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## GENERAL SAFETY – SIGNS

You might see over 100 of them as you ride to work. Signs -- they are everywhere. How many of these do you actually notice? Probably not many. That creates a problem.

Not only do signs litter the streets, but they may also be all over your workplace. Do you see them? Do you notice them? Do they mean something, or do they just make the workplace look safer to the outsider?

Signs are placed to warn and educate. They are not simply decoration.

Signs can be permanent or temporary.

Signs lose their impact if they address a hazard that no longer exists. Have you ever come across a barricaded area that has remained barricaded even after the work is done?

What happens?

Pretty soon someone realizes there is no longer a danger and starts using the area. After a while, everyone is. If this happens, barricades become something to ignore. That is until someone gets hurt crossing a barricade placed around a hazard that is not obvious.

What is the lesson? If you place a temporary warning sign, directional sign, or barricade, when you are done with the work, finish the job. Remove the sign. Remove the barricade.

Do your part to keep warning devices meaningful.

So when should you place signs? In some cases, sign placement is required by regulations.

For example, an air compressor is required to have a sign warning it could start at any time. A sign warning against entry must be placed at the entry to a confined space.

As a rule of thumb, warning or cautionary signs should be posted whenever the hazard is a danger to passersby or if the hazard may not be obvious to the untrained or unaware.

Just a one-word warning sign stating WARNING or CAUTION is not enough. Briefly explain, on the sign, what the danger is.

As an example: Warning--Confined Space--Do Not Enter or Warning, this machine may start automatically at any time.

Do not place unnecessary signs. Place necessary signs where they can be seen.

Explain the danger. Remove the signs when they are no longer needed.

And remember if you see a sign, read it, and heed it! It is there for a reason.