

PREVENTABLE ACCIDENTS

Investigation of accidents reported during the past five months has revealed the fact that the greater portion of these accidents could have been prevented. Disobedience of orders, willful neglect, carelessness and bad practices are factors in a large majority of cases, and inasmuch as untold suffering and a great economic loss are occasioned by these factors, it might be worth while to cite a few accidents which have occurred in order to show to what extent care and thoughtfulness are needed to reduce this awful toll which is being exacted from the industrial population. The following are a few typical cases in which the above-mentioned factors caused the accidents and represent classes of accidents which could easily be prevented if every person concerned would be careful:

Disobedience of Orders

At one of the quarries of the State an employe, in direct disregard of orders, rode on a truck loaded with stone. This truck was allowed to run down an incline by gravity, and instead of walking behind as he had been told to do, the employe climbed on a truck and in jumping off got under the wheels. His left ankle was broken and in addition he was badly bruised, so that he was compelled to remain away from work for many weeks and to lose considerable in wages, besides enduring a great amount of suffering.

Taking a Chance

An employe of a certain plant had occasion to examine a motor. Instead of making the examination from the outside of the guard rail, which in this case was possible, he evidently climbed or stepped over the guard rail and was caught by the driving belt. He was immediately whirled to his death. Had it been absolutely necessary for this man to go inside of the guard rail, his first act should have been to stop the motor, thereby removing all possibility of an accident. The chance taker eventually gets caught.

Neglected Wounds

The following accidents demonstrate the necessity of the prompt reporting of all injuries, no matter how trivial, for attention and treatment. Serious cases of blood poisoning often occur from neglect, and not only result in the loss of dollars and cents, but also cause great suffering, with perhaps the loss of a finger, hand, leg or even life.

An employe in a steel mill while changing rolls caught his finger on a sharp edge of a bolt and failed to have same attended to. As a result the wound became infected, necessitating the absence of the injured man from his work for three weeks.

In an axle works a workman was assembling differential cases, and while so doing received a scratch on the first finger of his right hand. He did not report this injury, but remained away from work the next day. He did not apply to the company hospital for treatment, but saw one of the city physicians. Blood poisoning set in and an operation was performed five days after the injury was received. This man was away from his work for at least three weeks, all due to carelessness in not reporting for treatment as soon as the accident occurred.

Improper Use of Elevator

An employe in a warehouse was ordered to get some material from the third floor. It was necessary for him to use the elevator. Lifting up the safety gate he started the elevator and when it reached the floor on which he was standing he attempted to jump on while the elevator was in motion. His foot slipped and his body was caught between the safety gate and the



floor of the elevator. He was instantly killed. No person should attempt to step on or off a moving elevator. Repeatedly accidents with serious and fatal results have occurred in this manner.

"He Knew How to Do It"

An employe had been working at a "pickling" vat for over four years. This vat was used for "pickling" plates, the process being carried on in the following manner: Before the plate is put in the pickler it is placed on edge in a cradle or rack. In this cradle or rack are set small iron rods about one-half inch in diameter, in order to keep the plates apart, so that the pickle solution will have free action on the plates. The cradle or rack is then set in the vat. These vats extend about two feet above the floor level. This man had been repeatedly instructed to push on the cradle and not to pull on it. He disobeyed the order and took hold of one of these iron rods, placed his foot against a pile of plates to get a greater leverage and pulled on it. The rod broke off and he fell into the vat with fatal result. Strict obedience to instructions is one of the prime requisites of a workman's duty.

Horseplay

A workman in a knife manufacturing plant threw a six-inch pipe nipple at a fellow workman, striking him on the index finger of his right hand and breaking it. As a result, the injured man will be absent from his work for at least two or three weeks. All fooling and horseplay should be prohibited while on duty, and rigid rules should be enforced against it.

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