



# TOOLBOX TALKS

Guides for discussing safety.



## Mind on Task



**Talk Leader:** Ask the group the questions in bold. You may read/refer to the unbolded text to facilitate discussion and understanding.

### **What does it mean to have your mind on task?**

Having your mind on the task means knowing the proper steps, focusing on their successful completion, and being alert to surroundings and avoiding potentially hazardous mental states.

### **What are some conditions or mental states that can take your mind off the task?**

Distractions, rushing through a task/activity, frustration, fatigue, complacency, repetition, overconfidence, and being under the influence of mind-altering substances.

### **Provide an example where an incident occurred when a mind was taken off task.**

It's almost 5:00 pm and the worker still has two more holes to drill for concrete testing. He decides to rush to get them done so he can hopefully beat some of the traffic. While rushing, he backs away from the drill and trips over a small hole behind him. He breaks his ankle so badly that the doctor says he'll be out of work for the next three months. If he focused on what he was doing and took his time, he would have been able to prevent this injury.

### **How do you keep your mind on task?**

It's natural that the mind will wander away from the task at hand. When you find yourself in such a state, recognize that you may need to take extra precautions, especially if performing dangerous work. Take breaks if you are fatigued or tired. Complete work in a purposeful and controlled manner, taking time to slow down if necessary. If frustrated with the task, walk away to take a short break and return less frustrated and more focused. Where possible, avoid distractions and other hazardous mental states.

### **Are there job-specific conditions that take your mind off task?**

Review known conditions. Review ways to deal with these conditions where appropriate.