



## **The Gift of Safety**

*During the Holiday Season, you'd probably be disappointed if the only gift you received was a box full of safety tips. Come on, admit it. What you really wanted were those miracle golf clubs that can drive a ball a mile down the fairway or a bass boat with a 75-hp outboard motor.*

**But let's think for a moment.** A box full of safety tips might mean a lot:

- You don't lose your vision when that steel shard hits because you're wearing safety glasses.
- You have just a slight headache when that 2x4 from the third floor glances off your hard hat.
- When you drop a jackhammer, those steel-toed boots protect your feet.
- When you operate a hoe-ram all week (BAM! BAM! BAM! BAM!), those ear plugs maintain your excellent hearing.
- When you stand behind the excavator and the operator suddenly puts it in reverse, you heed the back-up alarm and step out of harm's way.
- When you operate a crane and the boom comes in contact with overhead power lines, no voltage is in the lines because you read the OSHA code requiring you to de-energize them.
- When you excavate a 10-ft. trench over a major gas line, the one-call center marks the line's precise location, allowing you to work safely.

**Well, we all got safely through** this past year and now we're all set the new year. Or are we? Did you learn anything from your mishaps? Did you have any safety near misses? Sometimes you can learn more from a near miss than from a direct hit.

**The new year** is a good time to review your injuries. How many bruises, bumps, and scratches have you suffered during the past 12 months? Each of these minor cuts and abrasions was a near miss?

**Any bruised ribs?** Swollen ankles or knees? Backaches? Sand in your eye? Infected fingers? Each of these minor injuries could have been. They weren't serious this time, but they might be next time.

**What's your injury/accident** record for last year? Good? Bad? Obviously, we can all improve our safety track record. So what about some New Year's resolutions? Here are some good ones:

- I will always wear my hard hat on the jobsite.
- I will wear my safety goggles.
- I will use ear plugs when the jobsite gets noisy.
- I will listen carefully to the toolbox talks my foreman gives each week.
- I will practice the buddy system on my jobsites.
- I will listen for back-up alarms on construction vehicles and equipment.
- Before I enter a trench, I'll be sure there's a ladder in it.
- If I don't know where a first-aid kit is on my jobsite, I'll ask.
- I'll practice good safety habits throughout the year.

*Yes, those golf clubs and bass boat would have been great, but your life is even more valuable. Because you follow your safety tips, you may go home every night next year, with no injuries, no bumps, no bruises. Isn't life great?*