem unnecessary but, here's the deal: they help!

Discussion Points:

- What is complacency?
- Complacency and awareness
- How does complacency contribute to accidents in the workplace?
- Companies should implement a Safety Program
- Training, safety meetings, uses of safety equipment and PPE

Discussion:

Often workers do not realize their complacency until an incident occurs. When working a routine or repetitive task, they become comfortable, and tend to go on "auto-pilot" and stop paying attention to what they are doing. On some occasions this may not seem to be a big issue but, depending on working conditions and the environment, such as working at heights or driving a vehicle or heavy equipment, it only takes one mistake to become a victim of a fatal fall or a serious accident. According to OSHA, complacency is one of the most common causes of injury, even at OSHA-compliant companies. In actuality, complacency can become a safety issue, because there are no OSHA regulations that apply specifically to it.

Companies should implement Safety Programs and provide Safety Training on a regular basis. Many companies start each day with a short session such as a Toolbox Talk to remind managers and workers that their safety and well-being is extremely important. Training employees to multi-task or cross-training and providing opportunity to perform various tasks may help keep workers from becoming complacent. Workers should commit to follow all required procedures, and use all safety equipment and PPE provided by the company.

We cannot change what happened last week or yesterday, but we can control how things are done today and tomorrow. It is important to focus on all tasks, all the time, to avoid complacency. This may be done by encouraging employees to perform a daily checklist on equipment and machines, and on procedures for every task.

As always, stay safe out there!