

A MILLION EXCUSES FOR NOT WORKING SAFELY

OBJECTIVES

- Staff will learn common excuses for not working safely and the reasons why those excuses are inaccurate and unacceptable

Employees have a million excuses or reasons for not working safely. None of which are accurate, legitimate, or reasonable. On average 5,000 employees die and over 3.7 million employees suffer disabling injuries every year. Most of these employees or at least the fortunate ones that live offer the poorest excuses.

Common excuses for not using personal protective equipment (PPE):

- My PPE is worn out.
- I don't have time to get my PPE; I'm in a hurry.
- My PPE is uncomfortable.
- I normally wear it, just not all the time.
- I'm only going to need it for a second.
- I've never worn it and I am okay.

These are poor examples of excuses for not wearing required PPE. There is no valid excuse for not wearing PPE in every situation it is required.

- If your PPE is worn out, replace it. The organization pays for it.
- What takes more time, getting your PPE, or getting hurt or looking for a new job for not wearing it.
- It's true some types of PPE are uncomfortable, but so is an eye patch, stitches, or an arm or leg cast.
- Wearing PPE some of the time is good, but you are required to wear it all the time.
- Just because you will only need PPE for a second, means you still need to wear it. That brief second is all it takes to be injured or killed.
- You may have gotten away with not wearing PPE in the past, but it will catch up to you. Think about it, it probably already has caused you to be injured in one way or another.

Common excuses for not following proper lifting practices:

- I've been lifting this way my whole life.
- I don't lift anything heavy.
- I thought I could lift it myself.

- It takes too long to lift properly.
- It doesn't matter; my back hurts all the time.
- I lift a thousand things a day; who has time to lift that way.

These are poor excuses for not lifting properly. County employees experience hundreds of injuries every year because employees fail to follow proper procedures and lift properly. Many of these employees suffer major surgeries and never recover to their original health.

- Just because you've been lifting improperly doesn't mean you shouldn't start lifting properly today. Your back and future health depends on it.
- Even if you don't lift heavy objects, it doesn't matter; you can injure your back lifting something as light as a pen if you do it wrong.
- If a load is heavy or cumbersome, get help or use a lifting device.
- It takes the same amount of time to lift something improperly as it does to lift it properly.
- If your back already hurts from lifting, starting lifting properly; your back pain may improve by using the proper lifting technique.
- Regardless of how many times you lift objects during the day, you must use the proper lifting technique every time or you could injure yourself permanently.

Common excuses for not following policies and procedures:

- No one is going to tell me what to do or how to do it.
- Safety is not my responsibility.
- What difference does it make; I get the job done.

These are poor excuses for not following all safety policies and procedures.

- Failure to follow safety rules will result in disciplinary action. The organization cannot allow you to work unsafe.
- Safety is everyone in the organization's responsibility. You are responsible for your safety as well as the safety of your co-workers and citizens that encounter our work.
- The organization has developed specific safety policies and procedures to protect you. If you think these rules need to be changed or modified, you need to speak to your supervisor; otherwise the existing rules must be followed.

POLICY

Discuss all organizational policies related to compliance with safety rules.

CLOSING

- *Discuss the presentation and excuses you have used or heard for not following safety rules.*

- *Remind employees that there are no legitimate excuses for not following all safety rules and if they believe a rule should be changed or is inappropriate then encourage them to talk to their supervisor.*