

**TALKING PAPER**  
**ON**  
**WHY WAIT? / DON'T WAIT -- HAZARDS**

**INTRODUCTION**

Few things other than fine wine and whisky improve with time. Certainly bad news, hazards, and mishaps only get worse as time lingers on. All too often, workers, supervisors and leaders will walk past hazardous conditions.

**WHY WAIT?**

- Situational Awareness — “Zoned out”
  - People often become outwardly-focused on the task at hand and don't take time to observe the workplace environment around them.
  - People are often inwardly-focused on problem solving, upcoming events, or “lost in thought” — they are disengaged from the physical environment that surrounds them.
  - People are around the hazard so long that it becomes part of their “normal” environment — the Challenger Accident Investigation Board named that “Normalization of Deviance.”
- Recognition — Personnel may look at a hazardous situation without recognizing it as such.
  - Many times personnel don't know what hazards may be involved in the task at hand or the surrounding environment — they don't know what to look for.
  - Personnel don't always understand potential impacts of hazards to themselves and others.
- Understanding/Initiative—why do now, that which may be put off 'til later or “I have PLENTY of Time.”
  - People don't understand the potential impact of the hazard...to themselves or others.
  - People make assumptions that everyone else sees the hazard and will avoid it.
  - People may not know the process, procedure, or who to contact to correct the hazard.

**DON'T WAIT**

- Educate people on hazard identification—the OSHA 10 hour course is a good start.
- “Be in the moment” — in all tasks, take time to observe the world around you.
- Initiate, Communicate and Educate — Fix the hazard on the spot, or at least communicate the hazard to those who can fix it and educate people about the presence of the hazard.

**BUMPER STICKER**

Hazards don't fix themselves—take the initiative, fix the issue—you may save a life...possibly your own!