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Shortcut To Permanent Disability

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Todd is 23 years old, married and has two wonderful children. Todd has been working as a molding press operator since graduation from high school six years ago. Todd's company has a very active safety program and demonstrates true concern for safety.

One day Todd noticed a work stool in his area that had a broken leg support. As a quick fix, Todd used strapping tape to "repair" the stool. Later that afternoon, as Todd sat down to perform his daily paperwork, the "repaired" stool leg gave way under his weight, causing Todd to fall backwards to the concrete floor.

When Todd hit the floor, the backrest pressed into his back and crushed several vertebra. This resulted in permanent disability. At age 23 with only a high school education and six years of work experience, Todd is unable to work in any job that requires prolonged sitting, standing, walking or climbing. How will he provide for his family or play with his children?

Todd's reaction to the problem of the broken stool was not uncommon. It is human nature for us to find the easiest and quickest solution to problems that arise. As we look at safety and how it applies to each of us, it is imperative that we examine human nature and behavior.

Todd's failure to properly report and repair the stool must be addressed. To prevent future accidents under similar conditions, Todd's supervisors and managers must also address questions such as, "Why did Todd not properly repair the stool?" or "Was Todd empowered to refuse to work on the damaged stool?"

This accident scenario is a reminder to report all hazards, close calls, accidents and injuries.

If you report a problem, you may keep someone else from getting hurt. When you have a close call or a minor accident, the same hazards involved might result in serious injury for someone else later.

Minor injuries can have major complications. You might think you aren't badly hurt, but you may develop problems later. Minor wounds can get serious if they become infected. It is important to get first aid treatment for all injuries.

Never ignore hazards. If you are authorized and qualified to do so, properly repair the problem. Otherwise, report the problem so someone else can correct it. Do not rely on makeshift repairs - this can lead to a serious injury.

Be sure to learn your company's procedures for reporting hazards, close calls, accidents and injuries. Find out who you should talk to. Follow through to make sure the problem has been corrected.

Things do go wrong sometimes. It is up to you to report problems so things go right next time.

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