



Safety Alert

# Preventing Severe Injuries and Fatalities



Let's make this work for everyone®

## True Stories

- *A truck driver was securing a stack of pipe racks on a trailer when a pipe rack on top fell from the stack onto the employee's legs, causing multiple fractures.*
- *A bandsaw operator left the machine running unattended and another employee cleaning around it got their fingers caught in the rotating blade. Multiple fingers amputated.*
- *Wood logs slid off a dolly and fell onto an employee's legs. Employee hospitalized for six days.*

These are just a sample nearly two dozen serious injuries our teams have encountered in just a two-month period that have resulted in limb crushes, head trauma, amputations, and other potentially fatal injuries. Even though frequency of injuries in the U.S. has historically been declining over the years based on a variety of studies, a 2018 Campbell Institute Study showed there was little to no correlation between injury rates and the number of workplace fatalities.

This is because causes of serious injuries and fatalities are often different from those of less-serious injuries. Reducing injury frequency doesn't necessarily reduce how severe they are.

- *Todd Conklin, author of "Workplace Fatalities, Failure to Predict", says every employer should ask their employees these three questions:*
  1. *WHERE can someone die or get seriously injured?*
  2. *WHAT are the controls to prevent it?*
  3. *Are the controls ENOUGH?*
- *Using this model allows us to examine other causes, instead of just looking at unsafe behaviors.*





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### The Deadly Situation List

A situation on the Deadly Situation List is a high-risk activity that will eventually result in a serious injury or fatality if it continues without being identified and controlled. Some work activities have more risk than others, especially when paired with Red Flag Situations.

#### Keys to SIF Prevention

Identifying and controlling Red Flags, not as a one-time task but as an ongoing process, can be an effective path to prevention. Consider these key points:

- Involve your employees in prevention discussions/planning. Their experience can provide the best awareness on identifying and controlling SIF hazards.
- Don't only manage routine safety and OSHA recordables.
- Involve employees in risk assessments.
- Identify red-flags and serious hazards that are part of tasks.
- Add controls to critical steps of processes.
- Flaws in the system impact individuals. This can also be true in reverse.
- Educate on and inform employees of SIF hazards.
- Provide employees training on identifying and eliminating SIF potential.



#### DEADLY SITUATION LIST

- Vehicle/equipment operation
- Working from heights
- Machine hazards/lockout
- Hazardous materials/chemicals/ environmental exposure
- Electrical/arc flash hazards
- Fire/explosion/flammable vapors-dust/ hot work
- Confined spaces/trenching/engulfment
- Suspended loads
- Struck by objects and equipment/ Line of Fire



#### RED-FLAG SITUATIONS

- Non-Routine Tasks
- Physical or Environmental Stresses
- Fatigue
- Production/Time Pressures
- Inadequate supervision and follow-up
- Solo Work/Working Alone
- Inadequate/non-existent Operating Procedures, Training and Follow-Up
- Poor equipment or task design
- New Employees (New to company or New to Department)
- Lack of Engineering Control



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### Call to Action

- If any of the above applies to your company/organization, immediately address any of the high-risk/red-flag issues.
- Develop a plan for eliminating or significantly reducing Red Flag situations that exist with situations on the High-Risk Deadly Situation list.
- Implement the plan and routinely audit for effectiveness.

### Summary

Every employer has the potential for SIFs. Even businesses considered low risk have SIF potential. Using this information to identify SIF potential can be an effective first step in preventing severe injuries and fatalities in your workplace.



## | Do it Right – Do it Safely

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