

Safety Matters

Provided by: ToughComp

The Fatal 10 and Red-flag Situations

A serious injury or fatality (SIF) can be caused by high-risk situations and is likely to lead to death or permanent/long-term limitation. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, while the Total Recordable Incident Rate (TRIR) has significantly decreased from 8.5 recordable incidents to less than 3 per 200,000 hours over the last 20 years, the number of SIF incidents has been on a much slower decline. This can be partly attributed to the fact that reducing frequency of injuries doesn't necessarily reduce their severity. While it's encouraging that the overall TRIR is decreasing, it's still imperative for employers and their employees to take steps to prevent the Fatal 10 and red-flag situations from occurring.

The Fatal 10

The Fatal 10 list is comprised of high-risk situations that will likely eventually lead to a SIF if allowed to continue without being identified or controlled. The following tasks are referred to as the Fatal 10:

1. **Vehicle/equipment operation**—To avoid a SIF, employees need to know where vehicles and equipment are used and be aware of when they are in close proximity to them.
 2. **Working at heights**—Employees working at heights greater than 4 feet for general industry and 6 feet for construction are at risk of a SIF occurring.
 3. **Workplace violence**—Unsafe situations created by customers, other outside
- outside parties or even those within the organization may put employees at risk.
4. **Machine hazards/lockout failures**—Machines that aren't properly guarded or locked out can cause serious injury.
 5. **Hazardous materials/environmental exposure**—Employees should be aware of when and where they may come into contact with hazardous materials. This is important training information for employees when they begin new job tasks.
 6. **Electrical/arc flash hazards**—Employees should be aware of where they may work on, be around or have contact with electricity.
 7. **Fire/explosion/hot work**—Employees who do electrical, arc, torch welding or other hot work are vulnerable to SIFs.
 8. **Confined spaces/trenching/engulfment**—If employees enter or work around confined spaces or trenches, they should be aware of the potential risks.
 9. **Suspended loads**—Suspended loads could lead to SIFs if employees are not

cautious of them.

10. **Struck by objects and equipment**—

Situations in which employees may be struck or crushed by moving objects and equipment should be avoided.

Red-flag Situations

Red-flag situations are risk factors that compound the potential for SIFs to occur, especially when combined with the Fatal 10 tasks. Employees should be aware of the following red-flag situations that could put them at risk for SIFs:

- **Nonroutine work**—When an employee is unfamiliar or out of practice with a certain task, they may be at greater risk of suffering a SIF. It's important to receive training or refreshers before beginning nonroutine work, and be extra careful while performing the task to minimize danger.
- **Stressors**—Physical and environmental stressors, including working tools, workload, heat, cold and noise, may lead to employees suffering from a SIF.
- **Fatigue**—Working long hours, multiple shifts or doing shift work often contributes to incidents affecting workers' health and safety. If an employee believes they are too fatigued to complete their work in a safe manner, they should tell their supervisor immediately.
- **Production pressures**—If the pressure to complete tasks becomes too great for an employee to handle, they may begin to take shortcuts or not prioritize safety procedures. Even at times when productivity must increase to meet job demands, safety cannot be compromised.
- **Inadequate supervision**—Supervisors must monitor and address employee health and safety issues, and follow up with solutions to any noted concerns.
- **Working alone**—Employees who work alone may experience low- or high-risk situations depending on the circumstances.
- **Inadequate operating procedures, training and/or follow-up**—Companies with inadequate operating procedures, training and/or follow-up protocols may be putting their employees at risk of SIFs.
- **Poor equipment or task design**—Equipment that is dangerous, out of date or not being used according to its manufacturer's design can lead to employee SIFs. Inefficient task design—such as tasks that don't fit a worker's capabilities—should also be immediately flagged.
- **New employees**—New hires are more likely to be involved in safety incidents than experienced employees. Therefore, they should be properly trained and their presence on job sites should be carefully supervised to avoid any incidents.
- **Lack of engineering controls**—When

engineering controls—policies and procedures that reduce or prevent hazards from coming into contact with workers—are not in place, there is a risk of employees suffering SIFs.

Conclusion

It is the responsibility of both employers and employees to implement and execute health and safety measures to avoid the Fatal 10 and red-flag situations from occurring and leading to SIFs. For more information, contact us today.



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