

Unsafe Acts in Construction

While unsafe conditions as well as unsafe acts are responsible for accidents, by far the largest percentage of construction work injuries are the result of unsafe acts as compared to those caused by unsafe conditions.

If we review the industry's accident experience over the years, we will find that the reduction in accident rates has occurred as the result of improved physical inspection of the jobs, improved safety-minded supervision, and advances in engineering and design. Yet, in spite of these noteworthy efforts, many accidents—too many—continue to happen each and every year.

It would sometimes appear that people want to hurt themselves, or to be involved in an accident. We find that many workers who are protected by safety devices, remove them or fail to use them. People who are told about hazards seem to ignore the warnings. Well-trained, experienced workers seem to forget what they have learned. Above all, they forget that nothing is as important as safety.

Different people treasure different things. Here, at the University of Arkansas, one of the things that we treasure is the safety of the employees. Just how valuable is that treasure? How much are we willing to spend to get and keep it?? The University spends quite a lot—in terms of dollars, time, and effort—to make sure ours is a safe place to work. But none of that investment in equipment, protective equipment and gear, training and so forth can buy safety for workers whose unsafe acts result in accidents and injuries. For example:

- The safety goggles we provide can't protect the eyes of an employee who leaves those goggles hanging around his neck, or in the crew truck, or in the locker.
- All the toeboards and railings in the world can't guarantee protection from a serious fall for workers indulging in horseplay on a scaffold or around a floor opening.
- Training sessions in how to recognize and guard against chemical hazards won't help a worker who fails to consult the Material Safety Data Sheet, or disregards the warnings on a label

In the long run, it's the time and effort you spend on learning and observing the safety rules that will secure for you the treasure of on-the-job safety, and a safe return to your loved ones at the end of your workday.—**KNOW YOUR JOB, THE SAFETY RULES, AND THE PROPER EQUIPMENT NEEDED TO DO IT RIGHT.**