

SAFETY'S MOST WANTED *Episode II: The Accomplices*

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

INTRODUCTION: A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION: These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to site-specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Questions may be copied and given to participants to stimulate discussion about the program, its safety lessons and universal theme.

INTRODUCTION

"Don't be an accomplice to unsafe acts" is the theme of this second episode of our "Safety's Most Wanted" Series. Our host Tom Clark shines the spotlight on three injury-causing culprits: the prankster horseplay, the "get it done" cowboy and the infectious apathy are each exposed as a source of workplace injury. Through co-worker interviews, incident reenactments and testimony from the culprits themselves, viewers learn how to defeat these safety culprits and maintain a safe workplace. Each of the safety villains in this program require accomplices in order to thrive. The viewer will learn that by refusing to participate in horseplay, not calling on the cowboy to "get it done" and refusing to be infected with someone else's apathy towards safety, we can all help create a safer workplace.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

THE 'GET IT DONE' COWBOY

Method of Operation

- This culprit goes by many names, such as "cowboy," but "the go-to guy" works too. His motto is "let's just get it done."
- He operates best when things start to get hectic, especially when time is critical or people aren't really sure what to do.
- Like electricity and water, human nature tends to look for the path of least resistance, especially when facing a crisis or time crunch. This is when the "cowboy" usually presents himself and many people can't resist the urge to call on him.
- There is usually at least one cowboy at every facility. He's been there so long, he knows how to do every job.
- He also knows every shortcut and every trick to get around the safety rules, save time and get the job done, but like all cowboys and go-to guys, he can't work alone; he needs a group of accomplices to support his activities.
- Another trait of the go-to guy is to turn into a bully when others won't go along with his plan. Either through intimidation or shame, he'll try hard to recruit accomplices for his schemes.

The Cowboy's Accomplices

- Newer workers are usually the first to be convinced of the cowboy's mode of operation. One employee said that the cowboy "seems like he always had a better way to do things and his way seldom included following the safety procedures."

- Other workers all just went along with the cowboy because he'd been there longer than the person who wrote the procedure, so they just did it his way.
- Having one set of rules and procedures for most employees and a different set for the go-to guy is a double standard that can quickly undermine a safety program.
- The cowboy teaches his co-workers that it's okay to ignore safe work practices when needed. All too often, managers and supervisors reinforce his message by calling on him directly or by praising the results of his actions.
- The cowboy says he is amazed how gullible most people are. He doesn't care about the company, the production goals or even saving time; those are just cover stories to help him get what he really wants.
- It's the spotlight and the attention the cowboy craves. He says it feels good "when the engineers and the suits upstairs" have to call on him to a job done. "If I have to risk my life, or yours, to keep that feeling going, well, that's just the way it is," he says.

Get It Done Cowboy Reenactment

A chemical line at the plant was down and a supervisor suggests calling Frank, the "get it done" cowboy to get the line back up. A shaft needed to be replaced on one of the drive motors and Frank decided that if they could "hot swap" it quickly, they could avoid the much longer shut down procedure. They only had 45 minutes before the bypass holding tank filled up. Frank told a forklift operator to lift a motor off its mounts with a chain so Troy could crawl under and remove the damaged shaft parts. The forklift operator objected, knowing this went against procedure, but Frank shouted him down and coerced him into going along. When the operator accidentally hit the mast tilt lever instead of the up lever, the chain slid off the forks and motor fell on Frank and another employee. Frank's leg was severely crushed and the other employee was killed.

Lessons:

- Remember, the cowboy must have accomplices in order to thrive. To stop him, co-workers must refuse to participate in his unsafe activities.
- When the pressure is on and time is short, resist the urge to call on the cowboy "to save the day."
- Most importantly, supervisors and managers must not become accomplices by allowing a double standard to exist when it comes to safety. Safe work practices must be followed by everyone and in all situations.

HORSEPLAY

Method of Operation

- Another culprit is horseplay. He says it's all in good fun, a little prank here, a little joke there, but the punch line is often a lot different than anyone expected.
- Horseplay and teasing seem innocent enough, but the workplace is not the proper environment for fun and games. There are always hazards and dangers lurking nearby.
- Distraction is one of the easiest ways horseplay can injure his victims. When people get caught up in games they don't pay attention to the dangers nearby.
- Even when the pranks seem harmless, it's important to remember that one person's fun is usually bothersome and aggravating to others; having a laugh at someone else's expense often leads to a dangerous escalation.
- Horseplay says it's all fun to him, because he doesn't care if anyone gets hurt. It's all about getting a laugh and feeding off the crowd.

Horseplay Reenactment

Tucker put some grease on a piece of equipment in Lester's work area. When Lester grabbed it, he got grease all over his hand. Several co-workers in the area thought it was hilarious, especially Billy. Publicly embarrassed by the event, Lester plotted his revenge. He decided to rig a compressed air line into a small bin filled with metal filings and hardware parts at Billy's workstation. Although Lester's intention was to create a large mess for Billy to clean up just as he was trying to go home, Billy was hit in the eyes with metal filings when Lester turned on the air. He had to go to the hospital to be treated for his injuries.

