



THE  
NATIONAL  
BOARD  
OF BOILER AND  
PRESSURE VESSEL  
INSPECTORS



# Complacency Can Kill

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National Board of Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors General Meeting

Salt Lake City, Utah

**Zurich Insurance Risk Engineering**



# One Code, One Inspector, One Stamp, 100 Years



# Complacency

- Can take your commission
- Can take your career
- Can take you to court
- Can take your life
- Complacency can kill

# Complacency Can Kill

## Agenda

- What is Complacency
- Complacency & Risk behaviors – a dangerous combination
- What might cause complacency
- Potential impact on quality inspections and safety
- Identifying and controlling complacency

# Defining Complacency and Risk behaviors

## **Complacency** (*Webster*)

Self-satisfaction especially when accompanied by unawareness of actual dangers or deficiencies

## **Risk** (*Cambridge*)

To expose to hazard or danger

Complacency + Risk could equal Danger

# Complacency & Risk Behaviors Together

A dangerous combination

- Distracted Driving - 25% of all motor vehicle fatalities
  - 3450 deaths & 391,000 injuries in 2016
- Selfie & texting injuries & fatalities - 259 recorded deaths
- Job related accidents – 5147 fatalities (2017 OSHA)
  - Falls
  - Electrocutions
  - Confined Space
  
- Boiler/PV inspection
  - Assuming no changes since last inspection
  - Assuming data on file is correct
  - Assuming owner will repair before starting

## Could it happen again?

- Jan 19, 1982 Star Elementary Spencer OK  
Six Children & 1 teacher killed - 34 injured
  - Investigation revealed complacency was a factor

# Factors that may lead to Complacency

## Past Experience

- The mindset “I have never seen it happen” can erode danger or fear and result in short cuts.
- If it hasn’t happened – it won’t happen attitude

## Repetition

- “Inspected thousands of these with no issues”
- The more inspections you complete without incident the more complacent you could become



# Factors that may lead to Complacency

- **Time Pressure / Production**
  - Production Goals
  - Over scheduled inspections
  - Unexpected delays
- **Location of object**
  - Vaults , mounted high, obstructed, operating room
  - Requires special equipment to inspect (lift)
  - Obstructed by equipment or materials
- **Inspection Environment**
  - Unpleasant environment – hot, cold, damp, nasty
  - Some in hazardous areas
- **Personal life issues**

# Tenure and complacency

- Seniority does not guarantee quality
- State Jurisdiction audit program found a majority of missed violations from veteran inspectors
- Counter intuitive as you think experienced inspectors would catch everything
- Approach all inspections like a first inspection
- Keep current with technology



# Signs of Complacency

- Does not engage in discussions or ask questions
- Does not take on challenges
- Only does the minimum required
- Takes shortcuts
- Does not submit recommendations or violations
- Does not refer to references and codes
- Attitude: “I’ve been doing this for many years & don’t need training”

# Keeping Complacency in Check

- **Reinforce** the purpose and impact of what we do
- **Recognition** - Recognize & celebrate success in the field
- **Urgency** - Accident and failure lessons reinforce danger
- **Challenge** staff with new assignments
- **Avoid Routines** - Rotate responsibilities
- **Reset Repetition** - Review accidents, violations , why we inspect
- **Communication** - Remote workers team connection
- **Mentoring** - Team up staff to learn from each other

# Keeping Complacency in Check

## Training - Training - Training

- Get the field staff involved
  - Back to the basics
  - Technical updates
  - Code review
  - Procedures
  - National Board Inspection Code
  - National Board training
  - Jurisdiction / Association meetings



# Keeping Complacency in Check

- **Tools**
  - Inspection guides, reference materials
- **Quality Reviews**
  - Onsite and report
  - Jurisdiction audit programs

# The Pilot's mindset

- Pilots perform pre-flight inspections and checklists
- Routine activities done thousands of times
- Failure to complete in detail could lead to a catastrophic event



- We need to instill that mindset in inspectors
- Inspect every vessel as if you have never seen it before and do not have any information to start with

# Complacency

Complacency, Control it and

- Keep your commission
- Keep your career
- Keep out of court
- Keep your life
- Keep your community safe





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# Thank you



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