



APRIL 2021 SAFETY TALK – PROACTIVE VS. REACTIVE SAFETY APPROACH

Proactive Versus Reactive Safety Approach Safety Talk

Many of the safety rules and procedures that are in place came about from a previous incident that caused an injury, property loss, etc. When we implement a safeguard after an incident occurs we are taking a **reactive** approach to safety. We can look at the majority of rules and procedures that we follow today as a proactive approach towards safety, however many of them came from a reactive position. A lot of times something unfortunate happened first, before many of the rules and procedures were put into place.

Being proactive is the best way to approach safety in the workplace. Addressing and **eliminating hazards** before work begins should be a main goal of a company's safety program. Sometimes some companies take a reactive approach with hazards rather than being proactive and eliminating them up front. This mindset puts everyone onsite and the company as a whole at risk for an incident or injury.

Proactive Versus Reactive Example

Before beginning a work assignment, the safety of the assignment should be evaluated by both the individuals completing the work, and the supervisors. If there are any questions or concerns, they should be addressed before beginning the work.

For example, sometimes you may be working in a busy environment, that may involve more than one crew, company, contractor, equipment, etc. Imagine you are the crew moving furniture into a building, and there are others there wrapping up finish work on electrical, plumbing, drywall, caulking, etc. This may be due to a deadline for a grand opening. Everyone feels the need to work at a fast pace to meet the deadline, however safety should always be in mind.

Before moving in the furniture, you notice your main walkway has extension cords stretched across it, that could cause a major tripping hazard. Before beginning the work, it would be worth having a conversation with the owners of those extension cords, to see if they can be taped down or re-routed, to avoid anyone tripping. Although this may take a little time, this small decision could make a big difference for everyone involved.

Being proactive sometimes takes time to do successfully. To eliminate some hazards, it takes thought and planning to do correctly. Other times, like in the example, a two-minute conversation could save people from injuries, avoid property damage (if furniture is dropped from tripping/falling), and stress for everyone involved.