

SAFETY TIP OF THE WEEK

ZERO HARM

Short Cuts are Risky Business

For one thing, a shortcut is something you should not take. A shortcut is a quicker or easier way to do a job without following a safe work procedure required to prevent injury. A shortcut can easily lead to serious injury or fatality -- not necessarily every time, but sometimes. Is it this time? That's the big question.

Shortcuts such as these have killed or badly injured workers:

- Walking through a traffic area in the yard instead of sticking to the pedestrian routes.
- Reaching into the copier to clear a jam without reading safety instructions.
- Unjamming a table saw without shutting down and locking out the equipment.
- Using the chainsaw just one time on that broken branch.
- Failing to put on a seatbelt for a short motor vehicle trip.
- Standing on a top rung to reach a window being washed instead of moving and securing the ladder
- “Bunnyhopping” a ladder instead of climbing down and shifting it.
- Using the wrong tool for the job because you don't have the patience to stop and retrieve the appropriate one.
- Standing on a chair or some other structure to move between levels or retrieve something.
- Using a chemical without checking the label and Material Safety Data Sheet for precautions, instructions and PPE.
- Passing on your own dangerous shortcuts to a new employee without even realizing it. You'll both be in the dark, until he hurts himself doing what you taught him.
- Using that old warn extension cord one more time before we get a new one.

It's tempting to take a shortcut, especially if you are in a hurry, frustrated, fatigued, or if you don't feel like making the effort to do something right. You may be new on the job and not understand the hazards, or you may be an experienced worker who has used the shortcut before without anyone getting hurt. However, it is always worth taking the time and effort to do the job correctly, with all the recommended safeguards. Don't believe me? Just ask your supervisor.

