

# MAFES Dawg Tracks



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Safety Tips: Avoiding Horseplay



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Horseplay is rough play, practical jokes, and other physical humor that can endanger workers. In the workplace, horseplay is usually linked to behavior. In many cases, they are acts of harassment aimed at new employees, or in other situations, maybe an employee that doesn't fit the mold of the other folks.

## CONSEQUENCES OF HORSEPLAY –

The victim of an act may in defense of this action, react with some type of retaliation. It could be physical or verbal; both can lead to a bad problem for both parties. Occasionally, the practical “joke” can turn into a serious matter, and one or both parties are injured. Even the most light-hearted intention can distract workers and could cause serious injury to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, who wasn't originally involved. *I'm sorry* doesn't repair an injured eye, foot or maybe a more critical part.

I was the victim here several years ago at lunch with an employee who knew that I have a real problem with snakes. He slipped a life-like rubber snake in my lunch sack. I sat down to eat with the agronomy boys, opened the sack and reached in for my sandwich - I didn't get the sandwich - but I did get the snake. I had chairs scattered over the room trying to rid myself of that toy snake. Guess what the subject of my next DAWG TRACKS just happened to be? **HORSEPLAY!**

## KEYS TO PREVENTING HORSEPLAY –

- **Obviously, we know that horseplay or “fooling around” are the opposites of safe and responsible work:**
  - ~Horseplay usually means *rough fun* and *fooling around*, which means doing foolish, useless things.
  - ~It usually results from using little judgment or common sense.
- **Workplace Rules Ban Horseplay because it's Dangerous :**

Horseplay is usually a friendly, physical way of letting off steam. But this type of fooling around is dangerous because –

  - ~When you are “fooling around,” you're not concentrating on what you were hired for - to work.
  - ~Horseplay is always directed at another party, which makes it even more dangerous by distracting the other party and possibly causing them to fall into equipment with moving parts, electrical shock or just plain falling. All of which will, for the most part, cause a personal injury to the victim.

~Giving less than full attention and concentration to the safety rules makes you less likely to notice or account for hazards until it may be too late.

~Most accidents are caused by unsafe acts – horseplay is about as unsafe as it gets.

## • Horseplay Creates Unsafe Risks:

Workplace accidents can be prevented by being alert to hazards and following the safety rules. If you are indulging in horseplay, you can't do either one of them. Some prime examples of these are –

- ~Running, pushing, or chasing which can cause slips, trips, falls or other types of hazards.
  - ~Not noticing or paying attention to slips, uneven walking surfaces or objects on the floor or ground.
  - ~Running into or pushing someone into moving equipment or moving parts of equipment.
  - ~Knocking over stacks of boxes or materials onto a person.
  - ~Throwing tools is a frequent cause of injuries. Tools can catch an eye, head or foot, or cause someone to get stabbed with a sharp edge.
  - ~Speeding or stunt driving with a forklift can cause a rollover or hit someone else - either of which can cause a critical injury.
  - ~Running with a loaded hand truck can cause the operator to lose control and injure himself or someone else.
  - ~Practical jokes like dropping your half of the load, turning out the lights or maybe hiding an employees' PPE.
- **Take Your Job and the Safety Rules Responsibly and Seriously:**
    - ~It is all of our responsibility to do our jobs as best we can, which includes following all the safety procedures.
    - ~The safety rules and procedures are designed to protect us as we work.
    - ~The safety rules are for everyone to follow.
    - ~Horseplay and breaking other safety rules can and should lead to disciplinary action.
    - ~Don't promote horseplay and discourage those who might want to.

**KEEP YOUR ATTENTION  
ON ACCIDENT PREVENTION!  
~ACCIDENTS HURT –  
SAFETY DOESN'T~**