WEEK 51 LATE DECEMBER · ~5 MIN READ · ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION

Year-End Rush: Distraction & Cutting Corners

Deadlines before the holidays. A shutdown coming. Everyone trying to wrap up and get home. This is exactly when good workers skip a step they'd never normally skip — and the steps that get skipped are the setup ones, because they're the ones that feel optional when you're nearly done.

The hazard

Rushing produces shortcuts: the isolation not done, the guardrail not put back, the permit not pulled, the second look not taken. Your head is already at the holiday table. Tired, distracted, and hurrying is a poor mix around heights, machines, and traffic. The job will still be there in January.

What to do

- **Take the same setup time you always would** — the isolation, the guards, the fall protection, the permits **that this task actually requires.** Not every job needs a permit or a tie-off; the point is that whatever *this* one requires doesn't get shortened because we're nearly finished.
- **Don't change how a hazardous task is done to hit a date.** A deadline is not a reason to alter the method. If the method has to change, it gets re-planned properly, not improvised at 4 p.m.
- **Keep your head in the job.** Park the holiday plans until break.
- **Slow down or stop if something starts feeling rushed or unsafe** — and know how that works. In Ontario you have the **right to refuse work you believe is likely to endanger you**: report the circumstances to your supervisor or employer, **stay in a safe place near your work station** while it's investigated, and take part in the investigation. If you're still not satisfied after that, it escalates — to the worker health-and-safety representative or committee member, and a Ministry inspector if needed. **You cannot be penalised for using it.**
- **Don't take on a job you're not trained or equipped for** to save time.
- **End the day clean and organised** so the next crew isn't rushing into your mess in the dark.

Watch out for

- "Just this once" and "it'll only take a second." That's the sentence right before the injury.
- A supervisor or client pushing pace. Pressure doesn't make a shortcut safe, and passing pressure down isn't a plan.
- Crews working tired and distracted late in the day — the last hour of the last week is worth extra attention, not less.
- Setup steps quietly dropped because the job is "basically done."

Talk it over

- Where are we most tempted to cut a corner to hit the year-end date — name the actual step?
- If you felt pushed to rush something unsafe, would you say stop — and do you know what happens after you do?
- What's the one thing we should re-plan rather than rush through this week?

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