

You're the loser

Cost of living, inflation, taxes--these are things we all are very much concerned about. They're topics that creep into every conversation at home and at work because they deal with money. But it's funny how many people express concern over living costs and then ignore a very important factor in keeping costs at a minimum. I'm talking about safety. If you think that safety doesn't have much to do with the cost of living, you'd better listen to this:

On-the-job accidents cost the U.S. economy about 3.4 billion dollars every hour of the workday. The people who compile these statistics go on to say that this adds up to 6.8 billion dollars per year.

The total includes 1.5 billion dollars in lost wages, 3.8 billion in lost production, and 1.5 billion in medical expenses—and that's just the measurable part of the cost.

This is a substantial drain on the economy, and we all pay for it in our roles as taxpayers, wage-earners, and consumers. But each of us as an individual is the big loser when we're injured. This is why safety should be important to cost-conscious people. It's not the only reason for being safe, but it may be the only reason some people understand.

Safety is part of doing a good job. You can't get hurt and still do a good job. When an injury occurs, there's something wrong, and the injured person is the first to find out about it. There's pain. The paycheck might stop. The bills pile up, and the table begins to get bare.

You might ask, if all this is true, then why do some people ignore safety rules? There are many good answers to that, but we'd all have to be psychiatrists to understand them. However, there are a few things that are quite obvious.

Accident-prone people are likely to break rules that they consider unimportant or contrary to their philosophy of life. This may be based on an over-inflated sense of self-importance.

People who disregard safety rules may also be reckless, both on and off the job. They're confident that accidents always happen to the other guy. They have manufactured a false sense of security.

As previously noted, there are many good reasons for being safe, but you can narrow it all down to just one--yourself. You are the loser. You either play it safe, or you trust to luck. There is no in-between. You either make safety a part of your job, or you become a chance-taker. And a chance-taker's working career can be short.

Hazards exist in many forms. We attempt to keep them at a minimum around here, and we try to send you home in good condition at the end of each workday. But we can do it only with your cooperation. You are important to this job, or you wouldn't be here. But you're also important to your family and your community.

So don't be a loser. Treat safety with the respect it deserves. When you lose at the game of chance-taking, you lose big.