



# DON'T RUN ON AUTOPILOT

BY JOE CHOI, LAT, ATC

Have you ever started a job that should have been quick and easy, only to run into delays (or worse, danger) because the right tools weren't ready? Whether it's a missing piece of PPE, faulty equipment, or a general lack of preparation, not having what you need before you start can turn a routine task into a risky one.

Just like we prepare our bodies to work safely, we also have to prepare our tools and gear to do the job right. It's easy to go on autopilot and assume everything will be fine, but safety isn't something you can afford to coast through.



## DRESS FOR THE JOB YOU WANT (AND THE HAZARDS YOU'RE AVOIDING)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) exists for a reason. Being a robot made of metal would be nice. The human body, however, is made of flesh and bone which makes us vulnerable. Cuts, bruises, and even more serious injuries are a real risk in the industrial setting.

Use the PPE provided by your site. Make sure it fits *properly*. And don't try to tough it out with boots that are two sizes too big (unless you're aiming for a tripping hazard or trying out for the Ronald McDonald lookalike contest). Properly fitted gear is your first line of defense.



## KNOW YOUR EQUIPMENT (AND THE RISKS THAT COME WITH IT)

Every tool or piece of equipment comes with its own set of hazards. That's why it's crucial to understand how to use it as it was designed. Follow the proper work methods. Don't improvise or "Jimmy rig" something just to save a few seconds. It might feel like a quick fix, but shortcuts can quickly turn into injury risks.

And if you're not familiar with a tool or how it works? **Ask.** No one's going to knock you for wanting to be safer and smarter on the job.



## DON'T PENCIL WHIP THE PRE-SHIFT

Pre-shift inspections are there for a reason. Skipping steps or rushing through the checklist might save a minute in the moment, but it can lead to breakdowns, delays, or even put the next person in harm's way.

If you're using equipment like battery-powered machines, always check the charge level. There's nothing worse than a pallet jack dying an hour into a shift. Turn it on, listen for anything out of the ordinary, and check for strange smells or sounds. If something seems off, don't ignore it.



## PREVENTION FAVORS THE PREPARED

Sure, checking your equipment might feel repetitive, *but safety often lives in the routine*. Just like a pilot never skips the pre-flight checklist, you shouldn't skip the steps that keep you and those around you safe.

For pilots, that list is a matter of life or death. For you, it might mean avoiding a trip, a strain, or something worse. You might not be flying a plane, but your work matters and so does your well-being. Whether you're responsible for a team or just looking out for yourself, taking the time to evaluate your equipment is how you make sure you get to go home safe and sound, every single day. 🌱

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**Work Right** is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.