

# Tools for Life – Weekly Health & Safety Meeting



## Home Healthy - Home Safe

December 2021

### Taking Shortcuts

We've all probably taken a shortcut at some time in our lives. Whether it is improper use of a tool or a ladder, we've all probably been there.

Taking shortcuts is vindicated by any number of poor excuses:

- It will save me time.
- I've seen other people do this.
- I've done this lots of times and never got hurt before.
- I'm only doing this just one time.

Sometimes you can take a shortcut without consequence, but is the risk worth it? Continued use of poor practices is likely to lead to incidents or injuries and a reduced quality of your life. The chance of impact or injury increases with every time you take that shortcut. Examples of shortcuts include:

- Disabling tool guards or using tools improperly
- Using chemicals without being familiar or understanding the SDS sheet
- Using any type of equipment without doing a pre-use checklist
- Lifting things without asking for help, reaching outside the uprights of a ladder or using a ladder improperly (like the top 2 steps of an A-frame ladder)
- Smoking around flammables or not observing signage that is in place to protect you.

It is a natural tendency for humans to want to get things done faster and easier. We believe that doing so will result in a reward of being more productive. It is a self-serving type of reward and can be incredibly risky.

To reduce the need to take a shortcut, always make sure you have the right tools available prior to starting your task and follow your work plan to make sure that you have everything covered prior to beginning your task. Proper planning will mitigate the perceived need to take a shortcut because we were not prepared for things and conditions that may arise, as we go about getting our work done.

Follow work procedures as written and stop to get the work instructions changed if they aren't correct. Avoid the "work-around" or shortcut. It will make you more productive and safer, thereby giving you that personal satisfaction of a job well done and going "Home Safe" at the end of the day.

**SAFETY REMINDER:** Lead and Asbestos used to be the "Next Big Thing" in building materials to make our homes and schools safer. Now they are both regulated by the EPA as hazardous substances that cause known life shortening diseases.

Discussion Points/Quiz Questions:

1. What are some common shortcuts people might take on the job?
2. What are the reasons people take shortcuts?
3. What are the risks of taking shortcuts?