Leave Yourself an Out Meeting Kit

LEAVE YOURSELF AN OUT

What does it mean to leave yourself an out? The ability to escape danger if a negative situation occurs. The term **“leaving yourself an out”** is often used in defensive driving courses. These courses always stress that no matter what the situation is, drivers need to be always on defense. Being a defensive driver allows you to avoid preventable collisions. Situations such as a car in front of you braking unexpectedly or a driver swerving into your lane are unsafe acts that can put you at risk for serious injury if you are not prepared to react. A defensive driver always has an “out” so that they can react to changing conditions around them and have a safe option to take to avoid a collision.

EXAMPLES WHERE WORKERS DO NOT HAVE AN OUT

Dropped loads. Workers inadvertently or carelessly put themselves at risk to be struck-by a lifted load. Workers dropped objects safety should never put themselves in a position where a load can strike them if it falls. They should also consider giving extra space for whatever the work task is in case conditions change or something fails.

Working around vehicles or equipment. All too often employees find themselves in a position where an operator of a piece of heavy equipment or a driver of a vehicle does not see them. The problem with this scenario is that when the individual does not have an “out” they will be struck. If you have an out, even if you find yourself in danger, you may be able to escape and avoid serious injury or worse.

WHERE WORKERS NEED AN OUT

- **Stuck-in/Caught-Between**– This could be pinned by a piece of heavy equipment, a load, or a vehicle.
- **Struck-By-** This could also be by a load that is being carried, dropped, or even a piece of heavy equipment that could not see you.
- **Released Energy**– This could be a burn or anything else.

DEADLY HAZARDS IN CONSTRUCTION/MANUFACTURING

Hazards in these sectors require an “out” for workers in the following **target areas**:

- Heavy Equipment
- Machinery
- Hand and Power Tools
- Material handling
- Mobile Equipment
- Excavations
- Unsafe Behaviors

OTHER OPERATIONS WORKER NEED AN OUT

- Never walk under suspended loads.
- Cut away from your body.
- Never pull equipment or tools towards yourself. Position yourself so if the tool or equipment slips it will not hit you.
- Never work directly under other employees. If you must work at an elevated height, barricade the area below and use means to secure your tools.
- If you are hoisting materials, barricade the area.
- If you use force when pushing or pulling, look where you would go if you slipped, or equipment gave way.
- When working around equipment that could potentially start up, always lock, and tag it out.

- When working around mobile equipment make sure the operator knows you are there.

GIVE YOURSELF AN OUT TO PREVENT FALLING OBJECT INJURIES

- Use tool lanyards to prevent tools from falling.
- Keep all material at least 3 feet from a leading edge, other than material specifically required for work in process.
- Remove items from all loose or unsealed pockets, especially top shirt pockets, such as phones, pens, and tools.
- Do not hang objects over guardrails.
- Secure all objects when working on an elevated surface.
- Ensure toe boards are in place and inspected frequently.
- Require hard hats and other required personal protective equipment (PPE) for every person in areas at risk for falling objects—no exceptions.
- Rope off the area, if possible, where fall or drop hazards may exist.
- Inspect all PPE prior to use to confirm it still meets manufacturers' recommendations.
- Communicate often. Work as a team to avoid complacency and always remain vigilant of these procedures.

THE BEST WAY TO AVOID WORKPLACE ACCIDENT TYPES IS TO ELIMINATE THE HAZARDS WHENEVER POSSIBLE.

When elimination is not possible, engineering controls are the next best choice in protecting yourself from injury. Some engineering controls that could protect you from line of fire incidents include physical barriers, guarding around moving parts, and toe boards on elevated work platforms to prevent objects from falling to the area below.

FINAL WORD

You should always strive to never put yourself directly under a lifted load or behind a backing vehicle. Workers should always be mindful what your options are if conditions change, and a negative situation occurs. Always leave yourself an “out”.