

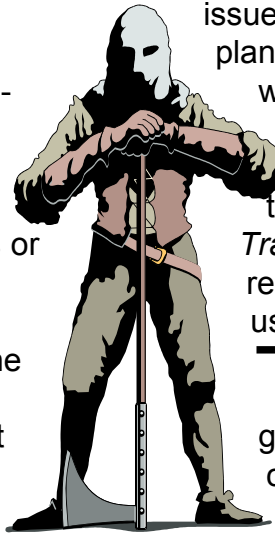
A Written Letter Of Warning For An Accident.. Punishment Or Deterrent ?

It's The Same Thing If Actions And Results Are The Same !

A criminal robs a store. He *intentionally* breaks the law. When he is caught, he will serve time in prison for this *intentional* act. He will be punished. A person *accidentally* hurts themselves at work. This person *will* get a written letter of warning. This person is *also* being punished !

We all remember during orientation the fact that we would be fired if we were hurt . I can see this as a way of dealing with the total abandon of safety issues or when employees participate in horseplay. But if a person is hurt due to lack of proper training or the state of equipment they have to work around or on, then I feel that accidents should be approached in a manner in which a solution can be found that will eliminate the cause of the accident.

There are two types of reactions to an accident; positive and negative. A positive reaction is where there are positive consequences. A negative reaction is where there are **only** negative consequences ! One positive reaction to an accident for the *entire* Postal Service, is **training** ! Establish and *use* an OJI program in maintenance and all other areas of the workroom floor. If a new person comes into any craft, place them with an OJI to show them each aspect of the job and all the many safety issues. Teach them the correct procedures for the task being applied to the equipment. Regardless of the persons background, all new hires should be shown all the equipment. All career employees should also receive information on equipment changes



and policy changes. Many times a procedure is changed and there is no satisfactory method used to inform all the employees in a timely matter. This same lack of adequate training is what causes most accidents ! Repair or deal with various safety issues as they are brought up in the plant. We are too crowded here, and with many more people feeling the pressure of moving the mail, along with lackluster (if any !) training, then there are going to be accidents. *Training* can and is the best positive reaction that the Postal Service can use to reduce accidents.

The fear of hurting yourself is the greatest reminder of safety a person could have. Nobody intentionally hurts themselves. The Postal Service needs to realize this and address each accident independently without prior judgments against the employee.

If a person gets a written letter of warning for a safety violation put in their personnel folder, then it *is* a punishment because everyone knows how management looks at a persons record. If they see a letter of warning, they will deny a transfer, promotion or award. But, we are told that the letter of warning is not a punishment, only a deterrent to more accidents. The dictionary defines deterrent as "tending to discourage or restrain from acting or proceeding through fear, doubt, etc." That sounds a lot like a punishment to me.

What do you think ?