Hurry Up and Get Hurt

by Carl Potter, CSP

Root cause analysis is a tool that many safety professionals and organizations use to identify "what caused the injury." This is tough work because the injured party usually says, "Oh, it just happened!" As we dig down and get to the root cause, 97% of the time we find the injured person didn't see the hazard and failed to control it. During the investigation (or as I like to call it, "Interrogation") we often find a competent individual who just got in a hurry and got hurt.

Hurry is the most common cause of injuries I have reviewed, investigated and advised on. Hurry is the reason we forgot to "follow the safety procedure." Hurry is the reason we:

- break the speed limit driving to the safety meeting
- run to the safety meeting
- walk past spilled coffee in the hall thinking, "somebody should clean that up"
- trip climbing the stairs because we have an armful of donuts for the (you guessed it!) safety meeting

At work or at home it is hard to stop and take the time to do an activity safely unless we consider the possible outcome. If we are:

- breaking the speed limit can lead to a wreck
- running can cause you to land in the hospital
- leaving spilled coffee uncontrolled can cause a co-worker to slip and fall
- tripping and falling down the stairs can put you in a wheel chair the rest of your life (not to mention all of the ruined donuts)

We hurry when we are trying to catch up. Feeling rushed takes up space in your brain and can lead to a mistake. The control for this easily, but seldom dealt with, hazard is to slow down. If you are late starting a job, it is likely going to take you the same amount of time. In other words, recognize that you cannot make up the lost time. Being late on jobs continually may mean you are continually late getting started (imagine that).

Some people feel rushed because the boss has pushed the deadline for a job up and now it sounds like he or she is telling you to hurry up even though it may mean that you get hurt, but that's not true. Schedules get pushed up for many reasons, but when it comes to doing a safe and quality job, the 'squeezed' deadline might not be met. The reality of hurrying through any job is that it leads to mistakes. Mistakes lead to injuries and an inferior product.
This week in your safety contact time, open the discussion about hurry. See if anyone can describe what hurry looks like on the job and what could result. Go one step further and count how many times you find yourself being in a hurry during the next five work days. Report back at your next safety meeting. Take the time to do this and you will be well on your way to targeting zero injuries and ensuring that Nobody Gets Hurt on your job.

To learn about Carl's work, you might want to visit:

www.safetyandthesupervisor.com

www.hazardrecognitionworkshop.com

Consider purchasing a 52 Weeks of Safety Workbook for each of you team members. This will meet some compliance training for less than .29 cents per week, per employee. Click Here to Learn More

*Carl Potter, Certified Safety Professional and Certified Management Consultant works with organizations that want to create an environment where nobody gets hurt. As an advocate of a zero-injury workplace, he speaks, writes, and consultants to industry. As a general aviation pilot, Carl enjoys infusing aviation safety principles into his workplace programs.*

*If you have questions about working with Carl Potter, call 800-259-6209*

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