



THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
Environmental
Health & Safety

SUPERVISOR TOOLBOX TALK

Combating Complacency: Rest, Self-Care & Present-Moment Focus

Staying Alert During Hazardous Operations

Date: _____ Supervisor: _____ Crew/Dept: _____

What Is Complacency?

Complacency is a feeling of quiet satisfaction or security, often while unaware of potential dangers. In hazardous work, it develops when repetitive tasks create a false sense of safety.

OSHA Perspective:

- Workers who perform the same task repeatedly may skip steps or ignore hazards
- Familiarity breeds shortcuts — shortcuts breed incidents
- OSHA General Duty Clause (Section 5(a)(1)) requires employers to keep workplaces free from recognized hazards
- Complacency is a leading contributing factor in workplace fatalities



Rest & Self-Care

Fatigue and poor self-care are precursors to complacency. OSHA recognizes that worker alertness is directly tied to adequate rest and physical well-being.

Key Points:

- Get 7-9 hours of sleep before performing hazardous tasks
- Stay hydrated and maintain proper nutrition throughout the shift
- Recognize personal fatigue signs: yawning, wandering thoughts, slow reactions
- Use breaks intentionally — step away, stretch, reset mentally
- Report to work fit for duty; communicate if you are not at 100%
- OSHA 29 CFR 1926.16 — employers must ensure workers are competent and alert

Remember: A well-rested worker is a safer worker. Self-care is not selfish — it is a safety obligation.



Present-Moment Focus

Being mentally present — not on autopilot — is your strongest defense against complacency. OSHA expects workers to maintain situational awareness at all times during hazardous operations.

Techniques for Staying Present:

- Conduct a personal risk assessment before each task — ask: "What can hurt me right now?"
- Use the SLAM method: Stop, Look, Assess, Manage
- Verbalize steps aloud during critical procedures
- Eliminate distractions — phones, side conversations, rushing
- Pause and refocus after any interruption before resuming work
- Practice the 2-second rule: before each action, confirm your next move is safe



Key Insight: If your mind is somewhere else, your body is unprotected. Be where your feet are.

Staying Focused During Hazardous Work

Hazardous scopes of work demand heightened vigilance. OSHA standards require that workers performing high-risk tasks maintain continuous focus and follow established safe work practices.

Strategies for High-Hazard Operations:

- Review the JSA/JHA before starting — never treat it as a formality
- Identify your line of fire and energy sources each time conditions change
- Rotate tasks when possible to prevent mental fatigue on repetitive hazardous work
- Use buddy systems and peer checks — a second set of eyes catches what yours miss
- Stop work immediately if you feel rushed, distracted, or uncertain
- Debrief after each task: what went right, what almost went wrong

OSHA Reminder: Under the General Duty Clause, every worker has the right — and obligation — to stop work when conditions are unsafe.



Discussion & Sign-Off

Discussion Questions:

1. Can you recall a time complacency almost led to an incident?
2. What personal signs tell you that you are losing focus?
3. How do you reset mentally after a break or interruption?
4. What can we do as a crew to hold each other accountable for staying present?

Key Takeaways:

- Complacency kills — treat every task like it is your first time
- Rest and self-care are safety tools, not luxuries
- Be where your feet are — present-moment awareness saves lives
- Stop work authority is everyone's right and responsibility

Employee Acknowledgement:

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Print Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____