

How Much Did This Accident Cost?
By
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Safety Consultant, Industrial Truck Safety

After twenty years of instructing forklift operators and safety managers, I am still amazed at the lack of foresight and planning provided by business leaders, supervisors, and the employees across this nation when the subject **is** safety.

Many companies give good lip service to the topic, and talk about safety being a number one priority with their company. But walk through their facility and you are probably following the guy they sent out ten minutes ago to cover up as many safety issues and violations as possible.

This guy rushes through the warehouse, stockroom, or other varied offices yelling out “Put on your safety glasses”, “Put on your hard hats”, or “Check your area, the **Safety Guy** is here.”

This is the game we play. You assume that the **Safety Guy** doesn't see it, Most “**Safety Guys**” act like it does not happen because they do not want to lose their job, their client, their contract, etc.

Guess what? We see it, it is real, it is dangerous, and your employees, their families, your customers, your business, and **you** will eventually pay the price!

Well I am one of the “**Safety Guys**” and so is everyone working under the roof where your business is located.

I am not afraid to let my clients be aware of the issues that I see when I visit their facility.

The reason I am not afraid is that I made a decision the day I opened the door to my business.

I decided that human health and human life was more valuable than any manufactured product, any person's ego, any contest, goal, or competition that companies sometimes play to feel good about their effort in safety.

While we play, we focus on a specific area of safety and during the work day we walk blindly past dozens of hazards but they do not show up on our checklist, competition form, or goal worksheet.

While we play, we either fail to hear the warnings given by our employees, our vendors, and even our supervisors, **or** we fail to notice the deafening silence of employees, vendors, supervisors, and yes, even the **Safety Guy** because they are afraid to speak up.

If you are guilty of creating an atmosphere of fear, laziness, laxity, or machismo where everyone tries to best everyone else in stupidity, wake up.

Accidents don't have to happen.

To the Business Owner, President, General Manager, Boss, Or Top Dog:

Safety Is Not A Cost, Safety Is An Investment!

You have taken the time to interview, background check, and hire your employee. As time goes by this person begins to gather knowledge. At first, they can just locate the time clock, lunch room, rest room and at the end of the day, the exit to the parking lot.

But as time goes by, they learn your policies and procedures, they can locate product by stock or sku number, they become more efficient, more confident, and require less training, guidance and direct supervision.

Why then, being a reasonably intelligent business person would you throw away the time and cash investment you have in this person to save the cost of teaching them to work safely.

Why do you want to start all over again with a new person that lacks these skills?

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Could it be that you are giving your human resource personnel, job security? If you keep hiring, they are secure in their employment.

Can't be that easy, I know, your supervisors don't have enough to do, they need to spend some quality time with a new employee to fine tune their training skills.

Wait, that's not it either, you want to show your generosity by spreading the company's wealth.

You get to pay your new employee, while your injured employee survives on workman's compensation.

You like keeping your insurance company busy paying the bills for the injured employee.

You get to pay your supervisor to train the new employee when they could be conducting your business today.

You get to pay your attorney to sort the entire mess out as it occurs.

If the accident is bad enough, you or another designated person gets to spend some one-on one time with an OSHA Compliance Officer.

You get to pay any fines issued by OSHA or spend time fighting the fines, (you get to spend money doing this as well).

But let's not just pick on the Business Owner, President, General Manager, Boss, or Top Dog. There is enough blame to go around.

To the Warehouse Manager, Dock Manager, Superintendent, or Production Manager.

You Saved A Dollar And Spent One Hundred Thousand Dollars!

You needed the new guy today, that training session can wait, It is just a waste of time anyway.

You needed the new guy today, because the last one got hurt doing something he should not have been doing, wonder how that happened?

You needed the new guy today, it doesn't matter if he has a "deer in the headlights look" when you tell him to do something, He will get better, we hope.

The new guy asked when his safety shoes would arrive that were ordered for him, just tell him to be "real careful" until they get here. If we make it another week without an accident, the boss will buy lunch for everybody.

You needed the new guy today; it is really hard getting things done when they keep making everybody go to these *safety things!*

But let's not forget the employee themselves.

To John or Jane Doe, the Crew, Joe or Jeannie Blue Collar, YOU!!!

This is what this is all about...

You ignore the safety signs because you see them everyday.

You don't use your safety glasses because they are hot and uncomfortable.

You moan about your pay then go visit the guy or girl who through their own negligence just cost the company hundreds of thousands of dollars.

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You make statement like, “they have plenty of money, it doesn't hurt the company, or that's what they have insurance for.”

Well let me clue you in, if you can do better, then you should. But don't be part of the problem.

If business owners do it right, they get taxed for the privilege.

If they do it wrong, they get taxed, fined, and sued!!!

Add this to the wonderful things involved in running a business such as paying for the building, lights, water, insurance, office supplies, tools, forklifts, packaging material, racking, cleaning supplies, computers, and yes even safety training materials to give to the **Safety Guy!**

Accident reduction and prevention involves everyone in the business top to bottom.

Some view it as just employment, but think about it, if any person fails to do what should be done, everybody pays.

It is your pay raise, equipment, bonuses, retirement, health, and even your life at stake.

Now Ask!

How much will the next accident cost?

Author and keynote speaker Kenneth Hutchins has over 30 years experience in the Security Industry serving as a Law Enforcement Specialist with both military and civilian agencies in addition to Loss Prevention Management with some of America's largest retailers. Mr. Hutchins' expertise in security and entertaining presentations have made him a sought after keynote speaker in the private sector. Author of “Stealing Back Your Profits” a guide for small and mid-size business and of multiple safety programs Mr. Hutchins teaches at several community colleges around Texas. Mr. Hutchins is the founder and President of Industrial Truck Safety. Mr. Hutchins also serves as the Operations Manager of Bedrock Electronic Security Technology (BEST) a division of EMCS, Inc guiding the convergence of Physical Security with Information Technology (I.T.) Services and Telecommunications Services offered by BEST and its sister company BedRock Services.