

:: Hazards & Accidents ::

If someone asked you to define a hazard and/or an accident could you do it? Many times hazards cause accidents, but what is the definition of each? To help educate employees, the following definitions have been provided for your reference and understanding:

A *hazard* is a condition or changing set of circumstances that presents a potential for injury, illness or property damage; the potential or inherent characteristics of an activity, condition or circumstance that can produce adverse or harmful consequences.

An *accident* is an unfortunate, unforeseen and unplanned event or circumstance, usually resulting in an unfavorable outcome, often the result of carelessness or ignorance.

There are some key words in these definitions: unplanned; unforeseen; unfortunate; unfavorable and, most importantly, **POTENTIAL!**

For an unplanned or unforeseen event to take place, there has to be *potential!* Complacency and taking things for granted are causes of a tremendous number of injuries each year. Recognizing hazards and doing something about them is everyone's responsibility!

So as you begin work, ask yourself:

- Do I have the right tools/equipment for the job?
- Have I inspected my tools/equipment to make sure they are in good repair or am I trying to "just get by?"
- Is the work laid out to provide safe completion of the job?
- Are the materials I am using safe, and do I need additional personal protective equipment (PPE) such as safety glasses, gloves, etc.?
- Is there a safer way to accomplish the task?
- Are all necessary equipment/machine guards in place?
- Are procedures such as lock-out/tag-out being followed?

You need to be aware of the potential hazards associated with any job and ensure you are performing the job safely.