



**Jim Persons**  
**jimpersons@safetypride.com**  
**707-889-0881**

## **GENERAL SAFETY - IT'S YOUR DECISION**

Most of us like to get our work done with the least amount of effort, and as quickly as possible. We all want to get the most work out of the energy we use on the job. This is good because it often results in discovering newer and more efficient ways of getting our job done.

This energy-saving attitude can also be bad if we make a wrong decision and take dangerous shortcuts. All of us at some time or another have exposed ourselves to possible injury by taking a shortcut when, with a little extra effort, we could have done it the safe way.

When we were kids, we took shortcuts by jumping the fence instead of using the gate. Now that we are adults, we do it by crossing the street between the intersections. Why? Because we want to get there as quickly as possible and use the least amount of energy we can while doing it.

There is no doubt about it, the safe way is not always the shortest or quickest way. The safe way usually takes some extra effort while the unsafe way often appears to be more efficient at the time. When we are faced with these situations, each one of us will make a conscious decision about what actions we will take next.

Sometimes we talk ourselves into taking an unsafe shortcut by flawed reasoning. We convince ourselves that it is worth taking the risk because we are in a hurry and can probably get away with it this time without being injured. After all, we have done it before and were not injured then.

Take the electrician I saw the other day who was working on a ladder. He was almost finished with the job except for a little work that he could do only by reaching a little farther than he knew was safe. He knows he will be taking a chance, so he has to make a decision whether to get down and move the ladder or to take a shortcut.

Suppose he takes the shortcut. He may get away without having an accident, or he may fall and suffer an injury that will change his whole life - or even end it. Whatever the result, his

decision to take a chance is not a good one. Whether he wins or loses this time; risking his neck to save a few minutes' time is rolling the dice - a gamble that he will, eventually, lose.

When you get right down to it though, I don't really think most of us take shortcuts to save time as much as we do it because the safe way is just too much trouble. Like using the wrong tool because it is too much trouble to get the right one. Like climbing the rebar because it is too much trouble to get a ladder. Or maybe like lifting more than you know is safe because it's too much trouble to get someone to help you.

Or maybe it's like the guy I saw the other day swinging around like a monkey on the side of some forms, holding on with one hand while trying to strip forms with the other, all because it's too much trouble to go get a safety belt and tie off like he knows he should.

Or how about another guy that was chipping concrete without safety goggles because it was too much trouble to go hunt up a pair.

Remember, you always have a choice, but only you can decide to do it the safe way. The safe way is usually not the shortest or quickest way, but it is your decision.