02-09-2026 – TBT – Auditing Ourselves

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When the word audit is mentioned, people generally think of a negative experience, an Internal Revenue Service (IRS) tax audit or of a confrontation. However, it is possible for audits to be positive.

First, let's consider the definition of audit. Audit: A systematic or methodical review; to examine with intent to verify.

Audits can apply to your job. From a safety standpoint there is only one way to do a job - the safe way. Safety needs to be the first consideration in everything we do. It is possible that we may not always be doing this, so our continuing efforts to review or think about our jobs are auditing.

Contrary to an IRS audit which evaluates what we did not record, our job audit should evaluate what we did record. If we take the time to at least mentally think out the steps that we go through to perform a task, we can audit it to ensure we are safe.

Auditing ourselves:

Look at these things prior to completing a task:

- PPE, do we have the correct eye protection? The correct gloves? Protective footwear?

- Do we need any special PPE such as a chemical apron or a harness?

- Is our PPE in good condition?

- Do we have the correct tools and are they in good shape?

- Do we know how to operate the tools or equipment?

- Do we know how to accomplish the task safely?

- Do we know the harmful energy sources around the area and have we isolated them?

These are a just a few of the questions we should ask. However, they include some of the most important ones. Ensure you do a quick audit, prior to accomplishing a task. A more thorough one should be done if we're doing something for the first time or for the first time in a long time.

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