

Workplace Complacency toolbox talk

A simple, 5 minute outline of what to cover in a toolbox talk on Workplace Complacency.

Complacency occurs in every workplace and individual complacency will differ to varying degrees. Complacency can be defined as self-satisfaction with yourself and your own abilities, especially when accompanied by a lack of awareness of present dangers or process deficiencies. Most jobs are repetitive, and gradually people can take things for granted, in their daily work. This can lead to health and safety risks to themselves and their colleagues.

Why run a Workplace Complacency toolbox talk?

- Effects of Complacency
- Internal factors that attribute to complacency
- External factors that attribute to complacency
- Tips to avoid complacency

Why is Complacency A Concern?

Complacency is a concern because it can lead to unsafe acts in the workplace and this can lead to ***near misses, injuries or possibly a fatality.***

Effects of Complacency

When some one starts becoming complacent, there is a danger that the worker will go in 'auto-pilot' and may underestimate risk or decide to cut corners. Some of the actions related to complacency are:

- Taking shortcuts in processes
- Inattention to their work environment

- Rushing to complete the task
- Assuming everyone is aware of the health and safety aspects of the work
- Riskier work behaviours
- Dissatisfaction with your work and lack of motivation
- Changes in worker attitudes
- Lack of engagement in meetings or with other workers

External Factors That May Attribute to Complacency

- **Really good health and safety systems** – accidents may be rare, and workers may perceive that accidents don't happen in the workplace
- **Unchallenging work** - doing the same repetitive task can become mundane
- **Poor staff training** - on-going health and safety awareness training may not be frequent or engaging enough
- **Lack of incident reporting** – near misses or accidents may not be reported by workers

Internal Factors That May Attribute to Complacency

- Workers may not conduct a risk assessment - because they are experienced in their job or are in a rush
- Not thinking who you are working with
- Not considering the task they are doing
- Not considering the workplace environment they are working in
- Not considering the consequences
- Familiarity of the workplace environment and job

Tips To Help Avoid Complacency

- Perform a risk assessment prior to conducting work
- Make training more frequent and engaging for workers
- Always be vigilant for your own and others' safety
- Don't assume that years of experience means that you will not make errors

- Report near misses and accident to your supervisor
- Review work processes and procedures
- Include workers in health and safety risk assessments, talking through work tasks, inspections and help other workers in their task or job.

Complacency is hard to overcome for some individuals, however, do not ignore the signs and do not be afraid to approach your work colleagues or supervisors when you see signs of complacency.

Key takeaways:

- *Complacency can lead to serious accidents*
- *Complacency can lead to more frequent near misses*
- *Consider factors that may be attributed to complacency*

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