



Are You Safe...Or Just Lucky?

Everyone likes a little good luck. We wish it to friends, coworkers, and teammates all the time. But when it comes to safety on the job, luck isn't something we should ever rely on.

Sometimes organizations with strong safety records begin to assume everything is working perfectly. When the numbers look good and jobs are getting completed, it can feel like the system is working flawlessly. But occasionally those results are less about perfect safety practices and more about things simply going right — until they don't. When shortcuts go unnoticed or small risks pile up, what looked like a strong safety program can quickly unravel.

So how can you tell the difference between being truly safe and simply being lucky?

First, **inspect what you expect**. Supervisors and crews need to observe work in the field to ensure that *work as prescribed* matches *work as performed*. Just because crews head out in the morning and return with the job finished doesn't mean every step was followed or every hazard was addressed. Regular field observations and job-site check-ins help ensure safety procedures are actually being practiced – not just written down.

Second, **encourage near-miss reporting**. Near misses provide some of the most valuable safety information an organization can collect. If no near misses are reported, it doesn't necessarily mean they didn't occur. It may mean employees aren't comfortable reporting them. A strong safety culture treats near-miss reports as learning opportunities, not reasons for blame.

At the end of the day, safety should never depend on luck. By actively observing work in the field and creating an environment where near misses are openly reported and discussed, crews can replace luck with awareness, accountability, and safer outcomes for everyone.

Source: Dave Sowers, [Toolbox Talks](#).

