



## Incident Response - Stop, Assess, and Respond Safely

### Why This Matters

When an incident occurs, it is human nature to want to react quickly. But rushing in without thinking can make a bad situation worse. Many secondary injuries and even fatalities happen because people fail to assess the scene first. The first and most important thing you can do is **stop and assess the situation before acting**. Your safety and the safety of others depend on it.

### Key Point: Stop and Assess First

Before you attempt to help an injured coworker, shut down equipment, or contain a spill, always stop and ask:

- Is it safe to enter the area?
- Are there electrical, chemical, mechanical, or environmental hazards?
- Do I need protective equipment or special tools?
- Do I need help or backup before proceeding?

If you are unsure, alert your supervisor or call for assistance. Never put yourself in harm's way.

### Real-World Examples of Rushing In Without Assessment

#### 1. Electrical Shock Rescue Gone Wrong

A worker saw a coworker collapsed next to an electrical panel. Without thinking, they rushed in and grabbed them. The rescuer received a severe shock because the panel was still energized, resulting in two injuries instead of one.

#### 2. Chemical Spill Exposure

During a chemical leak, a worker ran to shut off a valve without donning chemical-resistant PPE. They suffered chemical burns and inhalation injuries. Had they paused to grab the proper gear, they would have avoided harm.

#### 3. Confined Space Incident

A maintenance worker was overcome in a confined space. Two coworkers immediately entered to help without air monitoring or ventilation. All three required rescue, and two were hospitalized. A trained confined space rescue team should have been called first.

#### 4. Machine Entanglement

After seeing a coworker caught in moving equipment, a supervisor reached in to free them without locking out the machine. The machine activated again, causing serious injury to the rescuer.

### Key Takeaway

- The first and most important step after an incident is to **assess the situation**.
- Rushing in without thinking can lead to additional injuries or fatalities.
- If it is not safe to act, **wait for help** and use the proper tools and equipment.

**Remember:** You cannot help anyone if you become a victim yourself.

### Discussion Question

- Can you think of a time when someone rushed to help and got hurt as a result? What could have been done differently?