



# The Porcelain Press

NSWC Indian Head Division  
Safety Department Newsletter

1<sup>st</sup> InSTALLment

Distributed to a Restroom Near You

February/March 2006

## *Complacency*

Complacency is the curse of our personal safety. No matter how vigilant we are, as time goes by with no problems occurring, we become complacent and let our guard down.

Life is what happens when you least expect it. People do not get hurt when they expect it. Accidents occur when you least expect them. So, to be safe, you must expect the worst to happen. You do not need to be paranoid, you just need to maintain your vigilance, even when there is nothing apparently going wrong.

Complacency is a natural function of the brain. The brain is designed to automate repetitive behavior. Complacency is not the result of apathy, carelessness, or a flaw in your personality; it is the way the brain functions. Most of our day-to-day behavior is automated; it happens without conscious or deliberate thought. Repetitive tasks become automated to free up our attention for things that are new, unusual, or threatening. If it were not that way, our brain would be overwhelmed by the simplest of tasks.

The brain constantly and unconsciously scans the environment for signs of danger. We notice and respond to what is unique, unusual, or threatening. However, repeated exposure to hazardous situations dulls our defense mechanism and our awareness. People, who are repeatedly exposed to dangerous or hazardous situations, become less concerned and cautious about them when nothing happens. Over time, the absence of consequences causes us to become lax about our personal safety.

The cure for complacency is a deliberate effort to apply safety strategies in the absence of perceived danger. Remember, the time that you are at greatest risk is when you least expect something bad is about to happen. The key is to form safety habits that you do everyday until they override your former unsafe behaviors and become automated.

Complacency is like a chronic illness that you must treat daily to maintain your health. You are never cured of complacency, it requires constant attention to prevent it from adversely affecting your life.

## *Create A Billboard Contest*

The Safety Department is sponsoring a billboard contest in which all employees will be eligible to participate in designing a billboard message that deals with workplace safety. The winning safety message and artwork will be enlarged and placed on one of the activity billboards as a safety notice throughout the next year. The contest is open to all employees and their family members. The designs may be submitted as drawings, computer designs, concepts, etc. The winning employees' design, name and organization will appear on the billboard and will receive a Safety Award presented at an awards ceremony by the CO. Submit your billboard design to the Safety Department by 31 March 2006.

## *Ask the Safety Wiz*

The Safety Wizard will answer your questions and concerns about the safety program!

**Dear Wiz:** I work in the administrative area, why do you keep sending me all this stuff when I can't affect explosive safety?

- *Admin Safety Only*

**Dear Admin:** Just because you work outside of the restricted area or don't perform explosive operations doesn't mean that you can't and don't affect the explosive safety program. The goal for our business areas is to "always provide business operations that enable technical excellence." As such, every function we perform is tied to providing a quality product, safely and efficiently, that is, explosive safety is a critical part of performing our mission. The actions or inactions of just one person can directly or indirectly affect the explosive safety of others. Whether you are involved in Personnel, Procurement, Financial or Program Management, your actions affect the explosive operations that are conducted at the Division, for example, if we do not have enough people with the right training to perform an explosive operation, we are putting the other people at risk. Similarly, if the appropriate safety gear is not procured and available at the required time, we are putting people at risk. Bottom line, everyone's actions can have a positive or negative affect on the explosive safety program. The linkage may not be clear at times, but don't be misled to think that you can't and don't make a difference in explosive safety.