Complacency

Some people have their head in the sand and ignore what is happening around them, what’s changed, what NEW hazards are there...
Webster’s Definition

- Contented or self-satisfied to a fault.

We should comfort the afflicted, but we also need to afflict the comfortable.

John Kenneth Galbraith
Complacency

- Complacency is the bane of physical security and personal safety.
- No matter how vigilant we are, as time goes by with no problems occurring, we become complacent and let our guard down.
Complacency

- September 11th is a prime example.
  - Immediately after the event, people were vigilant and leery of everything out of the ordinary.
  - Now, everyone is carrying on as they did before the attack.
Complacency

- Complacency is a natural function of the brain.
- The brain is designed to automate repetitive behavior.
- Complacency is *not* the result of apathy, carelessness, or a flaw in your personality; it is the way the brain functions.
- Most of our day-to-day behavior is automated; it happens without conscious or deliberate thought.
Complacency

- Have you ever been driving and thinking about the solution to a problem and suddenly find yourself at your destination with no recollection of how you got there?
Complacency

- The brain can handle routine actions without conscious guidance.
- Repetitive tasks become automated to free up our attention for things that are new, unusual, or threatening.
- If it were not that way, we would be overwhelmed by the simplest of tasks.
Complacency

- The brain constantly and unconsciously scans the environment for signs of danger.
- We notice and respond to what is unique, unusual, or threatening.
- However, repeated exposure to situations, even if they are potentially dangerous, dulls our defense mechanism and our awareness.
Complacency

- People who are **repeatedly** exposed to dangerous or violent situations, such as police officers, fire fighters, operators and mechanics, become less concerned and cautious about them.

- We become complacent about our personal safety from repeated exposure to threatening situations that do not actually occur.
Complacency

- Psychologists call this habituation.

- Example:
  - a short amount of time after dressing, (the stimulus) the weight of your clothes creates is 'ignored' by the nervous system and we become unaware of it.
Complacency

- Habituation works against us when we are repeatedly exposed to the potential of dangerous situations, but nothing happens.
  - Changing strainers/filters
  - Clearing pumps and other equipment
  - Climbing on scaffolds

- Over time, the absence of consequences causes us to become lax about safety, etc.
  - In AUTO-PILOT
Complacency

- The cure for complacency is a deliberate effort to apply safety strategies, like JSA’s or Safety Briefs, in the absence of perceived danger.

- Remember, the time that you are at greatest risk is when you least expect something bad is about to happen.
Complacency

- The key is to form safety habits that you do everyday until they override your former unsafe behaviors and become automated.
- Start by accessing your work and work areas.
- When are you most susceptible to injuries, releases, etc.?
  - Consider prevention situations at:
    - home
    - while commuting
    - at work
    - while carrying out your daily activates.
The Stop Light
Complacency

- Adopt safety tactics and *deliberately* do them over and over on consistent basis in the absence of perceived danger until they become automated safety habits.
These four states…
- RUSHING
- FRUSTRATION
- FATIGUE
- COMPLACENCY

Can cause or contribute to these critical errors...
- EYES NOT ON TASK
- MIND NOT ON TASK
- LINE-OF-FIRE
- BALANCE/TRACTION/GRIP

What caused the incident to happen
• These four states…
  - RUSHING
  - FRUSTRATION
  - FATIGUE
  - COMPLACENCY

• Can cause or contribute to these critical errors. . .
  - EYES NOT ON TASK
  - MIND NOT ON TASK
  - LINE-OF-FIRE
  - BALANCE/TRACTION/GRIP

Why did the critical error occur
Complacency

As we have stated before, Complacency sets us up for eyes and mind not on task, which can lead to line of fire and balance/traction/grip issues.

- Rushing
- Frustration
- Fatigue

- EYES NOT ON TASK
- MIND NOT ON TASK
- LINE-OF-FIRE
- BALANCE/TRACTION/GRIP
Complacency

- Complacency is like a chronic illness that you must treat daily to maintain your health.

- You are never cured of complacency, it requires constant attention to prevent it from adversely affecting your life.
Preventing Complacency

- Analyze small mistakes not just the serious ones
- If you think you are becoming too complacent, try placing visual reminders in your line of vision.
  - A loved one's picture
- Discuss with the folks you work with the hazards of your job
- Shadow another in their unit, looking for hazards
- Look for signs of complacency in other people
  - This will help bump up your awareness to help you fight auto-pilot
Do you have a story to share where COMPLACENCY has caused you to take your Eyes and Mind Off Of Task?