

This topic is about the broader aspect of safety which touches all areas and can be called Daily Risk or Daily Hazard Assessments.

These are the things we do every day of our lives. Some are just common sense – you don't get out of shower and step on a slippery floor, you first toss down a bathmat. McMaster employees are professionals – you are very good at your jobs and you do them well. We wouldn't think to tell you how to do your jobs, but we can remind you how to be safe and how not to become complacent. You might say to us – I've been doing this job for 20 years and I've done this a thousand times – but our workplace, McMaster, is always changing. We purchase new equipment that might be slightly different, introduce new processes that might be very different, management changes, and new employees are hired, and this introduces changes that may result in accidents.

A machine shop bought a new lathe recently and went about installing the chuck guard, writing SOPs, conducting training, and ensuring users were using the proper PPE and procedures. But they had the machine in operation before installing the chuck guard interlock and while cleaning the chuck with the teeth backed off, a staff member hit a button on the front (similar to all the other older machines) to disengage the power and adjust something. Unfortunately, on this machine, this was the jog button and when he hit it, the shaft spun, and the teeth went flying. Injury was avoided because he followed a steadfast rule of not standing in front of the lathe when operating the power button.

However, steadfast rules aside, complacency (something that we are all guilty of) - not worrying about the interlock ("we installed the guard") and not familiarizing yourself with a new piece of equipment ("I've used these things for years") could have resulted in serious injury to the operator or others nearby. To go back to the point of working here for 20 yrs. and never been hurt – you've lived in your house on your street for over 25 years. You've crossed that street a thousand times and never been hurt but would you do it blindfolded? Of course not, you'll never stop looking before crossing.

We need to remind ourselves and others to do those daily hazard assessments and speak up – talk about safety. Do it in a positive and proactive manner – "hey, wait! You're going to get stuff in your eyes if you do that – here, use my safety glasses". Or, "hold on guys, I'm going to get the supervisor to take a look at this – I don't think it's safe". If we stop talking about safety, then so will you and people will be afraid or intimidated to say something. We will never stop talking about safety.

Look at your job today with fresh eyes and complete those daily risk assessments. Take the time to tape down the extension cords and put on your safety glasses and speak up when you see someone doing something hazardous or creating a hazardous situation. Your actions will have an impact on others, particularly our young workers. We don't want these workers to feel intimidated or afraid to speak up when their safety is at stake. Let's all be leaders in safety.