

Safety in All Decision Making

By now we all know that the #1 Goal in KYTC’s Strategic Operating Plan is “Safety First”, and specifically to “promote safety in all decision making”. We have made progress but several recent serious injuries within our KYTC Maintenance team have shown that we are struggling with putting that concept into practice. The root cause of each can be traced to faulty risk tolerance decisions influenced by several common factors:

- 1) ***Underestimating hazard***: I know that could hurt me, and it’s a little sketchy, but I don’t feel like it is that dangerous in “this” situation.....
- 2) ***Overestimating capability & experience***: just doing the job before doesn’t mean it’s been done correctly or safely, maybe just that we have been lucky. Training? Experience? “Nah, I’ll figure out how to do it with what I have.”
- 3) ***Familiarity with the task***: am I “thinking” about my actions, or just on auto-pilot?
- 4) ***Seriousness of outcome***: how bad could it be? I’ll have it done in 2 minutes.....
- 5) ***Voluntary actions & being in control***: failing to stop & think...take 5 seconds to look for hazards, correct problems, plan your actions.
- 6) ***Personal experience***: it hasn’t happened to me, or I haven’t heard of it happening to others so I assume nothing bad has or can happen to me today.
- 7) ***Cost of non-compliance***: I’ve had incidents before and nothing was ever done to me, so I’m not worried about the cost of taking shortcuts or being careless.
- 8) ***Confidence in equipment***: My PPE or machine will protect me if something goes wrong.
- 9) ***Gain from actions***: I’ll be known as the one that will “get the job done” and be seen as a leader in the team. Doing it the safe way will slow things down, productivity or deadlines are more important than safety.
- 10) ***Role models accept risk***: My leader doesn’t recognize or prioritize safety as a primary goal so why should I?

All the above factors influence decisions all of us make every day and we sometimes roll the dice and gamble with our life as a result. Most days we win, but running out of luck or gambling unwisely can result in a serious injury or fatality (SIF) for us or others.

What you can do:

STOP before the job – what here can hurt or kill me? Can I eliminate the hazards? Do I have the tools, knowledge, and experience to do this job, or do I need to ask for help? Do we need to do this job at all? Does it have to be done “right now”, or can it wait until we have

the right resources? Maybe the most important question is.....am I willing to suffer grave injury or die to take unnecessary risks? Remember "Safety in all decision making"!