

Work Smart – Work Safe

(A Personal Code Of Conduct)



1. Support our Union.
2. Respect other trades.
3. Safety first, not speed.
4. Avoid extended shifts.
5. Report all accidents.
6. Enjoy all our vacations.
7. Show our resolve and stay the course.

Each of us knows the Smart and Safe way to work, which will affect our employment as well as our well-being. Every day there are pressures which influence the way we work. Occasionally we may be allowing ourselves to stray from our ideal Personal Working Code Of Conduct. The Work Smart-Work Safe program is a gentle reminder to be true to ourselves. Your Skilled Trades Association asks that each of us reconsider our actions to see if some personal working habits may be effecting the employment and safety of others or ourselves. The following is an incomplete list of examples, of some Working Codes Of Conduct, for your consideration. We are all striving for a stress free, secure, working environment and a safe return to our families.

1) Support our union and elected leadership.

Examples:

A) Attend meetings

Whenever possible, we must attend Local Union and Skilled Trades Association meetings showing our support and giving our input. One hour of our time each month says so much to so many. Our attendance shows solidarity and support for each other, our leadership and our union.

B) Fully utilize our representatives and support their decisions

Report all indiscretions made by managers, group leaders or others, so their improper actions can be addressed. Indiscretions in many cases can and do lead to safety issues and people could get hurt. Your Leadership is here to help so communicate with them as often as you need to, it is our right. Be ready to support their decisions.

C) Follow recommendations concerning Voluntary Temporary Layoffs

In the event of a voluntary temporary layoff follow the recommendations of your leadership. Some of these VTL's are driven by budget and are designed to monitor the manpower needs. Management at times, is testing to see if they can run with less people and this VTL may generate permanent layoffs. There are times when our leadership may condone VTL's. Always follow our leadership's recommendations regarding each VTL.

D) Attend all union training programs

It is important for each of us to take every course available through our union. The courses help us understand and appreciate what we, our union and our leadership is up against. The

more people from the trades and from production who go to Port Elgin, or to the hall for training, the more people who will be out of the system and may need to be factored into management's manpower needs.

2) Respect other trades and the job they do.

Examples:

A) Never do another trade's job.

Insist in the appropriate trade and enough of them. Everyone's safety depends on qualified designated tradespeople to do their own work and not the work of others. What goes around comes around. By crossing lines of demarcation we are assisting management's agenda of combining trades. If management wants to amalgamate trades then let them pay the price and negotiate an appropriate system where jobs will be saved and people will be respectfully considered.

B) Never replace a trade with a tool.

Welders are becoming an endangered species and some other trades may follow. Appropriate trades should be utilized whenever possible rather than the tools that replace them. Reconsider using tools that replace a trade unless that trade has representation on your job. A tool doesn't need to feed it's family or send kids to college.

C) There is no right to access.

This is another Management Myth. We have enough M&M's without fighting each other over our daily bread. It doesn't matter if it is a quick disconnect or a screw on an electrical connection. If anyone gets hurt and we made the connection or the disconnection outside our trade, we would never forgive ourselves and neither would the Government (Part One Summons) or the Company (suspension). Safety dictates that if it is not our work, we call for the appropriate trade.

D) Construction considerations

There is a lot of demolition coming and we need to remember, Safety First. Demolition and construction are inherently dangerous. Rigging, a ground man, two men in a bucket, no dropping loads and Safety Reps etc. are all important aspects of a fully manned, safe site. Working safely will require the correct trades in the appropriate numbers to do the work so insist on it. It is our right to insist on doing the job safely, with the correct amount of trades at an appropriate pace.

E) Recreational activities should be handled discreetly

Management doesn't need our help to lay us off. If we need a diversion during our shift while waiting for a job we need to handle it discreetly. Management's perception of our work load and the performance of our duties will have a definite impact on their considerations for manpower.

3) Do not sacrifice safety for speed and never cut corners.

Examples:

A) Slow down and live.

Work conscientiously and at a pace that will get the job done without threatening anyone's safety (Section 28, Duties of a Worker OHSA). Remember to think it over, talk it over and plan every move so you don't have to do it over. Know every hazard before you start the job (Section 27, 2. Duties of a Supervisor. OHSA). Never sacrifice safety for speed. If it doesn't look safe then fix it or have it fixed. Also remember if there are no carryovers in service, then there must be enough people and enough time? We are not recommending that we slow the job down to create carryovers. We are however, suggesting that we not jeopardize safety or extend the shift to finish.

