4 Seconds to Safety

Introduction:

Do you find yourself moving from one task to another throughout the day, every day, at work? STOP! Why, you may ask? I have done the task a thousand times; I can do it with my eyes closed. You get caught up in the routine of the day and find yourself daydreaming or thinking about what you will be doing when you get off work. If you move from one task to another without taking time to refocus, you may eventually be injured. Before beginning any task, take a moment to evaluate the work area, and pause for 4 seconds. Look around, see if you can identify any potential hazards, and focus on what you are about to do. This simple act of taking 4 seconds before beginning any task can reduce the probability of injury by more than 90%.

Discussion Points:

- Before beginning any task, take a moment to evaluate the work area
- Pausing for 4 seconds can reduce the probability of injury
- A Job Hazard Analysis identifies potential hazards and reduces injury
- A few seconds today could ensure your tomorrow

Discussion:

"4 Seconds to Safety" is a strategy that was originally used on the Canadian National Railway project to reduce the number of injuries to workers. Even though workers were very familiar with the task at hand, they were not focused, and this resulted in serious injury, including amputations, to the worker or a coworker.

It is most often not the task itself but something you do not anticipate that causes an incident leading to injury. A Job Hazard Analysis, which is a procedure used to identify potential hazards and decrease the risk of injury to workers, can be used to train workers about the hazards associated with tasks. It encourages a worker to pause and think about the dangers associated with a task, greatly reducing the severity and frequency of injury. Stop and refocus before taking the first step onto the ladder, starting the vehicle, pushing the button, or flipping the switch to start a piece of equipment. The decision to take a few seconds today could ensure your tomorrow and keep you and your family from suffering the consequences.

As always, stay safe out there!