

Notice Danger Traps

Welcome to the sixth installment of the NDTs of NDT. So far we discussed the importance of the 3T's; *Training, Tooling and Treating them Right*. We are set and well on our way to establishing NDT as a rewarding endeavor. There is one thing that is paramount to any NDT technician, no matter how old we are, where in the world we are operating out of, or how many years of experience we may have, and that is, we have to be able to see! What is alarming in this day and age is that eye injuries in the workplace are common. Can you believe that every day, 700 Canadians sustain eye injuries while on the job¹, often resulting in lost time and in some cases, either temporary or permanent vision loss.

Notice Danger Traps

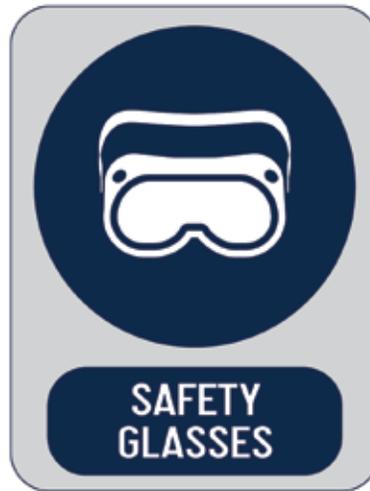
We tend to believe that it always happens to the other person. Do the math: 700 eye injuries per day multiplied by 250 (the days worked in a year) times the number of years someone stays in industry (30 years minimum) and it is not long before you realize that during the span of your career you have a 25% chance of that other person being you! That is a staggering number. What makes things even worse is that of those 700 daily injuries, the majority are preventable.

Another alarming figure can be found in the 2013 statistics recently published by the CCOHS (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety). Every day in Canada, two people kiss their loved ones in the morning before leaving for work. That is their last kiss – they will never make it back home! The study reported that in 2013, 902 people lost their lives due to work place accidents – 2.5 people per day.

Nobody goes to work with their prime objective of becoming a statistic – this is a sad reality. All that we can do is **Notice Danger Traps** and not walk into them, or let anyone around us walk into them. The very nature of our jobs puts us in environments where accidents may happen: we work high in the air, in confined places, and next to toxic and corrosive chemicals just to name a few. To make things a bit more dangerous, as NDT technicians, we concentrate on what we are looking at rather than what is around us; if we are not careful, this can easily become a recipe for disaster.

Before reading further, take a moment, sit back, and think of the past few years. How many accidents happened in the workplace around you?

¹CNIB Eye Safety at Work. www.CNIB.ca



So what can we do to ensure that we're not a statistic? Two things: **We can have a voice and we can use sense.**

It doesn't matter how old we are or how many years of experience we have – when we see someone doing something that just doesn't seem right, we have to speak up. Many times as a technician we are concerned about getting that job done and by an accumulation of maneuvers to get in the right position, we might put ourselves in a dangerous position without realizing it. When we see this, we can't just be passersby and not warn the person. The sad thing is that all too often, the technician will not listen to or appreciate the comment, but we have to change that cultural habit. We all have to look after each other.

We also have to listen to our inner voice. We often put ourselves in precarious positions on purpose to get the job done. We know it is dangerous but we do it anyway not to waste time so that we can hurry up and make it home in time for dinner. Often enough, when we are new on the job, we want to prove ourselves and not be thought of as complainers, so we don't ask for the right personal protection equipment. It is usually there, we just have to get it or ask for it. It might seem a bit cliché, but safety **does** start with you: you looking out for yourself and you looking out for others.

This does not mean that we have to be paranoid or alarmist. This does not mean that we have the right to say I don't want to go work in the chemical factory or the nuclear facility outage. That is our job. However, we have the right to ensure that we are working safely.

We all have a responsibility to ourselves, colleagues, employers and most of all our families to make sure that everyone has a **Nice Dinner Together** instead of **No Dinner Tonight**.

Now Do This

Almost a year has passed since the NDTs of NDT series started, and the first article summarized the current state of the industry: **Now Dire Times**. The following articles highlighted some paths of reflection. So how do we revive this trade and make sure we all excel and provide the best service we can? There are a few steps to take, but the important thing is persistence.

The first step: In order to counterbalance the aging population in

the NDT industry, we **Need Decent Training**. We need training provided by teachers who have a passion and a firm knowledge of the material at hand. This training should be coupled with a good mentoring program to bring everything that was taught to real life.

The second step: Need DISC Theory. Not every technician is created equal and not everyone excels in the same environment. There is a myriad of talent assessment tools at our disposition. By using a talent assessment, new technicians can learn to understand themselves better and so can the employer. When we know who we are dealing with, we can place them where they can excel and in turn providing better performance and return for the employer.

The third step: Believe it or not, each and every technician is human. We all perform better and achieve greater results when we are engaged in our projects. What can we do to increase the odds that the NDT community at large is engaged in the profession and with their employers? **Never Disrespect Technicians.** This is the fundamental element that drives engagement and motivation. Contrary to training and using assessment tools, this costs nothing, but what is required to ensure step 1 and 2 are successful.

The fourth step: we can't do what we are expected to do if we don't have the proper toolbox. We **Need Decent Tools**. This might easily be the greatest pet peeve of the NDT technician. We are hired by our customers to provide assurance that their product meets their standards for safety

and reliability. The only way we can provide that to our customer is by using the equipment that is called for in the inspection techniques.

Finally, if we want to continue what we do we need to **Note Danger Traps**. The nature of our job puts us in dangerous environments and very often in precarious situations. We need to put our safety and the safety of people around us at the forefront. The four steps mentioned above have no effect if we are not working safely.

A new year is quickly approaching. Let's make 2016 the year where we all take our part in making NDT the **Noble Dynamic Trade** it is meant to be.



Fulvio Mini

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