

BuildSafe Safety Bulletin for September 2018

Leave Yourself an Out

All too often individuals are injured at work due to putting themselves into the line of fire or finding themselves in a place where they cannot escape danger. There are many different examples of these types of incidents. From a dropped load falling onto your foot to rear-ending the car in front of you, there are many scenarios like these incidents that are preventable if you leave yourself an out.

Defining “Leaving Yourself an Out”

What does it mean to leave yourself an out? For the purpose of this talk we will define it as, “the ability to escape danger if a negative situation occurs.” The term “leaving yourself an out” is often used in [defensive driving](#) courses. These courses always stress that no matter what the situation is, drivers need to be on defense at all times. Being a defensive driver allows you to avoid preventable collisions. Situations such as a car in front of you braking unexpectedly or a driver swerving into your lane are [unsafe acts](#) that can put you at risk for serious injury if you are not prepared to react. A defensive driver always has an “out” so that they are able to react to changing conditions around them and have a safe option to take to avoid a collision.

Other Examples of “Leaving Yourself an Out” at Work

There are many scenarios that can be referred to that result in injury that are totally avoidable if the individual avoided the line of fire altogether or left themselves an out. Two common examples:

- Dropped loads. Workers inadvertently or carelessly put themselves at risk to be struck-by a lifted load. Workers should never put themselves in a position where a load can strike them if it falls. They should also consider giving extra space for whatever the work task is in case conditions change or something fails and the load drops in a way that is not expected.
- Working around vehicles or equipment. All too often employees find themselves in a position where an operator of a piece of heavy equipment or a driver of a vehicle does not see them. The problem with this scenario is that when the individual does not have an “out” they will be struck. If you have an out, even if you find yourself in the line of fire, you may be able to escape danger and avoid serious injury or worse.



Summary

- You should always strive to never put yourself directly in the line of fire such as under a lifted load or behind a backing vehicle. Even when you are not directly in the line of fire you should consider what your options are if conditions change and a negative situation occurs. Never put yourself in a position where you cannot escape danger. Always leave yourself an “out”.