B) Never cut corners to save time.

Don't allow managements perceived, production emergency become your gas-pedal. There have been and always will be emergencies in production. If something needs to be engineered for you, or others to be safe, then it is time to stop and call attention to the situation. When attaching a fall arrest harness to something to do a job, always be sure the point you are hooking your lifeline to is going to withstand the forces exerted should you fall. If it is not clearly marked for a proper harness tie off point then involve an engineer because that is their responsibility. If you get hurt, management will lay blame on the easiest target and that will be you. All tie off points should be engineer approved whatever is being used. Roof and building trusses, angle iron and other building steel all have their limitations (Section 25,1(e), Duties of an Employer. OHSA).

If a machine needs to be ascended to work on it, make sure that there are appropriate legal points of egress. Get an engineer involved and never cut corners. Always use the right ladder for the job. Never make due with a stepladder when an extension ladder can't be found. Never lean a stepladder against something because it can't be opened. Get the right device to get you where you need to go. Never extend your reach past what is safe. Move the ladder or get the appropriate lifting device to get you where you need to be. Never work off of a ladder or carry items up a ladder. Get the right equipment for the job. It will take you longer initially, but eventually it will save you time and perhaps your life. Never cut corners. Speed should never replace safety. Safety requires time consideration and generally the use of more manpower. Safety always means jobs. NEVER CUT CORNERS.

C) Perform your work professionally

Insist on the job being done correctly the first time and every time, with no cut corners no matter how long it takes. When we do this, it shows that we are fully considering everyone's safety. In the foundry days, we did what we had to do to get the job done and get ready to do the job over, correctly, on the weekend. Today we must always insist on doing the job correctly and safely the first time. It may take longer to do it safely but no job is worth doing if it can't be done right or safely. Your recalls to that job will be less frequent because you took the time to do it right, your capability will not come into question and the safety of others will be protected. The days of us performing our duties at a level of "just good enough" are over. If we want respect for our trades then we must first respect ourselves. Insist on doing the best job we can and as safely as we can the first time and every time. There is an accident every sixteen seconds in Ontario and almost every day a worker doesn't make it home at all.

D) Cleanliness

We have the right to be working in a clean and safe environment that also creates work for support people outside the trades. If anything looks dangerously filthy, stop and have it cleaned, or contact your Union rep or your Health and Safety rep. Production people need our help to recapture these jobs and we need them to provide clean safe working environments at a moments notice, not two shifts later. If something needs to be done to ensure your safety or that of others, stand pat and wait until it is safe.

E) Lock out and Test

Working under someone else's lock, or not locking out enough sources of energy, won't get us done quicker, it will get us dead. Always lock out all sources of energy because you never know where your job may lead you. Time should never be an issue. A problem often arises on the off shifts when no operator is available to fully set your mind at ease whether your lock out and test on machines is safe or not. Check the lockout maps and ask your supervisor to keep them accountable because they are responsible to let you know. If they don't know, be sure they get the appropriate trade and be sure that he or she is familiar with the machine (Section 27, 1,2. Duties of a Supervisor. OHSA).

Many times we are asked to work on appropriately locked out machines, and close by, something else is running. It is easy to become involved in our work and forget where we are for a moment. If you feel you need other equipment locked out even though it has been designated safe, always remember it is your right and responsibility to do what ever it takes to keep yourself safe (Section 28,2(b). Duties of a Worker. Section 25,2(h). Duties of an Employer. OHSA).

4) Avoid working extended shifts or more than seven shifts per week.

Examples:

A) Avoid working extended shifts.

We just prove to management that some of us are redundant. We prove that all of us are not needed because the tradespeople that are working will fill in for laid off people, so there is no need to recall people from layoff. Management may feel that some of us are not needed and lay some of us off. When there are no layoffs and no notices of layoff, then work under the direction of our local union leadership and the agreements (Master and Local). They have made allowances for emergency situations. Remember that when we are tired we are less responsive and more prone to accidents and illness.

