



'ANGUS BARKS'

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AEG Executive Board

Re-Learning Old Lessons

Your survival on the shop floor at GE depends on protecting yourself. Recent disciplinary decisions by Plant I management exposed a truth we learned long ago: Your boss is not your friend.

Today's shop floor is a mixture of hardy veterans and new arrivals. In case you are too old and forgot, or too young and don't understand, here's a refresher course that applies to any dayworker who works to a job procedure:

PRE-FLIGHT CARDS

Everyone thinks pre-flight cards are a pain. It is the operator's responsibility to fill them out. Their purpose is to identify any tools, gages, paperwork or equipment that is unavailable but required by your job procedure.

The problem is, almost every job procedure has something missing or out of date. The intent of the preflight system is to notify management what needs to be fixed, so they can arrange the fix. Due to years of expense cutbacks, nothing gets fixed these days, especially when the resourcefulness of the operator or ingenuity of the remaining planners keeps the job going with a borrowed tool or alternate method.

The conscientious operator who pre-flights properly, piles up pre-flight cards daily, with no results. So if management doesn't care, why bother, right? WRONG!

YOUR BEST PROTECTION

The pre-flight card is an operator's best protection. Why? When quality problems arise, corporate auditors want corrective action. That means heads must roll, discipline will be issued.

When your ex-friend the manager is visited by the auditor, what will he say? Will he put his neck on the line by explaining his operators keep the whole shop going with wits and wisdom, without required tools or modern machinery, in order to keep production running and this plant open? Or will he claim his quality procedures are squeaky clean, and his ex-friend the operator must have screwed up? You know the answer to that one.

ALL YEAR LONG

Not even the strongest union member can bear to fill out a meaningless piece of paper every single day with no results. So this is what you should do: For each job procedure you run, fill out one pre-flight that lists everything wrong with that procedure. Under date, write "2006". Make the card good for all year.

Have your foreman sign it. Give him 2 choices. Sign the card and get his parts. Don't sign the card and the job won't run until every item is fixed. He'll sign. Keep the pre-flight in your toolbox. That way you only fill out one for each jobsheet, instead of one each day, and you're protected all year long if a quality issue arises. If the foreman wants a copy, give him a copy. But keep your own.

THIS MEANS YOU

It's clear in Plant I the management is squeaky clean. Let them squeak. We know the reality. Protect yourself. Fill out your pre-flights today.

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