

Are You Prepared?

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▲ A knight in shining armor and a process operator in the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) are both donning the necessary gear in preparation for possible hazards.

Most of us have seen movies of medieval warriors preparing for battle. They sharpen swords, test their shields, and don their armor and helmets. Leaders explain the plans for the ensuing conflict, and they all go to their stations to await the start of the battle. Some movies also show the soldiers thinking about possible injuries (or worse). In this way, they prepare for the challenges of the day.

Are you prepared for the start of your day? At the beginning of a shift, workers don their personal protective equipment (PPE), such as safety glasses, fire-resistant clothing, boots, and helmets. It may be necessary to calibrate a meter or personal gas monitor. The production schedule and inspection tasks have been outlined by the unit leaders and are communicated to the workers during the shift handover and start-of-shift meetings.

In industrial and process engineering, the hazards of the process and equipment are the enemy; the battle is to keep processes operating safely and to keep hazardous materials contained. Operators continue this mission daily when making rounds, performing inspections, and repairing faulty or failing equipment and devices. Do we take our jobs as seriously as those warriors of old? When you put on your PPE, are you also thinking about the hazards you will face today?

Did You Know?

Planning is an important part of every safe and successful workday. Effective shift turnover includes a face-to-face discussion between the personnel ending their shift and those beginning the shift.

Good shift turnover meetings include:

- the status of each process
- any upsets or production problems that occurred
- equipment that is offline for maintenance
- any equipment or controls that are bypassed or offline
- any contractor work underway
- permitted work that will continue on the next shift
- visitors or workers in the unit from another plant area
- review of the unit logbook.

It may be necessary to visit the field to see the exact situation that is being discussed. Some companies use a checklist or form to list all the topics to be covered during turnover.

What Can You Do?

- Arrive at the control room or shift-turnover area in time to allow personnel to discuss all necessary information.
- Read the logbook carefully. Do not just look for issues in your area; understand the situation in the entire area or unit.
- Follow the shift turnover forms and procedures to address all the problems and concerns.
- Ask questions to ensure that the present status of the process is well understood.
- Actively participate in the shift turnover meetings. Listen as if your life depends on it — it may!
- If permits need to be rewritten for the next shift, take the time to inspect the area before writing or approving the permit. Conditions may have changed.

Start your day prepared for the challenges ahead!