A good employee learns new things quickly and easily. But a good employee also waits for the proper training and authorization before using equipment.

Training is important before you attempt to do any job. Sometimes it may be tempting to take the controls of a piece of equipment rather than waiting for a trained and authorized person to do the job. Giving in to this impulse has resulted in death for a great many workers.

There are those who thought they could operate a forklift just because they knew how to drive a car. They found out too late how differently a forklift handles, when it tipped over on a ramp or struck a pedestrian. Trying to weld without the benefit of safety training and personal protective equipment can result in eye injury, electrocution, fire or other mishaps. Tradespeople go to school to learn how to do the job right and protect the safety of anyone who comes into contact with their work. You can’t learn it all by casual observation or quick instruction.

It’s not only what you do, but where you go that can get you into trouble. By ignoring an "authorized personnel sign", you can get yourself struck by moving equipment or overcome by toxic chemical vapors. Many people have been killed as they tried to rescue others from places they had no business going.

Even the best intentions, like tidying up the workplace, can backfire if you hang up a fire extinguisher which needs to be serviced before use.

Computers, copiers and other electronic equipment usually have components inside which are not to be opened except by a licensed technician. Don’t go there -- the result could be electric shock or damage to the equipment.

More is being learned all the time about work-related hazards and how to avoid them. Studies of statistics and specific incidents help determine what conditions and actions can lead to injuries. As a result, training programs are developed to help workers carry out their jobs with a great degree of safety.

*Training and certification are required for an increasing number of occupations. Safety is one important reason for this trend. It affects the worker and the other people affected by his or her actions.*