

GM'S SAFETY FLYER



Late May 09 we invited Chad Hymas to the Yilgarn South Barrick sites to talk with our workforce about safety. Chad is a world renowned speaker on leadership whose life was changed dramatically after a tragic accident. For those of us fortunate to have had the opportunity to attend one of Chad's presentations, his message was inspirational and challenging. For those of you who did not, I would like to give you my summary and thoughts on Chad's message.

Chad is a quadriplegic, paralysed from the chest down - he broke his neck performing a task he described as "routine", taking the same short cut he had taken a many times before. At the time Chad was 27 years old, in the prime of his life, and made a choice to hurry whilst feeding the elk on his ranch. He was operating a tractor, lifting a one tonne bail of hay off the stack of hay bails, when the load dropped back onto the pile. Chad straight away knew what the issue was, it had happened before, it was confirmed when he checked the hydraulic gauge which showed his tank was on empty. This was the pivotal point in Chad's life, he chose not to Stop and Correct the Hazard by filling the tank. In his own words "*He knew the machine would work on a low hydraulics, he had operated this way before*". Chad chose to ignore the issue and continued on with the job at hand. He lifted the load again and reversed back, he touched the brakes too hard and instead of the load dropping to the ground (due to low hydraulics) the bale of hale toppled backwards crashing down on top of him.



Chad does not tell this story so we feel sorry for him nor so we learn how not to operate a tractor, as none of us are likely to break our necks this way! He tells the story to demonstrate how doing a simple task, being stuck in a routine, hurrying and not addressing a Hazard can lead to personal disaster! In Chad's own words *if he had done a simple "Field Level Risk Assessment" (FLRA) he would not have performed the task this way.* Chad calculated it would have taken him five to seven minutes to add the hydraulic fluid that would have prevented the accident. Five minutes to retain his normal life.

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When I look back at the incidents we are having in our Yilgarn South mines many of them show the similar root causes. They are typically routine tasks where we have taken shortcuts and not addressed a hazard, or we have not taken the time up front to identify all the hazards, and as a result something has gone wrong. So far we have been lucky and not had a consequence as devastating as Chad's!

One of the reasons Chad took this short cut was he was in a "hurry". He was rushing home to see his family, as his wife had rung him to let him know his second son had just taken his first steps. Was Chad mindful of the task at hand? Chad says, "not fully" he goes on to say "the irony of it all is the day his son started to walk, was Chad's last....." to this day Chad's son has not seen him walk.

The lesson here is that when we "hurry" on a task, we cut corners. When we rush, is our mind fully on the task at hand? **NO!** I believe not!

Barrick does **NOT** give any person permission to do any task in a 'hurry'. You do **NOT** have my permission to do your job in a hurry. You do have permission to be efficient in your work, to make sure you do the job right the first time, that you are always in control of your workplace hazards and go home safe in the same state you arrived at work that day.

If we all take heed of this advice our incident statistics will halve overnight.



We can do our jobs efficiently and safely by doing the task at hand right the first time. If something does not appear to be right, does not appear to be safe:

1. STOP!
2. Review the task.
3. Do an FLRA. Assess what is wrong?
4. Correct the issue, and
5. Only if safe, then proceed.

We must at all times be in control of the situation, continue to review the task at hand and assess and correct any Hazards. Be mindful that the hazards identified before a task can change as the job at hand is carried out – we need to stop and reassess the task, address the new hazards.

Before Chad's visit several people asked me "Why are we bringing someone all the way from the United States to talk to us about safety – surely there are people in Australia who have a similar story to tell?". The answer is YES, unfortunately there are too many people in Australia who have been badly hurt in an incident that could have visited us to share their stories about safety. However, in my experience very few have been as engaging to the audience as Chad, and been able to deliver such a positive message to all. Chad's message is less about what happened to him but more about how he has managed to improve his life by changing the way he thinks and what he believes.

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Chad had to change his beliefs and attitude to life otherwise he would have lost the thing he loved most – his family. We must not wait for a life changing accident to do the same. If we believe that we can work safe we will! If we choose not to accept unsafe work conditions or poor quality of work, then we can ensure the job is done safe and right from the beginning.



Chad also realised if he had a poor attitude, it not only impacted him but his family and his work mates. What he is asking us to do is to see how much of a difference we all can make if we decide to open our eyes to what is happening around us. See the Hazards, do not sit back, but instead get out of our comfort zone and change things for the better, not only for yourself but also for your workmates. If we can all do this we will have a happier and safer workplace but more importantly have a happier life with the people we care the most about our friends and family.

I am going to get out of 'My Comfort Zone', Are you?

What will I do? I have committed to getting into the workplace every day when on site to meet and talk with employees direct regarding safety issues. I will also be holding my leadership team accountable to being similarly visible. I will be focussing on all employees accountability for decisions re safety and our safety performance. I will follow up on our delivery of action plans to rectify safety issues.

HOW can you? Some other examples that come to mind: Give others help before asked asking. Take the time to spot hazards, Do not accept poor practices. Ask for advice when not sure. Question others to ensure they are sure. Say something or better still stop someone doing something unsafe. Never do a job that is unsafe!

If we are honest with ourselves we all can do more to improve our safety performance, I need everyone's help to significantly improve our safety results. In order to see improvement we must start with challenging ourselves to be accountable with the things that are occurring on our site.

"The change starts with You".



David Collopy
GENERAL MANAGER, Yilgarn South

