Have you ever thought, “It can’t happen to me?” Or perhaps you were about to do something just a little bit unsafe – or maybe a lot unsafe – and you thought, “Maybe I should… Nah. It’ll be OK. I’ve got this under control.”

You realize that the action you’re about to take is risky, but you decide to do it anyway. If this has happened to you, then you have essentially told yourself, “It can’t happen to me”. You have essentially given yourself permission to act in an unsafe manner, even though you are aware of the possible consequences.

Of course we all believe that we’re special. But the truth is no one is immune from taking a poorly thought out chance. Generally people who say or think, “It can’t happen to me” eventually end up saying or thinking, “I sure wish I had…”

If you commit acts that are inherently unsafe, eventually you are going to have an accident. Chanting, “it can’t happen to me” won’t make any difference to the outcome.

Following are some actual accidents that caused employees injury and time lost from work. They believed it couldn’t happen to them, either.

An airline ruptured and the noise startled an employee. She tried to run away from the area but tripped and fell, resulting in a sprained neck, bruised head, and bruised ankle.
She allowed her emotions to prod her into action, rather than staying calm and assessing the situation.

A power lawn mower got stuck in the mud while a janitor was mowing. As he attempted to extricate the mower, he strained his back. He should not have attempted to push the mower by himself.

An employee mistakenly applied highly flammable glue to his work table. As he started his drill, the electrical sparks caused the fumes to catch fire, burning his hands and face. He should have verified the container label.

An employee was unplugging a coffee urn. When she snatched at the cord, the urn spilled over and hot coffee burned her left arm and side. She should have drained the urn and carefully unplugged it before she moved it.

One employee was dashing to the first aid station to obtain help for another worker when he fell and injured his leg. He should have walked.

A hot spark blew into the ear of a welder while he was working, leaving a first degree burn. If he had been wearing ear protectors, he would have avoided injury.

Remember, an attitude of “it can't happen to me” is hazardous. Even if you aren't injured yourself, you could injure a friend or coworker. If you see anyone working in a manner which is unsafe, notify the person or your supervisor. Always report conditions that are unsafe, because safety is our first concern. Don't listen to the little voice that says, “It can't happen to me”.

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