Accidents Do Not Just Happen  
Lumbermens Mutual Casualty Company

While not every dangerous act produces an accident, few accidents have occurred that did not begin with a dangerous act of some kind. For instance, a man who was an employee in a large industrial plant was injured when he dropped a heavy box on his foot. Another employee in the plant caught his hand in a press the same day. These accidents may appear to be different, but the outcome is identical in their final stages. This is because accidents **do not just happen.**

The basic causes of accidents can almost always be traced to an unsafe act, an unsafe condition, or a combination of both. If we are going to avoid accidents, we should have a pretty good idea of what causes them. So let’s consider some unsafe acts and conditions that frequently lead to accidents.

- **Unsafe conditions** usually are created by careless housekeeping, improper loading or piling, defective or broken equipment, or missing guards on machinery. Examples of unsafe acts are reaching into running machinery, unsafe speeds, taking chances, not using guards, not wearing personal protective equipment, unsafe tools, horseplay, and unsafe handling of materials.

- **Unsafe acts** are a personal thing. General steps can be taken to avoid unsafe acts and conditions. First, stay alert on the job and do not let routine or familiarity lure you into carelessness. Know your job. All new employees should be thoroughly instructed in their tasks. Follow safety rules established on the job. Safety sense, better known as common sense, should always be used.

Finally, a very important contribution we can make to our own safety is to develop a safe attitude. Recognize that an accident can happen and then take the steps to avoid it. It would seem that the basic drive for self-preservation would be enough to provide us with a positive attitude toward safety, but injury statistics prove otherwise.

When you realize that accidents do not just happen -- they are caused, you can clearly see that something can be done about them. Let’s each do our share in eliminating the causes.