

2022-01 New Year Message

Hello everyone.

I hope all of you had an opportunity to relax and spend some time with your family and friends during the holidays and I wish you the best for 2022.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, sixteen (16) colleagues have lost their lives to the virus. I believe that without the strong actions and decisions you made to keep your employees safe during this pandemic, more of our friends and colleagues would have succumbed to the virus. You should all be proud of all your efforts and the efforts of your teams.

2021 was a challenging year in regards to the injuries our co-workers and contractors sustained. We saw a significant increase in high severity incidents, with four (4) life altering, irreversible incidents. We need to challenge ourselves and ask what we can do to help everyone make it home safely each and every day.

Aristotle said that "Excellence is never an accident. It is always the result of high intention, sincere effort, and intelligent execution; it represents the wise choice of many alternatives – choice, not chance, determines your destiny." Aristotle's words hold very true today, especially when I think about excellence in safety. Behavior, a choice, contributes to more than 90% of our injuries. In some cases, even with a bad choice the results may not be so bad. This can make it very difficult to change behaviors. For example, using a chair as a ladder or texting while walking or driving – we do those things and never get hurt – it is easy to feel we are in control and can do them safely. However, every now and then, those same choices may lead to a tragic, even fatal outcome.

In 2021, more than 60% of our injuries were from (1) slips, trips or falls (most at the same level), (2) ergonomic issues (over-extending, lifting, etc), and (3) placing our hands in the line of fire. In most cases, the person was performing a normal task, a routine task. So, how can we help people make wiser choices – holding a handrail, looking all around before entering a congested area, always following the life saving rules, being more aware of where they are placing their hands, etc.

I started thinking about myself and when I have hurt myself during a routine activity like walking or getting out of a car – things we all probably take for granted. In the past, I have tripped while walking and twisted an ankle and have had my hand caught in a car door. Immediately after those incidents, I paid much closer attention to where I was walking and where I placed my hands (not only getting in and out of a car). However, over time, the accident became a distant memory and my behavior (my choice) gradually evolved, no longer paying close attention – I returned to auto-pilot.

For me, to consistently make wiser choices, I have to make a conscious effort, especially if the "wise choice" takes more time. I do not think I am so different from most people. If you want to help your teams make wiser choices, you should consider Aristotle's guidance – (1) ensure your intentions /expectations with regards to behaviors are clearly known and communicated to your teams, (2) put in the time and effort needed to understand where your teams are struggling (why do they make the choices they do), and (3) co-create with your teams the changes needed to make it easier/more natural for them to make the right choices.

I look forward to working with all of you in 2022 and together, I know we can achieve our ambition of everyone making it home unharmed each and every day.

Thanks and Stay Safe,

James