

Avoid Harmful Horseplay

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

Horseplay is rough play, practical jokes and other physical humor which can endanger workers. Horseplay at work is also linked to bullying behavior. In those cases, jokes are actually harassment targeting new workers or others who, in someone's opinion, do not fit in with the crew.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

A victim's explosive anger is one danger arising from horseplay. Even if a certain prank doesn't cause physical injury, it could bring dangerous retaliation. Workplace "joking" has resulted in fatally stabbed jokers. And even the most light-hearted horseplay can distract workers for a second and cost someone a serious injury. Every year people are injured during horseplay. "I'm sorry" can't bring back a finger, an eye or a life.

EXAMPLES

Vandalism is closely linked to horseplay as destruction of property for a prank or more malicious reasons. Consider the traffic fatality in which three innocent people were killed when the vehicle in which they were riding smashed into a transport truck. Why? Pranksters had deliberately knocked down a stop sign at a rural intersection. Whoever did that probably thought they were being pretty funny at the time.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Think of victim

Be aware of how practical jokes affect the victim – endangering, frightening and belittling him or her. Treat others how you would like to be treated.

Don't play

If someone plays a practical joke on you or invites you to join in horseplay, tell him it's dangerous and not fitting in the workplace. Remember that any workplace tool can be a lethal weapon if misused, even in fun. Don't engage in this type of activity.

Discourage it

Discourage your fellow workers from "acting up" on the job.

Train early

Help influence and train new and young workers to avoid horseplay and stick to the rules. Warn them that there may be times when the same-old, same-old atmosphere at work seems to call for a little "lightening up," but the cost of following that temptation can quickly become heartbreakingly heavy.

No audience

Ignoring horseplay is sometimes a smart way to discourage it.

Report it

The best way to stop horseplay, however, is to report any worker who refuses to listen to reason about practical jokes and horseplay. It may cost that person a job, but it could save a life.

FINAL WORD

It makes no difference what the motive is for horseplay – boredom, humor or deliberate cruelty. The result is the same: Horseplay hurts.

QUIZ

1. Some horseplay in workplaces is linked to bullying.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
2. If a prank doesn't cause physical injury, it's safe to do.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
3. Any workplace tool can be a lethal weapon if misused.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
4. Ignoring horseplay can be a smart way to discourage it.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False
5. The best way to stop horseplay is to report it.
 - ☐ True
 - ☐ False

AFTER THE TALK- CHECKLIST

- ### PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID

NAME: _____

DATE: _____

TASK(S): _____

DATE: _____

TOPIC(S): _____

DATE: _____

OTHER (DESCRIBE): _____

MEETING DATE: _____

LOCATION: _____

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

1. True 2. False 3. True 4. True 5. True

ATTENDANCE

[illegible]

INSTRUCTOR: _____ **DATE:** _____

SAFETY TALK: _____