

Safety Bulletin



Complacency in HSE

Who would have thought that you can do your job so well that it could become a safety issue?

Even the most competent teams who perform excellent work can begin to see issues show up in the form of small mistakes, or memory and judgement lapses.

The more someone does a job or a task, the more likely a routine or rhythm is created. It's in these routines that complacency can develop.

To effectively combat complacency in HSE:

1. **Get everyone on it:** Complacency takes a team effort to eradicate. If everyone believes in not getting hurt, then they must do whatever is necessary to achieve that result. This means being, and remaining focused on the warning signs that could lead to an incident. Besides physical hazards, you are also looking for mental hazards (fatigue, rushing, repetitive tasks, monotonous tasks). Get into the habit of checking in with each other.
2. **Marketing:** When it comes to complacency, the message must be '*our greatest threat to ourselves*'. Processes and procedures mitigate of the vast majority of physical threats but what is left to address is the mental threat. You can repeat processes to train yourself to complete the tasks correctly, but without checking in on the mental threats we can easily slip into an unconscious auto-pilot state leaving us vulnerable to risk.
3. **Supervisors Must Connect:** The supervisor is the first line of defense when it comes to complacency. They need to be able to tell whether their crew members are distracted or are performing repetitive/monotonous tasks and when to intervene to challenge the threat of complacency. Furthermore, the employees need to be truthful about their status in order to combat complacency.
4. **Targets, Achievements and Celebrating Success:** Nothing is quite as motivating as success. When employees succeed, they want to do it again. Setting up small achievable goals and targets to hit can build motivation, but also keep the focus on the task at hand. Start small – for example, set up a 2-hour increments, and then at break time, celebrate the success. Momentum is built when targets get knocked down and the team is moving forward together.

To win the battle, engage the crews to look for signs of complacency. Task them with finding solutions to overcome it. **Solutions developed at the front-line gets ownership by the front-line.**