

# Workplace Safety Group

## November 2008

# Monthly News e-Letter

## ZERO ACCIDENT VISION



Workplace Safety Group

71 King Street

Suite 206

St. Catharines, Ontario

L2R 3H7

Phone: 905-688-9429

Fax: 905-688-9097

1-866-347-7707

\* It is important to remember that the most expensive preventive step is the one you don't take. \*

There is ongoing controversy around incidents vs. accidents. If the belief is that accidents happen by chance, then it follows that the congruent belief is that they cannot be prevented. Too many people believe that accidents are an inevitable fact of life, thereby exonerating themselves of any responsibility. A safe workplace is created when management is motivated to lay the foundation for improving safety. Incidents will continue to happen however, with strategies in place, they will not escalate to life altering accidents.

The principles of "zero accidents vision" include:

- All accidents are preventable
- Accidents do not happen by accident
- Education is key to successful accident prevention

In order to prove these principles, owners and managers must implement a two-fold strategy:

1. Their own commitment to health and safety strengthens safety motivation with workers by encouraging and rewarding safe behaviour, providing educational tools and encouraging a positive attitude toward, and a willingness to accept a health and safety culture.
2. The second strategy provides methods and tools such as rules and regulations (existing legal documents), risk identification, accident investigation and checklists to make worker acceptance easier.

By using these two strategies, workers understand that employers and managers are serious in their quest for workplace safety and that they are sharing ownership in the process.

Incidents may be "near misses" and as such are looked at as "lucky breaks" but are really accidents just waiting to happen and from which lessons can be learned. It bears repeating, *accidents are preventable*; workers who buy into the safety culture and take personal responsibility and accountability have recognized this. This is "zero accident vision".

Education is the key. By being provided with effective learning tools workers will become more safety conscious and will develop a sense of belonging and mutual concern for co-workers.