



The Foundational Logic of Zero Injury

The National Academy of Construction (NAC) urges top company leaders in the construction industry to embrace the operational concept of “achieving Zero Injury” as a corporate safety performance norm. NAC offers the following safety precepts on which the Zero Injury safety concept is based. These statements give insight into how to begin the process that yields in Zero Injury outcomes. NAC fully recognizes that Zero Injury is a safety concept that departs from the historic norm of accepting employee injury as a necessary part of the build process. This paper defines a “precept” as a *foundational logic statement supporting a corporate safety commitment by all employees to work injury free*. A precept typically takes the form of a statement, but can also be a poignant question. The Zero Injury precepts assist individuals in forming their foundational safety beliefs. A priority list of the NAC Zero Injury precepts asks top leaders to:

1. Know that the fact injuries occur does not mean that injuries must occur; all injuries are preventable.
2. View the objective of Zero Injury outcome as a commitment, not a target or goal. There is a difference.
3. Understand there are many reasons injuries occur, but only one cause, which is always linked to some form of at-risk behavior (ARB).
4. Ensure all employees make a commitment to avoid all at-risk behaviors.
5. Accept that committing to Zero Injury is not saying there will never be another injury, but that another injury is never wanted.
6. Know employees will fully support a company’s Zero Injury efforts since no employee nor their families want an injury to occur to anyone.
7. Acknowledge that safety has always been about working more hours without injury. It is clear that Zero Injury is statistically possible.
8. Recognize that an informed construction leader’s job is simply to apply the Zero Injury research of the Construction Industry Institute (CII) to redefine a company’s longest string of hours worked at Zero Injury.
9. If Zero Injury is not your heart’s desire for a safety outcome, then what is?

The longest string Zero Injury records occurring in North America, both exceeding more than 4.6 million hours worked, have been achieved by S&B Engineers and Constructors, Houston, TX, with a companywide record, and by Peter Kiewit Sons’, Inc., Omaha, NE, at the Kearl Oil Sands Project near Fort McMurray, Alberta, Canada. Both CEOs are members of NAC.

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- See NAC website at www.naocon.org to download copies of the NAC Safety White Papers.
 - See CII website at www.construction-institute.org for copies of various research products.

NAC White Paper authored by Emmitt J. Nelson and provided by the NAC Safety Committee.

The National Academy of Construction (NAC) is an organization of leaders from industry, construction, the military, and academia formed as a knowledge base of American competence in the construction of capital facilities. NAC position papers are created from the experience base of NAC membership and are offered to American business and government leaders as answers to challenges facing American enterprise. NAC position papers are issued after review and consent by a majority of the current members.