



## Toolbox Talk

**Safety First in Construction Day – May 2, 2018**

### **The Power of Safe Choices**

This year marks the 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary for the Coalition for Construction Safety (CCS). Each year, we celebrate the industry's outstanding safety achievements at the annual Anniversary and Awards Celebration. To coincide with the celebration, CCS holds Safety First in Construction Day, a day where CCS and its members remember those workers who lost their lives on Indiana construction jobsites in 2017. These individuals serve as a continual reminder that there is always room for improvement in jobsite safety for all workers.

The mission of CCS is to send construction and facilities maintenance workers home safely every day. All employees are promised a workplace free from hazards and a way to provide for their families. The tragic loss of any worker is unacceptable and until we deliver a state free from fatal workplace injuries the work of CCS, IOSHA and our collective organizations is not complete. Even when we do reach this goal, we must never let our efforts diminish to ensure that all workers go home safely to their families and friends every day.

The following individuals lost their lives on Indiana construction jobsites in 2017. Let's pause for a moment of silence to remember these fallen workers:

- Jacob Bugg
- Alberto Vivanco Dominguez
- Howard Y. Esterbrook
- Kevin Folleph
- Chris Goins
- Jason Higinbothum
- Earl W. Hulsman
- Michael McGraw
- Guy Volk

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CCS Safety First in Construction day is more than just a day of remembrance; it is a day we all stop and stand together as a **united front for safety** while we work to

build a better place for everyone to live. Safety depends every day on the **choices** we make. It only takes a second for even one small decision to save a worker.

Each day we are presented with a multitude of choices. Based on the information we have available, our experiences and knowledge, we make decisions. Some take thought, like organizing the daily job safety analysis (JHA). Others are more subconscious, like putting on a hard hat. Whatever the scenario, a choice is made. With each choice, we gain new knowledge and experience to help us make the next choice in a similar situation.

When it comes to safety on the job, our choices can be the difference between life, disability and death. Think about your experiences. Can you remember events when your choices made a difference in the safety of a project?

Were you part of a good decision that eliminated a dangerous situation? Or perhaps you witnessed a choice made to play the odds that seriously injured a coworker? Perhaps it is a look back at the split second separating a near miss from a fatality. Regardless of the outcome, it all comes down to our power to make good choices.

In the world of safety, it is our hope and ultimate goal, that every worker will make the right choice to work as safely as possible, even when no one is watching. When working with a group, we encourage everyone to speak up and watch out for each other. It takes great courage to tell another worker about a safety concern. Have you heard the saying “if you see something, say something”? Easier said than done. People don’t like to be corrected or feel wrong. This makes it hard to both give and receive safety feedback. Choosing to actively care about our construction family means breaking down that barrier. Find the courage to say something and know that choice made a difference, no matter how big or small.

As we stand here together today, look around at your coworkers. Our enjoyment of construction binds us together like family. Make safety, wherever you are, whomever you are with, whatever you are doing, a value that will never be compromised. Priorities change as we make our choices. Values shape our choices. Choose to speak up when you see others give their safety away. Openly accept when others remind you about safety. **The power to make safe choices is ours.**

*~Christina Merriott, Trinity Safety Group*