DON'T MESS WITH AN INCIDENT SCENE

WHAT'S AT STAKE?

When an error is committed in the workplace and it leads to a worker's injury or death, people who believe they could face blame may panic and be tempted to tamper with the accident scene before a safety investigator arrives.

Tampering can include removing evidence such as objects or documents from an accident scene or adding safety-related items that were not there when the worker was killed or injured.

WHAT'S THE DANGER?

Not only is tampering with the scene of an accident or incident morally wrong, it can land workers in serious legal trouble if the fraud is discovered. And the likelihood of a cover-up being sniffed out by someone who has years of experience investigating workplace injuries and fatalities is high.

EXAMPLE

A construction superintendent was sentenced to six months of house arrest and three years' probation after being convicted of trying to cover up the circumstances surrounding a worker's fatal fall from a steep roof. He was found to have directed another person to put fall arrest equipment on the roof to make it appear as though equipment was in place at the time of the fall.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

There are obviously situations in which workers must disturb an injury or fatality scene, including these:

- You are trying to save a worker's life or relieve someone's suffering following an incident.
- You are trying to prevent serious damage or loss of property following an incident.
- You are attempting to maintain access to essential services such as water, gas or electricity.

Otherwise, you should not be entering the scene unless you have authority to do so or the investigator has concluded his or her examination of the area and given permission for workers to regain access.

Tampering with an accident/incident scene to make it look as though conditions were compliant with safety regulations is extremely risky, not to mention foolish. Safety investigators can interview witnesses, including victims who survive their injuries and quickly determine that you aren't telling the truth.

A lie can snowball and if you continue the deception you can be caught under a legal avalanche. Don't become part of any cover-up if a co-worker asks you to lie for him or her. You've got nothing to gain and everything to lose, including your job and possibly, your freedom.

If you are first on the scene of a workplace accident, help the injured person and call for emergency medical help if required.

As soon as possible, contact your supervisor and report the incident. If you witnessed what happened, write down details of what you saw and heard. Your observations will help investigators determine what happened and how to prevent a similar incident in future.

FINAL WORD

When people have committed errors that could land them in trouble with their employer or legal authorities, they may be tempted to cover up details of what happened. But coming clean on what occurred can save workers months or years of anxiety and worry and ensure that other employees won't face similar hazards in the future.

QUIZ

- Cleaning up the scene of a workplace injury or fatality before investigators arrive could result in serious legal trouble for the person(s) who did it.
 - True
 - False
- 2. If you witness a workplace incident, you'll surely remember all the details there's no need to write down what happened.
 - True
 - False

3.	It's acceptable to disturb an injury or fatality scene under what conditions?		
4.	If you are first of the scene of a workplace injury or fatality, what two things should you do?		

WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

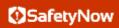
There's been a serious injury at our workplace and a co-worker and good friend has asked you to lie about what happened because he'll probably lose his job. Things are tight financially for your co-worker and he needs to keep working.

What would you do?

BEFORE THE TALK - TIPS	AFTER THE TALK- CHECKLIST
 Pass around the attendance sheets. Pass around the attendance sheets. Safe work practices and policies passed around pertaining to the conduct of accident/incident investigations at your work site. Other: Are your workers trained on what to do if they are the first ones on an incident scene? If you have any training gaps in this area, plan to address them quickly. Does your workplace's safety culture attach blame and negative consequences to near misses, incidents that damage property and injuries? If so, you shouldn't be surprised when people try to cover up those mistakes. Share with your workers a story about a company getting into huge trouble for altering accident scenes and being untruthful to investigators. Are you confident that you could preserve the integrity of an accident scene in the midst of chaos? Are you clear in your mind how you would do that? NOTES 	PROVIDED FOLLOW-UP TO WORKERS THAT DID POORLY ON THE QUIZ NAME:

ANSWERS:

- **1.** True
- 2. False
- **3.** Save workers life, prevent serious damage or loss of property, maintain access to essential services
- **4.** 4. Help the injured person, call for emergency medical help.



ATTENDANCE					
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INSTRUCTOR	DATE:				
	DATE.				
SAFETY TALK:					