

National Youth Safety Essay Scholarship Contest Winner

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Accepting employment on a construction job site, regardless of trade or occupation, means participating in the creation of a structure. Furthermore, the acceptance of the fact that you will be doing your job in a potentially extreme hazardous environment with death or injury quite literally around every corner. Various types of workers occupy these sites using their individual skills to complete assigned tasks on schedule. With all the commotion of a living site constantly ongoing, unfortunately, safety may take a back seat on occasion. Working in a dangerous environment is an occurrence that cannot always be avoided. Through a better grasp of identifying potential workplace hazards and the understanding of correct usage of safety equipment associated through the OSHA 10-Hour training I received, potential injuries or casualties from these hazards could dwindle drastically, benefitting not only myself but everyone working within proximity.

Having had experience while working on various job sites, I have worked around hundreds of other tradesmen and laborers. Now I know first-hand that, along with copious amounts of other people working in these environments, comes an equally abundant level of the understanding of safety and preventing hazards. With the help of training from OSHA-10, I have seen myself noticing potential workplace hazards with better clarity than before. I am now able to correct, or have corrected, various hazards before the possibility of negative outcomes resulting from those unaware of any possible danger. Something as easily controlled as properly covering a hole in the deck can make a huge difference in the outcome of an unsuspecting worker walking overtop of it.

Possessing an improved ability to recognize these hazards is just one section of the invaluable knowledge I've received from the OSHA training courses. Another that I've gained is the additional knowledge about the wear and proper utilization of personal protective equipment (PPE). The provided training on this subject should be taken very seriously as this could be considered a first line of defense following the identification of hazards. Not only could your life be on the line, but along with a potential casualty can follow an avalanche of inquiries, investigations, possible job shutdowns and arguably (depending on who you ask) more negative repercussions, including the loss of time and money.

Proper usage of PPE, after identifying potential hazards, has saved me from probable serious injury on two separate occasions. In the first, I went to work on the top of a structure and noticed many different trades working closely together. I made sure I was aware of my surroundings, but accidents can happen at any moment. After an improperly trained worker struck me on the side of the head with a bundle of rebar, I received no injury due to proper wear of my safety equipment. A second situation was when, before walking into a condo unit during the rough-in stage, I noticed the stud work seemed to be inconsistently completed and decided to don my PPE. As it turned out, thanks to my knowledge on identifying safety hazards, I only obtained a minor cut from improperly secured metal studs falling and striking my safety glasses. Both of these are examples of personal understanding of hazardous environments that could have ended poorly if it wasn't for the proper wear of safety gear reinforced by the OSHA training I received.

The process of identifying and eliminating situations that could cause a working environment to become dangerous is the responsibility of all those involved in the project. Yet in practical application, some fall short of their responsibility for one reason or another. It may be the lack of knowing how they are establishing an unsafe space, due to a scarcity of proper training. Though training can be time-consuming and at times agitating, it can make you more of a valuable employee, as you saved time and money by preventing incidents from occurring, and are proven to be a trustworthy coworker. Being an OSHA 10-Hour card holder has done just that for me. Following this training course, I have found myself showing a deeper understanding of identifying safety hazards. Though overused, the phrase 'safety is key' is important because when kept in mind and properly executed, everyone wins. Clients receive a safe and beautiful dwelling to work or live in and simultaneously, tradesmen or laborers collect a paycheck and go home to their families at the end of the day, continuing their careers which to me, seems to be a better future.