

VOLTS News

Valuing Our Lives
Through Safety

November 2023—Volume 120

VOLTS Data Report for October

Total Observations: 330

IPSC Emp. Contact Rate: 1.06

Total Safe Behaviors: 2,595

Total At-Risk Behaviors: 20

Top 3 Safe Behaviors

- Required PPE (255)
- Focus on Task (221)
- Eyes on Path (220)

Top 3 At-Risk Exposures

- Seat Belt (3)
- Housekeeping/Storage (3)
- Required PPE (3)

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THE DANGERS OF COMPLACENCY IN THE WORKPLACE



Workplace Complacency: The Enemy Within by Casey Draper

In the bustling world of the modern workplace, there exists a challenging enemy that often goes unnoticed until the damage is done—workplace complacency. Complacency can subtly infiltrate even the most dynamic and high-achieving organizations, leading to stagnation, lack of innovation, and potential for workplace accidents. In this VOLTS newsletter, we will explore the nature of workplace complacency, its causes, consequences, and how organizations and individuals can combat this silent saboteur of safety.

Defining Workplace Complacency

Workplace complacency is a state of contentment with the current situation, leading to a lack of motivation to improve one's capabilities. It can become apparent in various forms, from employees sticking to routine tasks without seeking to enhance their skills, to organizations resting on their laurels instead of adapting to changing conditions. Complacency often arises from the misconception that "if it isn't broken, don't fix it." While this might sound reasonable, it can be a perilous mindset from a safety aspect because workplace complacency is detrimental not only to a worker's productivity, but it can also be a disastrous safety hazard.

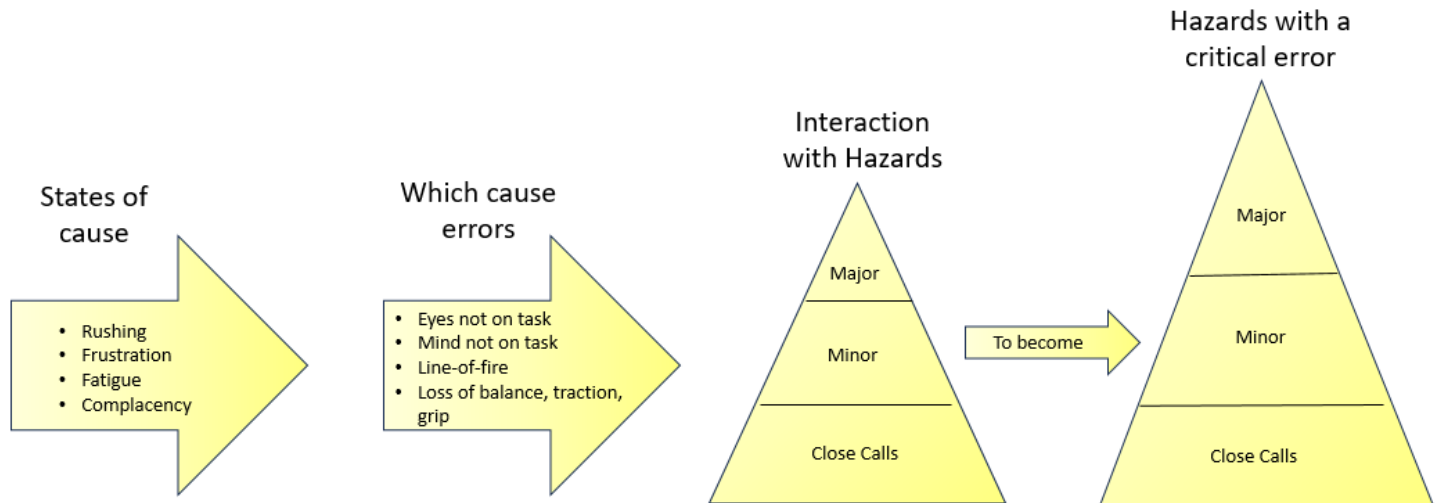
Complacency Risks

While no one plans to become complacent, everyone must watch for it. Being an engaged worker can help. Understanding the causes of workplace complacency is crucial in addressing the issue effectively. While several factors contribute to its emergence, it is important to spot the signs of complacency:

- Tasks performed in "auto-pilot mode"
- Attitude changes
- Noticeable increase or decrease in communication
- Dissatisfaction with your work and/or lack of motivation
- Steps missed in a work process

Safe and engaged employees often work in-the-moment, meaning they are focused on their tasks and their surroundings. Complacent employees, however, may perform their jobs in an "auto-pilot" mode, moving from step to step without thinking critically about their actions. This can increase the potential for risks and injuries for themselves or others—it can happen regardless of age or experience. Whether

Workplace Complacency: The Enemy Within by Casey Draper (cont.)



complacency is the result of getting too comfortable with a predictable task or going through the motions of the day-to-day routine, it can work toward self-satisfaction that leads to safety hazards.

Combating Workplace Complacency

Recognizing the deceptive nature of workplace complacency is the first step toward combating it. According to Paul Goren of OH&S Magazine (2022), some strategies that individuals and organizations can employ to fight the dangers of workplace complacency are:

- **Set Ambitious Goals:** Establishing challenging goals and clear objectives can motivate employees and organizations to strive for improvement.
- **Encourage Continuous Learning:** Creating an environment that values learning and development can encourage employees to acquire new skills, pursue further education, and stay updated on industry trends.
- **Recognize and Reward Achievements:** Acknowledging and rewarding the accomplishments of employees can boost morale and motivation.
- **Promote Innovation:** Fostering a culture of innovation where employees are encouraged to generate new ideas and processes. Provide the resources and support necessary to bring these innovations to life.

- **Effective Leadership:** Combating complacency through strong, visionary leadership is crucial. Leaders should inspire, provide direction, and challenge their teams to excel.

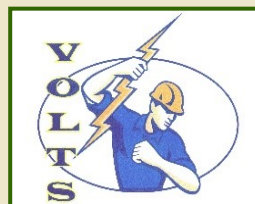
Vesting a Driven and Productive Workforce

Workplace complacency, though often subtle, is a difficult enemy of safety success. Its roots can be diverse, but its consequences are consistently damaging. The fight against complacency is ongoing, but by recognizing and addressing it, we can reveal ways to combat the issue. As we evolve in a rapidly changing workplace, we must remain active in the battle against complacency to ensure that our organization and employees have the best chance for success.

We as a VOLTS Steering Committee realize that one of the largest safety risks employees and supervisors face today, is the distraction of an uncertain future. We encourage all to combat complacency and navigate uncertain futures, by fostering a culture of Valuing Our Lives Through Safety.

References

Goren, P. (October 17, 2022). How to Combat the Dangers of Workplace Complacency. OH&S. <https://ohsonline.com/articles/2022/10/17/how-to-combat.aspx>



What's your why?

Do an observation today!