

# SAFETY FIRST FOR ABRASIVES

As recent news articles indicate, North America is beginning to see an economic recovery. As with past economic slowdowns, the hiring of new employees lags behind the increase in demand for products and services. Many organizations are slow to rehire laid-off workers. This lag often causes current employees to work longer hours and rush to keep up with demand. While increased productivity is good for an organization, it must not come at the cost of safety. In many cases, the old saying “haste makes waste” is true, especially if we are dealing with safety. The “Safety First” doctrine must always take priority.

Below are just a few examples of dangerous actions organizations may take in an effort to increase their productivity:

- Failure to properly maintain equipment (e.g. run it until it breaks)
- Equipment repairs made by unqualified or rushed personnel (e.g. just get the machine running again)
- Failure to read and understand safety materials (e.g. do not waste time reading the new machine’s manual, get to work and read it later)
- Failure to inspect and properly mount grinding wheels (e.g. skip wheel inspection and ring testing, do not bother to torque the mounting screws)
- Using “make-shift” or the wrong parts for machine or equipment repair (e.g. if you do not have the proper parts, find something that will work)
- Removing machine guards to speed up an operation (e.g. just finish the job and we will put the guards back on later)
- Exceeding the rated speed of a grinding wheel (e.g. the wheel will cut faster if you over-speed it)
- Using the incorrect tool for the job (e.g. you do not have time to get a grinder, use the sander you have at your worksite)
- Working when exhausted or “day dreaming” (e.g. the money is good, double back and work another shift)
- Using untrained or unskilled operators (e.g. just get someone in here and we will train them later)
- Using the incorrect abrasive product for the job (e.g. if you got the wrong grinding wheel for the job, force it to work anyways, if it is too big for the machine, take the wheel guard off)
- Failing to wear the PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) (e.g. you are only going to cut for a minute, why do you need to get your eye protection)
- Taking risks because you do not have the time to do it safely (e.g. do not get a ladder, just reach over quickly)

Don’t be a headline - don’t be the company that puts getting production out at the cost of taking short-cuts with safety. Taking unnecessary risks to save a few minutes is foolish when you consider that your actions could cause life-changing events to you and your coworkers. Your unsafe action could result in a lifetime of regrets. You need to be responsible for the safety of you and others around you. Always remember the doctrine of “Safety First” and you will not regret it.

For additional information on this topic, or if you need any other abrasive safety information, please review ANSI, OSHA and all literature provided by the abrasive wheel and machine manufacturer. You may also contact the Saint-Gobain Product Safety Department at Tel. (508) 795-2317 or Fax: (508) 795-5120 or contact your Saint-Gobain Abrasives, Inc. representative with any safety related questions.

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SAFE  
AT THE  
WHEEL**

