



President's Message

John Bond

City of Roberts, Wisconsin

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Earlier this spring, a young man repairing a water pipe in a nearby town was killed after the saw he was using kicked back, striking him in the throat. It is a very sad and tragic story.

It got me thinking about how quickly life can change for any of us and that we are not as invincible as we would like to believe ourselves to be. The wastewater industry can be a dangerous profession, but it doesn't have to be, if you follow a few simple rules:

1. Make sure your safety policies are up to date. More importantly, **KNOW** your safety policies and **FOLLOW** them.
2. Be sure you have the proper safety devices before starting any job. More importantly, **KNOW** how to use them, and **DO** use them every time.
3. Whatever job you are doing, think ahead and have an escape plan.
4. Keep your monitoring devices calibrated. Use them!
5. Work with a buddy when necessary.
6. Use common sense. If something seems unsafe, it probably is. Just don't do it!
7. No one can make you perform a task that is not safe. If you feel your or anyone else's safety is at jeopardy, do not proceed with the job until it can be done safely.

It is very easy to become complacent in our jobs. I have been guilty of thinking nothing will happen to me because I have done something hundreds of times and nothing went wrong. All it takes is once and you may not have a second chance to do things right. I know it takes a little extra time and effort to do things safely, but it is well worth the effort. Sixty-three percent of all people killed in car crashes were not wearing seatbelts. In 2008, there were 587 car crash fatalities in Wisconsin. If those 587 people would have all taken the 3 seconds needed to buckle up, there could have been 370 fewer fatalities.

If your facility does not have a good safety program, work with your superiors to help develop one. Areas of potential hazard in our profession include: confined spaces, drowning, traffic hazards, collapse of trenches, chemical hazards, digging up or rupturing buried utilities, falls, fires and explosions, and injuries from heavy lifting. A good safety program needs to identify potential hazards, how to protect the employee and the public from these hazards, proper initial and ongoing training for their employees, and a plan on how to deal with emergencies should they arise. Your safety plan does not have to be elaborate, but you do have to have one and all your employees need to follow it.

I will leave you with one parting thought. The most important part of any task you do, at home or at work, is to keep yourself safe so you can go home to your family at the end of every day.

John Bond
WWOA President