



# Northeast Public Power Association Safety Corner

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## Horseplay in the Workplace

You may have witnessed horseplay in the workplace: people pushing one another, throwing tools, pulling the chair away when someone goes to sit down, misusing equipment or PPE, distracting those operating heavy machinery, operating machinery recklessly, making a loud noise towards someone, or turning off the lights. These are just some of the incidents of “horseplay” or reckless behavior that can put someone, including yourself, at risk of unnecessary injury or cause property damage. “We were just having fun, or it was just a joke,” is the reason for participating in horseplay. Although, horseplay often involves the characteristics of cruelty, irresponsibility, and immaturity. **What was meant to be an innocent or playful action could have deadly consequences.**

### Recordable

According to OSHA, injuries to employees occurring at the workplace due to “horseplay” **are recordable on the OSHA 300 Log** as long as the injury meets the general recording criteria. Employers are encouraged to review their recordkeeping practices to confirm compliance with the OSHA recordkeeping rules - also, horseplay or reckless behavior while at work can **eliminate workers’ compensation**. For an injury to qualify for workers’ compensation benefits, it must be an accident that resulted when the employee was working responsibly. It cannot result from the injured worker participating in intentional or willful harm, negligent or criminal action, or horseplay.

### Best Way to Avoid

The best way to avoid potentially hazardous situations in the workplace is to have safety rules and procedures designed to protect employees and provide a safe work environment. The employer should ensure that the policies are clearly outlined in the **employee handbook**, that the employee is made aware of the consequences of their behavior, and that unacceptable behavior involves and is not allowed in the workplace.



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