



COMPLACENCY

Dictionary.com defines **Complacency** as *“a feeling of quiet pleasure or security, often while unaware of some potential danger, defect, or the like; self-satisfaction or smug satisfaction with an existing situation, condition, etc.”*

No one wakes up in the morning and says “I want to be in an accident.” But we also do not commonly wake up and think, “what can I do to prevent an accident today.” You see, life sneaks up on us. You are driving to work, you forgot to eat breakfast at home, so you are eating a granola bar, and your phone rings, you pick it up and the next thing you know, you are doing anything but driving. Yes, there are laws about this, but the immediacy of both situations (need for food and your spouse on the phone) has a tendency to push the safety out the window. We are often processing so much input on a daily basis that it is easy to set aside fundamentals like *safety*. We *know* the right way to do a task, but we also have a lot of other things going on that distract us from the primary objective. We get lucky, and that repeated luck allows us to feel invincible. *We’re not.*

Just ask any injured worker and they will tell you that they always thought “it couldn’t happen to them” — until it did happen to them. One momentary lapse in focus and everything can be gone. Your health, your livelihood, your relationships with those you love, your dreams and goals. *Or your, or someone else’s, life.*

Complacency is perhaps one of the biggest problems we face in completing our day-to-day tasks. We are used to things being a certain way each time and, unless the obvious comes right out and hits us, we can be oblivious to it all. This state of mind can affect many things such as productivity, quality and safety. Putting ourselves on “autopilot” has far-reaching implications.

There is much danger in going into autopilot when working on the job. All too often, we don’t realize how complacent we are until we have a near miss or close call. Those events tend to jump-start our hearts and focus our attention—at least for a little while—on the task at hand.

Think about the people you value most. Create a list of 3-5 of them in your mind. Think seriously about what they would do without you or what they would do if you were injured and could no longer take care of yourself. And the next time you are ready to push your own safety out of the way for the immediacy of a task or distraction, ask yourself:

Am I willing to jeopardize the most important people to me for this task?

