



Professionalism on the Job and the Hazards of Horseplay

Purpose

The purpose of this toolbox talk is to reinforce that professionalism is the expectation at work and that horseplay is a serious safety hazard. Horseplay increases the risk of injuries, distractions, and behavior that can be perceived as harassment.

What Is Horseplay

Horseplay includes any behavior that distracts workers or creates unnecessary risk, including:

- Pranks or practical jokes
- Roughhousing or physical contact
- Startling or distracting someone while working
- Throwing objects or interfering with tools or equipment
- Touching others or invading personal space

Horseplay is not limited to physical injury. Jokes or behavior involving personal comments, touching, or embarrassment may be perceived as harassment, regardless of intent.

Why Horseplay Is Dangerous

Horseplay can:

- Cause slips, trips, falls, or struck by injuries
- Lead to cuts, crush injuries, or equipment related incidents
- Distract workers performing critical or high risk tasks
- Escalate into conflict or harassment complaints
- Create legal and disciplinary consequences

Many serious workplace injuries begin with someone saying, “We were just joking.”

Professionalism Is the Expectation

Professional behavior includes:

- Staying focused on assigned tasks
- Respecting personal space and boundaries
- Using clear, respectful communication
- Keeping hands, tools, and objects to yourself
- Treating all coworkers with dignity and respect

Work is not the place for pranks, physical jokes, or behavior that crosses professional boundaries.

Everyone’s Responsibility

All workers have the responsibility to:

- Stop horseplay immediately when observed
- Speak up if behavior feels unsafe or inappropriate



- Report concerns to a supervisor if needed
- Protect themselves and others from unnecessary risk

If something feels unsafe or unprofessional, it should be addressed.

Key Takeaway

Professionalism keeps everyone safe. Horseplay is a workplace hazard and will not be tolerated. Stay focused, respect others, and help ensure everyone goes home safe.

Crew Discussion

Have you seen situations where horseplay could have caused an injury?

What can we do as a crew to maintain professionalism every day?