Lessons:

- The victim of pranks and horseplay often feels the need to "get back" at the person picking on them. Sometimes it's good-natured one-upmanship between friends, while other times the victim feels a visceral need to get even, especially when they've been embarrassed.
- Nothing about horseplay makes sense; that's why it is so dangerous. There are no rules, there is no way to win and most people don't know when to stop or think about the possible consequences of their actions.
- Even when friends are just playing around, the uncontrolled nature of horseplay combined with an industrial or construction environment often leads to disaster.

Horseplay's Accomplices

- To make your workplace free from horseplay, it must be free of accomplices. Don't enable horseplay by being part of the crowd; make it known that you don't think it's funny.
- If you witness unsafe behaviors such as horseplay, report it right away before someone gets hurt. Also, be supportive of those who speak up to try and create a safer workplace.
- Horseplay just can't stand up to a hostile crowd. Give him the hook by refusing to participate in his dangerous routine.

APATHY

Method of Operation

- Apathy likes her victims to think of her as a loner. She is seen as someone who keeps to herself and really doesn't get involved with other people, certainly not their safety; she simply doesn't care.
- While a company's safety culture depends on people who will look out for themselves and for others, this is when apathy tries to gain a foothold. Her method of operation is to fan the flames of discontent.
- Apathy despises all the do-gooders looking to be helpful when it comes to safety. She says let someone else worry about that; she'll do her job, you do yours.
- Apathy undermines the safety efforts of others by her lack of participation and she also belittles the safety program with negative comments.
- Once apathy gets established, she slowly begins to spread, even within the best of safety programs. When people get mad at her, they take it out on the safety program, causing apathy's impact snowball.
- Apathy works really hard at infecting experienced workers and supervisors. She says enforcing safety rules and managing a safety program is a thankless job, so why bother?

Apathy Reenactment I

One day, Freddy walked by the maintenance shop and saw it was a mess. He also saw Mandy, known for her apathy, walk by and do nothing. He decided she was right, let somebody else worry about it and left. Other employees joined Freddy, not wanting to be the only ones stuck with a housekeeping project and vacated the area. When a material

handler then came into the shop to get a pallet of parts, he got caught between his pallet truck and some materials that had been left in the walkway. He fell to the floor and was severely injured.

Apathy Reenactment II

A supervisor had been in meetings all day and had just been “snapped at” by a maintenance worker not wanting to wear his fall protection when he discovered an employee riding a large pipe being moved by a crane. Although he was shocked by this sight, he neglected to put a stop to this major safety violation and decided to speak with the employee at a later time. Fortunately, the employee arrived safely at his destination, but another employee witnessed the supervisor’s apathy toward the unsafe act and tried it himself later that day. He was killed when he fell off the pipe to the plant floor.

Lessons:

- Overcome apathy by refusing to let other people’s poor attitude affect your safety choices.
- If a co-worker is not fully committed to the safety effort, talk to your supervisor about it rather than give up your own commitment.
- Apathy cannot spread without willing accomplices. When you feel put upon and tired of your safety efforts, this is the time to be on high alert against apathy’s infection.
- When surrounded by co-workers and supervisors committed to safety, apathy just can’t survive.

SUMMARY

- In this episode, we have spotlighted three of Safety’s Most Wanted injury instigators. Each of these villains, the “get it done” cowboy, the comedian horseplay and the infectious apathy has similar modes of operation.
- They require either the approval, participation or at least the tolerance of a group of workplace accomplices. This is what also makes them easily defeated; they can’t exist in a workplace culture where everyone is committed to employee health and safety.
- Keep your eyes out for these heartless villains and don’t be an accomplice. Do your part to make sure they don’t take up residence in your workplace.

PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING OR TRAINING SESSION

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape or DVD. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on health and safety and how each person must be an active member of the safety team.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Copy the discussion questions included in this Leader's Guide and hand them out to the program participants.

Make an attendance record and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record written documentation of the training performed.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.

Place or secure extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to encourage employees not to be accomplices to the unsafe acts of three injury causing culprits: the "get it done" cowboy, horseplay and apathy.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Lead discussions about the "get it done cowboy," horseplay and apathy and how they could affect employees at your facility.

Copy the discussion questions included in this Leader's Guide and allow the participants to review them before discussing the program.

SAFETY'S MOST WANTED:
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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of the jobs at this facility that a “get it done” cowboy may encourage you to go along with his plan to do it his way? How would you respond if he tried to coerce you to do a job that was unsafe?
2. If you were the victim of a prank or horseplay, how would you respond and why?
3. If you witnessed some of your co-workers engaging in some lighthearted horseplay that was seemingly harmless, would you confront them or notify your supervisor? Why or why not?
4. When you see a co-worker taking a shortcut or performing a job that isn't safe, do you speak up about it? Why or why not?
5. Have you ever allowed a co-worker's poor attitude affect your safety choices? What can you do to prevent the apathy of others from influencing your safe work habits?
- 6.. Have you ever seen a supervisor praise a “get it done” cowboy or look the other way when a co-worker was committing an unsafe act? If so, how did that make you feel?
7. What are some of the things you feel that you can do to keep from becoming an accomplice to the cowboy, horseplay and apathy?