B) Avoid working beyond seven shifts per week

The same reason as above applies. One thing we should remember is that we have fought hard for time off and it is important to our mental health and physical well being to enjoy this down time. Heart disease is the number one killer in Canada and stress from working too much causes heart disease and many other problems.

C) Avoid crossing shifts to work overtime

If management doesn't have enough tradespeople then perhaps layoffs should be cancelled or more trades should be hired. We have been very accommodating in the past and it may have helped to hasten layoffs.

D) Force-ins welcome

Force-ins create a paper trail showing that there are not enough trades currently employed.

5) Report all accidents.

Examples:

A) Report all accidents no matter how small.

The law (Workplace Safety and Insurance Act) requires us to report an accident immediately. Making you feel totally responsible for your injuries is eroding your health and safety. Management policies are beginning to look like the policies in existence around the 1930's and 40's that blamed workers for their injuries. They would stack up all sorts of expensive lawyers to prove it was the worker's fault and therefore no liability to the employer. The management investigations of today are in place to embarrass and harass you into not reporting future accidents.

The bottom line is once again money and not a concern for your safety. It is just another example of disrespect towards working people. If management's accident reports were truly representative of the things that are really taking place on the shop floor, they would be compelled to take action to improve. Never sign an investigation report without one of your union representatives present. Make sure management is held accountable. We have complained for years that our coverage of nurses is substandard.

Truth is, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act requires only a first aid kit, someone trained to use it and a cot for a person to lie down on should they feel faint. Our management has a minimum number of people present on the weekends for the cafeteria to be open, but no such number exists for extra medical coverage on the weekends. Discussions are still ongoing to negotiate better coverage. Legislation is seriously needed in Ontario to prevent this from happening in all workplaces. If we report every scratch management may feel compelled to staff appropriately. This will add to manpower but it will surely be better for each of us.

B) Take time to heal and use your loss of earnings benefits

When you are injured on the job and your injuries force you to take time off work supervision may offer to cover the lost time by offering you use of your PAAs. Such "generosity" should be refused. PAAs are your vacation days. The time you lose from work should be compensated for by Workplace Safety & Insurance Board loss of earnings benefits not by your paid vacation time. If you take a PAA you are paying for the time off due to an injury with your own money. If you take a PAA you are helping to conceal the fact that an injury at work forced you to lose time. If you take a PAA you are simultaneously helping the boss to conceal the unsafe condition or work practice that caused your injury. If you take a PAA you are also helping the boss to get rebates on premiums paid to the WSIB by helping to lower the number of lost time claims the boss is responsible for.

But that's not all. By taking a PAA rather than seeking the WSIB loss of earnings benefits you should get, you are reducing the amount of vacation time you will take. Taking less vacation time helps the boss. It helps the boss because there will be less need to cover for vacation time. This helps the boss to get the most possible work from the fewest number of workers. That makes you more vulnerable to overuse injuries at work like repetitive strain injuries. The worsening speed up due to this corporate goal of getting the maximum possible work from the fewest possible number of workers is directly responsible for the growing number of workers who are working in worsening pain. Given these things why would you ever use your PAAs for lost time due to a workplace injury?

6) Enjoy all our vacations.

Example:

Vacations mean jobs

Put in for all holidays as soon as possible even if we don't intend to use them. Management needs to consider more people for replacement during these periods. It may just save your job or that of a friend. This part of our Work Smart-Work Safe agenda is very important. We are always fully manned during prime times because of replacement needs. We are a high seniority work force and most of us have three to five weeks holiday time. Use your weeks anywhere you want to but if you have weeks left over then put in for them. Management may be forced to consider keeping more people to cover at these times. At every opportunity, take your allotted time off. Do the math, 300 trades at an average of 4 weeks equals 1200 permanent full time jobs. Think how much 1200 to 1500 weeks of holidays could effect employment.

7) Show our resolve and stay the course.

Show our resolve.

Management firmly believes that no matter what stand we take, our commitment will last only a few weeks and then things will return to normal. When we remain committed, things change because we have shown our resolve. These suggestions and others will help keep us safe and will preserve jobs. Most importantly, we will have a feeling of satisfaction because we did our job the best we could. We helped to secure a fully employed future for ourselves and are returning home to the love and warmth of our families, safely.

Thanks from your friends in the Skilled Trades Association.