



Complacency in the Workplace

Complacency is when we go on “auto-pilot” because we have done a task over and over again. It is dangerous because we often fail to recognize a change in our environment during our normal routines. The best way to battle complacency is to stay alert and aware of our environments, no matter how comfortable we are with the task.

Driving a Car

When you learn to drive a car, it is a big responsibility. Learning the feel of the vehicle and the rules of the road is critical. Do you remember the first time you drove on a public road? New drivers are more likely to be cautious of their environment and constantly analyze everything in front of them. New drivers aren’t necessarily better than the average driver on the road, but what they lack in experience, they often make up for in focus. When experienced drivers are on the road it’s routine. Many of us don’t realize that driving is one of the most dangerous things we do daily. There are many job tasks that we do on auto-pilot but shouldn’t.

Questions to ask before starting a task

Before you start a task, ask yourself these questions to better understand the risks involved:

- Who are you working with?
- What are you working with?
- Where are you going?
- What are the hazards?

How to mitigate complacency

- Remind yourself how hazardous a task is. Treat it as if it was the first time you are completing it.
- Constantly scan your environment for hazards.
- Call out near misses when you see them. Address and report them as if they were an incident.
- Take breaks, rotate job tasks, avoid repetition if at all possible.
- Watch out for coworkers that exhibit complacent behavior.

