

SAFETY AND YOUR SUPERVISOR

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Safety does not just happen. Remember the old saying, if something can go wrong, it will. We must work to make things happen right; that is, in a safe manner. But one person cannot do this alone - It takes the cooperation of everyone.

Your company has a moral, legal, and financial interest in your well-being. Supervisors should be receptive to your safety concerns. Have you ever brought a problem to your supervisor only to have it dismissed? It happens. This does not mean he or she isn't interested, and you should drop the subject. You can't afford to. You may be the one getting hurt. Let us look at ways you can use to make your supervisor share your safety concerns.

- Don't wait until the problem becomes critical. As soon as you see the adjustment slipping, guard loosening, or scheduling problems, speak up. This will give your supervisor the opportunity to deal with the problem in a planned manner. Planning is part of a supervisor's job. Help him do it right.
- Don't be overly emotional or accusatory. Maybe you were just involved in a "[near miss](#)." Emotion is understandable. But it is a rare supervisor who will deliberately put someone in harm's way. More likely than not, the supervisor was not aware of the problem.
- Be prepared to offer your assessment as to whether the problem is critical or not. Don't overstate the seriousness, but don't understate it either. If you don't know whether the problem is critical or not, say so.
- Offer suggestions as to what needs to be done to correct the problem. This may clarify, in your supervisor's mind, what needs to be done and helps facilitate understanding. Again, if you don't know, say so.
- Finally, try to get commitment as to when the problem will be corrected. The idea is not to put anyone on the spot. But, when there is a firm commitment, people tend to pay more attention. If you don't see any action by the completion date, follow-up or remind the supervisor of your concern.

Again, supervisors are human. They can get buried in things that may need more immediate attention and/or they could just forget.

Supervisors - remember the employee who brings safety problems to your attention is just trying to do his job and help you with yours. Their concerns should never be dismissed without a review.

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