



Quick Take on Safety

Complacency

TRAINING OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES

- Overview: Training covers complacency, how that can cause accidents and methods to address complacency.
- Purpose: The goal is to be aware of the signs of complacency.
- Preparation: Read and become familiar with this Quick Take. *Change as needed to reflect procedures and personnel in your department.* Review disciplinary and enforcement guidelines for your organization.
- Handouts: Quick Review of Safety—Complacency

False Sense of Security Can Lead to Injury

Complacency is a lack of concern; in this case a lack of concern regarding safe workplace practices. Sometimes a false sense of security is formed from repeated successes after behaving unsafely. This can blind people to potential hazards and become complacent to their actions (they have no concern that their behavior is unsafe). Complacency can also result when there are no negative consequences as a result of bad habits, poor training or lack of proper understanding.

Complacency can be exhibited in many forms, such as failing to wear required personal protective equipment, ignoring or glossing over pre-start inspections, using a chair in place of a step ladder or other seemingly minor choices that may not result in any immediate problems. However, given enough time, these decisions can put you or others at risk.

Being aware of the signs of complacency and preventing it is vital, so know the signs and pay attention. Your health and safety are important to us; we don't want you to get hurt.

Identifying Complacency

Complacency is a state of mind and can be difficult to identify. The following are signs that you might be starting on the road to complacency:

- Poor housekeeping, which may include hoses or cords left out on the ground. Leaving items on stairs, in front of exits, in walkways, or in front of fire extinguishers or emergency shutoff switches.
- Inconsistent use of personal protective equipment, which can range from wearing items improperly, infrequently or not at all. It could include failing to keep your PPE clean or storing it haphazardly.
- Skipping or rushing checklist items without adequately checking on the items.
- Increase of close-calls or failing to report safety hazards.
- Skipping steps during work tasks.

Preventing Complacency

- Learn to recognize and be aware of the symptoms of complacency.
- Focus on the task at hand and stay in the moment, particularly for repetitive or familiar tasks.
- Be on the lookout for bad habits and try to reverse them early.
- Sometimes people act in an unsafe manner because they do not know how to do something safely. If you are unsure of how to do your job safely, please ask. Learn the correct and safe way to do it, and do it safely every time.
- Report any near misses to a supervisor or manager so it can be investigated and addressed.
- It is the responsibility of all employees to follow all safety rules every time. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary measures. [*Instructor prompt:* Inform employees of disciplinary policy or direct them to where they can review it.]

[*Instructor Note:* Complacency takes multiple forms. The reason someone is complacent is important, as it helps direct discipline of the employee. Disciplining someone for making a conscious choice not to be safe may improve behavior, but punishing someone for a lack of training or understanding may cause additional problems. It is often wise to consider root causes of behavior and focus on correcting it to prevent the behavior from reappearing in the future.]

Discussion Questions

- What are signs of complacency that we can look for?
- How do we report unsafe acts or conditions?
- Where are we most likely to be complacent?
- Why are we becoming complacent?

Complacency Session Planning and Review

Trainer

Training
Date

Department(s)

TRAINING GOALS

- Employees understand what complacency is.
- Employees learn how to recognize complacency.
- Employees develop strategies to prevent complacency.

RESOURCES

- “Have You Become Victim to the Normalization of Risk?” MCIT Bulletin, August 2018, [MCIT.org/resource/](https://www.mcit.org/resource/)
- “The Risk Is in the Routine: A New Look at Accident Prevention,” MCIT Video Library, [MCIT.org/video-library/](https://www.mcit.org/video-library/)

REVIEW

Did the training meet the stated goals?

How can the training be improved?

TRAINER COMMENTS

