



Should I
keep my PPE on?

"For safety's sake—do something."

Rationalizing Unsafe Choices

Deciding to follow every single safety rule or procedure does not come natural to us. We constantly have to work towards making the right decisions every single day. Many times individuals find ways to rationalize not working safely. It is important for each employee to recognize this error trap and address it when it arises.

WHY WE RATIONALIZE UNSAFE CHOICES

The majority of the time, we all know what the right choice is when it comes to safety during a specific work task. Safety trainings, policies, procedures, labels, etc. all communicate what needs to be done in order to mitigate hazards and work safely. The problem is, there are many factors that affect whether or not we want to make the right decisions in a given moment. A few of these factors include:

- Time pressure.
- Lack of supervision around.
- Lack of enforcement of rules.
- Energy levels.
- Mood.

Individuals facing one or more of these factors will use them to rationalize to themselves why a certain safety rule does not need to be followed. For example, "I forgot my fall protection, but it will only take a minute to go up, and right back down, so I will be fine".

We have all rationalized poor choices - whether it was choosing to not wear fall protection or rationalizing hitting snooze seven times before getting out of bed.

"IT'S THE NORMAL THING TO DO"

When there are other people around who are not making the right choices when it comes to safety, it becomes the "normal" thing to do despite not being the correct thing to do. When the norm is working unsafe it makes it difficult for even the individuals who want to work safe to do so. Do not rely on a supervisor or safety person to have to tell you to do the right thing. Make the choice to do what is right despite what others may be doing.

Recognize when you are falling into the trap of rationalizing a poor decision whether that is in your personal life or while on the job. Fight the urge to make the easy decision. Be an employee who follows the rules and help reinforce a norm of adhering to safe work practices and procedures.