

**It's not always easy to get employees to comply with your company's safety regulations. When dealing with difficult situations it's best to stay calm, behave professionally, and explain the reason for the rule.**

**G**o Team! This is the time of year when teams are very much in our thinking. How is our favorite professional baseball team shaping up, or how is our fantasy team doing? How is our kid's little league or soccer team doing? How did our favorite football team do in the draft? But, more to the point of this article, how is our safety team doing? Yes, your safety team does exist, and safety is definitely a teamwork proposition. Even if your company does not support a formal safety team, each and every employee at your place of work is a member of your safety team whether they know it or not. And just like all teams, there are some members that contribute the majority of the work and some that do not seem to contribute at all. It is our responsibility as employers and employees to provide a safe working environment for our fellow employees as well as ourselves, and each of us contributes to this environment in our own way.


The so-called non-contributors also participate in the overall condition of the safety environment; sometimes negatively, but at least by example. These negative examples should be immediately pointed out and dealt with. Often the occurrence happens and is explained by "we have always done it this way," or "this way has never harmed me." These arguments must be handled in a timely manner, because we all know that an existing hazard will eventually cause an accident, no matter how long it has existed without an accident having occurred. I

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believe that every hazard—and even uncooperative employees—can be dealt with by carefully analyzing the problem and then dealing with it in a non-confrontational manner. I find that when dealing with a person who does not feel that safety is a worthwhile issue, it is very important to maintain a calm and professional demeanor. Then it is simply a matter of explaining how the person could be hurt by continuing in the same manner, because no one wants to be injured at their job. So always try to remember that teamwork is the best way to ensure safe conditions for everyone involved.

One of the topics in this month's issue is lubricants. While we have discussed this topic in previous columns, it certainly can stand further consideration. From a safety standpoint, the proper lubrication of a machine tool is paramount. A machine that is not properly lubricated is an accident waiting to happen. You can hope that all that is damaged is the machine, the part, or the tooling, but if the machine freezes due to lack of lubrication it is not unusual

for things to go flying. This creates a very hazardous situation for the operator and for anyone in the vicinity. Of course, no one is going to purposely ignore the lubrication of a machine they are running, but it is very easy to get so busy that this very basic step is sometimes overlooked. We need to emphasize the importance of proper lubrication and of checking the equipment regularly to maintain the proper levels. Another point I would like to make, however obvious it may seem, is that lubricants are slippery and can create a very serious hazard when they are allowed to accumulate on surfaces such as floors or table surfaces. Slipping on floors, or tools slipping on tables, can lead to severe injuries. So as important as it is to properly lubricate machines, it is equally important to be sure that the area we are working in is free of lubrication.

The last subject I would like to mention this month concerns uniforms. If your company does not use work uniforms, it is something you should consider. Industrial supply companies are now able to provide comfortable uniforms that improve the workers' safety. They use fabrics that resist stains, are designed to provide adequate coverage without having loose articles that can get caught in machinery, and even assist in evaporative cooling for the wearer. If your company does not use uniforms, or even if it does, I highly recommend that you consult with your supplier about the latest improvements. You may find that this simple step will improve morale and safety in your shop. 

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

With more than 30 years of experience in the gear industry, Terry McDonald is partner and manager of Repair Parts, Inc., and a current member and past-chairman of the American National Standards Institute B11.11 Subcommittee on Safety Requirements for Construction, Care, and Use of Gear Cutting Equipment. McDonald writes this monthly column specifically for *Gear Solutions* magazine, and he can be reached at (815) 968-4499 or [rpi@repair-parts-inc.com](mailto:rpi@repair-parts-inc.com). The company's Web site is [[www.repair-parts-inc.com](http://www.repair-parts-inc.com)].