

MAFES Dawg Tracks

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MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™
MS AGRICULTURAL AND
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

Safety Tips: The Ten Most Important Safety Lessons

Practicing safety is simple, unless we want to make it difficult! None of us want to get hurt or see a fellow employee hurt. Our endeavor is to see that every employee, including yourself, can go home every night unscathed and unhurt. We want for everyone to go home each night just as they came in to work that morning.

According to a statement made by Mr. Albert Einstein, *"It can scarcely be denied that the supreme goal of all theory is to make irreducible basis elements as simple and as few as possible without having to surrender the adequate representation of a single datum of experience."* Reducing that to Mississippi lingo and according to Darrell Royal, former football coach of Mississippi State and the University of Texas – "K.I.S.S. – Keep It Simple Stupid."

Mrs. Pam Walaski, a lady of great knowledge, wrote in "Heath and Best Safety Practices," her rendition of the ten most important safety lessons, learned from years of working in safety and environmental health:

- ✓ **There is no such thing as an accident-**
An accident is the failure of a company's safety management system. Stop looking for excuses and someone to blame. When we accept that accidents have no cause (or we can't find the cause, don't have the time to figure the cause, or can't afford to correct the cause once we figure it out), we are assuring that it can happen again.
- ✓ **Let's have a great big group up hug-**
Our co-workers aren't our family - and maybe not even our friends or acquaintances - but that doesn't mean that we shouldn't care about their safety. We all should watch out for each other on all our work projects and especially on all new employees.
- ✓ **WMP-MC-**
The phrase "safety culture" has gotten a lot of publicity lately. What does having a strong "safety culture" mean and what does it mean if we don't have one? Remember-the analogy- **WMP - MC - "What management permits-management condones."** In other words- an effective safety program starts at the top of the organization. It involves management's commitment and total support.
- ✓ **You're being watched-**
Like it or not, all management levels are role models for safe work practices. If we do it right, the employees will "follow suit" and do it too. If not, they probably won't either. Management at all levels need to be aware of good safety practices. Sometimes it isn't easy to do this.

- ✓ **Listen up-**
Keep the safety communication line open! We should always listen to our employees- not only for safety issues but for all problems or issues that they may have. They are out there on the job everyday working and know firsthand the problems and issues that they face. They also, by this fact, can offer ideas for corrective actions. We shouldn't let the "suggestion box" or their opinions become a "black hole" or a "file 13." Explore the problem and take corrective action.
- ✓ **Failing to plan is – planning to fail-**
Planning ahead saves time, and over the long haul, reduces the chances of dangerous mistakes. Find the tool that works for you such as toolbox talks, newsletters, etc. and use them.
- ✓ **Look before you leap-**
Always pay attention to your surroundings. More people get hurt on work projects due to slips, trips and falls than on any other type of work project.
- ✓ **Your Momma doesn't work here - neither does your Daddy-**
Clean up after you finish a work project. Better still, try to clean up as you work on the project. Take care of minor repairs and problems. Don't wait on someone else to do them.
- ✓ **Common sense isn't so common (Voltaire)-**
Common- "Widespread general knowledge falling below ordinary standards."
Sense – "Definite but often vague awareness or past impressions."
"Common sense is based on life's experiences and values earned," according to Mrs. Walaski's perception. These won't be the same as ours. Relying on her perception might be a little risky; one that we might not want to base our safety program on.
- ✓ **Priorities change: Values don't-**
What are the safety values of our university? There is an old saying, "What gets measured-gets done." We need to be sure that we don't buy into the "safety flavor of the month." Everybody is busy. We need to be assured that the important tasks or projects get to the top of management's list by measuring the parameters of them and not disregarding the safety factors.

Another point, not included in Mrs. Walaski's perception, is that we should encourage all employees to remember that no question is irrelevant- the one not asked is the one that you need to ask and might just save a potential problem, safety-wise or otherwise.