Off-the-Job – SAFETY CHECKLIST



PREAMBLE

How safety-conscious are you when you are off-the-job? You can do a lot to increase your safety just by paying attention to your attitude and habits. You may be relaxing, but you can still relax safely!

Many of the same dangers in the workplace also exist away from the office… slips and falls at home, driving accidents, or not using personal protective equipment while playing sports. The danger is that we don't apply the same seriousness to safety when we're not at work.

Remember awareness is a 24/7/365 mindset. There's no clocking out! The practice of using a lock and tag to isolate power from a piece of manufacturing equipment is not uncommon at work, but you may not realize that more injuries from failure of locking out happen at home and they can be prevented.

The Importance Of Off-The-Job Safety

Each year, the number of workers killed in off-the-job accidents exceeds the number killed at work by a multiple of more than 10. And as many as 15 million workers are injured off-the-job each year. This means your employees have a greater chance of being injured or killed at home or during leisure activities than while at work.

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Some managers believe that what happens to workers when they are not working is none of their business – but it is. Off-the-job injuries that result in lost time by your workers directly impacts your operations. Just think about it for a minute. What if your superintendent or project manager was injured performing some project around the house and would not be able to return to work for three or four days – even worse three or four weeks or months? How would that affect your business? What if your best operator, welder or mechanic was out of work for several weeks? The fact is that lost work time due to an accident on or off the job affects companies in many ways that may or may not be obvious.

Any accident or illness can affect production, work quality, job costs and even morale. Every time someone is out of work, especially an experienced worker, for any period of time that was not planned for, efficiency and production are affected. It does not matter where the accident happened; the crew is still short a supervisor or worker until the employee returns or is replaced – someone has to pick up the slack.

There are also costs associated with worker injuries. These arise from the need to train a worker who is replacing an injured one, the reduced productivity of a once well-organized crew adjusting to a replacement crew member, overtime to make up for that lost productivity and possibly project delays and penalties. A severe off-the-job injury or illness can increase the company's medical and disability insurance premiums.

Safety off the job is as important to your company as it is to your employees and their families. If your company has an effective safety program in place, it does not take much to go one step further to include off-the-job safety information and training. In fact, providing this important information is often only a matter of adding a few lines to a discussion about safety or a training program. When Toolbox Talks and safety training sessions include off-the-job safety messages, they help employees think about accident prevention beyond the workplace. Those messages can be used to remind workers that injuries suffered off the job can affect them just as much as one sustained at work. Hopefully, they will carry the message with them, share it with their families and friends and apply what they have learned about safety at home and elsewhere.

Employees respect managers who show their concern for workers' well-being both on and off the job. Urging employees to apply the same safety practices at home and during leisure activities as they do at work promotes not only their own health and welfare, but that of their family members, who will follow the example the employees are setting. By reminding workers that safety is an integral part of their life both on and off the job, you are sending a message that their safety – and that of their families – is important to you and the company.

When discussing safety practices that are followed at work, don't hesitate to extend the conversation beyond the jobsite and try to show that the company is sincerely concerned for workers' safety both on and off the job. Encourage foremen and supervisors to be advocates of on- and off-the-job safety, because they may hear more than you will about what is going on in an employee's life at home.