

Committed to Compliance



One and a Half Goals

It is not a New Years' resolution, it is a commitment to safety excellence. Every year we promise to lose weight, exercise more, spend more time with family, etc., etc., etc. Within the same month we fail to keep our promise to ourselves. Allow me to cause you to think beyond a resolution this year.

In the past year, I have read about a few injuries, maimings, and fatalities that occurred because the people involved were not being compliant. Don't get me wrong, if it sounds like I am saying I am perfect - well, I'm not. Like anyone else I fall into the trap of being complacent, forgetful, or just plain lazy when it comes to compliance. We've got to get past the emotions around compliance.

The Rationale for Compliance

Compliance is a word that often makes people shudder. They get all wrapped up with their own ideas about following the rules and obeying the law...face it, people often have a rebellious streak...some wider than others...when it comes to safety compliance. Consider these three scenarios that ended in tragedy because of a lack of compliance or a lack of willingness to set and comply with their own standards.

- One event involved a couple who was killed when he, the pilot, tried to land at night, in reported fogging conditions without the use of landing instruments that were available at a nearby airport. A decision to not comply with alternate airport plans was likely the culprit.
- Then there is the family that lost their daughter this past year to a car crash. The young girl, just 16 years old, was driving on a road when she flipped her car into a large ditch. The passenger, reportedly her boyfriend, survived with only a broken arm, the girl died. The difference, again, was compliance. The girl was not wearing a seatbelt, the boy was.

In 2016 a man was out with his family boating and the wind came up. The kids were swimming while they were anchored. The man got in the water to help the kids get to the boat. With the



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wind tossing them around as he got the last child to safety, he became too tired to get in the boat and went under without surfacing. As a volunteer for the United States Coast Guard, I can safely say that a life jacket or a preserver would have saved the man's life. You may say, "Well he didn't have to have a life jacket on," but I say because of conditions he could have set his own standards and put one on.

Sometimes government agencies have not created the rule that would have saved someone. In many cases, however, a person who is working or playing in a hazardous environment should set their own standards.



Toward Setting Personal Standards

As a pilot and flight instructor in addition to my career as a safety consultant and speaker, I teach pilots to set their own standards. For example, we spend time talking about alternate plans for all types of emergencies. Under certain conditions, pilots are required to notify the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of their alternate airport plans. In the case of the couple who was killed in the airplane, it's not clear if the pilot had filed alternate flight plans or if they were required for the weather conditions. However, my personal standards would have been to go to the larger, better-equipped airport when the conditions were hazardous at my intended airport.

This summer we spent 3 extra days in Bangor Maine because of 200-400 foot ceilings (the distance from the ground to the lowest cloud layer) between there and Rome, New York. Why? I fly a single engine aircraft and that area is very hilly and wooded. I've set a personal minimum ceilings at 1000 feet. Some pilots see

that as being overly cautious. Yet, I'd rather keep myself and my passengers from harm's way.

In the case of the young girl? Sad story because she should have had her seatbelt on, and the guy who got the last kid in the boat could have made a better decision to wear a life jacket or used the life preserver to stay afloat. One was an issue of not complying with a stated law; the other was an issue of not setting personal standards.

The safety moral is that neither compliance nor personal standards are the silver bullet, but each is a part of the arsenal for preventing injuries, maimings, and deaths in the workplace, at home, and at play.

The Challenge: One and a Half Goals

My challenge for you is "Commit to Compliance in 2017." Take the time to discuss safety rules and work practices that everyone should commit to in 2017 and beyond. Further, how will you commit

to holding each other accountable for that commitment? Are there situations where you can apply a work practice to mitigate risk when no regulation exists from a governing body? Just do it—go beyond compliance to make it safe.

In the title to this article, I mentioned one and a half goals. The first goal is to Commit to Compliance in 2017. To amp up that goal, consider areas in your life where you will set personal standards and comply with them!

Set Your Sights on a Safe 2017

Upgrade yourself with one and half goals for safety. In the end, you will find that your target of zero-injuries has happened because you created a safe environment where it is difficult to get hurt. Make it a safe year!



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- > Product categories to streamline ordering with fewer clicks.
- > Enhanced item detail pages with image galleries.
- > Advanced search algorithms to return relevant keyword results.

- > Increased management and more options for your Favorites lists.
- > New document viewing and reworked account tools.
- > More upgrades and tools to come for easy and fast ordering.