**More Ruminations on Safety as a Verb not an Adjective**

Have you ever noticed that many people naturally use the word *safety* as an adjective, for example “always follow safety procedures”. There should only be one way to do a job, not a way to do it and the safe way to do it. When used as an adjective it becomes tired, trite and thus meaningless. What purpose does the word “safety” serve as an adjective? How do you know what it means?

To obtain a workplace that allows properly trained and equipped people following correct methods to perform without injury or illness takes work! In Physics we learn that work requires the expenditure of energy and requires motion, think change. I propose that when we think of “*safety*” we should be considering it as an action word, i.e. a verb! Safety could be a state of being, then I would call it a noun; the name of a person, place or thing. Then I am stumped by the definition of safety as a thing.

Is “*safety’* the presence of something or the absence of something? Some will say it is the absence of injury. I do not support that concept because injury or none, may often be the result of luck. The difference between a near miss, a minor personal injury, property damage or a fatality may be only a few inches or seconds. Relying on luck is NOT a management technique, in my opinion. I believe that to achieve safety requires vigilance. Do nothing and it deteriorates and eventually will disappear, or some will refer to that statement as a paraphrase of the “Second Law of Thermodynamics”.

I propose we consider the term “*Safety*” as a verb, because it should conjure up action! The best way to learn a skill is to employ all of your senses and to engage in practice. A colleague states that: “Practice does not make perfect; but Perfect practice makes perfect performance.” So, I propose that we must investigate, analyze, collaborate and communicate then M O V E. Nothing happens without behavior change; we move in new directions or implement new methods.

Let’s vow to cease using *safety* as an adjective! Let us commit as William Strunk Jr. stated so well, years ago, “make every word tell!”

Safety is a VERB; **V**erifiable **E**xcellent, **R**easonable **B**ehavior.