It Was Only a Matter of Time Meeting Kit

The term ¨it was only a matter of time¨ has been used by most people. It describes good events as well as not so good events.

The good events can be described in a positive context as ¨it was only a matter of time¨ before Sally was able to establish the quota for the quarter. On the negative side, in the context of a workplace accident “John was always in his cell phone while working and it was only a matter of time that the boss caught him”

Other employees knew what John was doing was wrong. More importantly, steps could have been taken to prevent John from using his cell while he was working.

CO WORKERS RISK TAKERS

When referring to specific coworkers taking risks and then getting injured on the job, this has usually been going on for some time. Typically, other other coworkers were aware of the behavioir.

So, when the injury happens, the often heard phrase is uttered: ¨It was only a matter of time¨.

UNADDRESSED HAZARDS IN THE WORKPLACE

“It was only a matter of time” situations result in injury when existing hazards are left in the workplace. What results from this unaddressed action is that everyone in the workplace is exposed to risk with the real possibility of injury. This leaves it to workers to deal with whatever those hazards may be.

APPROPRIATE ACTIONS BY WORKERS

Existing Hazards

Workers need to:

- Work with management to attempt to eliminate or mitigate the hazard(s). If your direct supervisor does not take your concerns seriously get another level of management involved.
- Take any action you can to mitigate the hazard you are exposed to. Let others know of the existence of the hazard and what can be done to avoid exposure to it.

Other Risk-Taking Workers

- **Speak up.** Realize that it is your problem when someone else at work is taking risks. Even if you are not injured someone else may be or the site could be shut down due to a serious incident occurring.
- **Confront the worker.** Tell the worker that there is a right and wrong way to do the job. Injuries affect all workers including their families.
- **Contact the supervisor.** Ensure that the supervisors are made aware of the problem so that they can fix the issues.

SAFETY TAKEAWAY

Before it gets to a coworker saying “it was a matter of time” after an injury occurs, take action to correct a dangerous situation. Employees and management want everyone to go home healthy. There are far reaching consequences for everyone if a worker suffers injury. When an injury occurs, it affects the company as a whole and the mindset shifts from “it is not my problem” to it is my problem and I need to speak up.

FINAL WORD

¨It was only a matter of time¨ has real relevance to workplace safety. Unfortunately, this phrase is often used in the negative sense. Risk – taking workers usually find out too late that their actions can haunt them well after the incident has occurred.