



HORSEPLAY IN THE WORKPLACE

INTRODUCTION:

Horseplay is defined as rough, boisterous, rowdy activity or pranks, and presents a safety hazard that can quickly get out of hand and lead to injury or death. Some examples of horseplay include unauthorized contests, irresponsible vehicle operation, playing around or goofing off, harassment, grabbing, chasing, social pressure to participate in unsafe acts, and joking that includes physical contact. Horseplay is often initiated by a practical joker who is seeking laughs and attention from coworkers. Playing jokes and having fun may seem like a good way to break up the workday, however, horseplay in the workplace is not always harmless, and often interferes with productivity. There are enough hazards on the job without creating new ones. Do not trade safety for amusement; horseplay at work should never be considered entertainment.

RISKS:

Every year there are numerous injuries directly caused by horseplay or pranks on the job. Most workplace accidents can be prevented by being alert to hazards and following safety rules. When employees engage in horseplay, safety rules are often disregarded. Horseplay is usually considered a friendly way to let off steam, but it is dangerous because it creates situations of unnecessary risk due to the unexpected distraction, and can result in humiliation, embarrassment, and sometimes even a desire for revenge. If someone gets hurt as a result of your horseplay or joke, you may be liable for damages. Some incidents where horseplay has resulted in injury have led to criminal prosecution, with the injuries being considered the result of a deliberate act and not an accident.

Some of the risks associated with horseplay include but are not limited to the following:

- **Running or chasing** another employee can lead to tripping, slipping or falling. It may also lead to a domino effect, causing the intended employee to crash into someone else and possibly fall against heavy machinery and be injured by moving parts. Boxes or open containers of hazardous substances can be knocked over, possibly causing injury to other employees.
- **Throwing** tools is a form of horseplay that often causes injuries. Employees are in danger of being struck in the head, eye or foot, or cut with a sharp edge.
- **Tampering** with personal protective equipment can cause damage to or compromise the integrity of the equipment, exposing workers to hazardous substances or conditions.
- **Speeding and stunt driving** while operating forklifts can cause tipping, injuring the driver or employees nearby.
- **Climbing** on or under the forks on a forklift or moving crane parts can lead to crushing injuries.
- **Pushing, teasing or distracting** a fellow employee who is working with machinery can lead to pinch point injuries.



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PREVENTION:

Do not initiate horseplay or allow yourself to get pressured into participating in it. Follow all regulations, instructions and safety rules to ensure the protection of all employees and others who may be in the work environment. If a coworker is behaving in an unsafe or unprofessional way, report it to a supervisor. The safety and well-being of all employees is very important. Horseplay and other behavior such as hazing, initiations, or other demoralizing, mean acts that adversely affect safety are considered inappropriate. These activities will not be tolerated and are strictly prohibited.



CONCLUSION:

You are responsible for your own safety. Perform your job correctly, and follow the safety rules and procedures that have been designed to protect you. Failure to follow safety rules is dangerous, not only to yourself but to those around you. Do not encourage horseplay by participating in it or applauding it, for it can quickly turn from entertaining to threatening and become a safety rule violation that results in serious injury on the job.

Remember: Horseplay, hazing, pranks, etc. are forbidden and will not be tolerated.



Questions? Call 1-800-734-3574

