TAKE 5 FOR SAFETY

INSTRUCTOR'S NOTES

5-MINUTE SAFETY DRILL

Civil Rights: Jokes Can Be Harmful

Date:_____

Shift:_____

Dept:_____

Station:_____

Training Code:_____

NOTES:

FOCUS: Many people believe we have become overly sensitive to jokes and pranks in society today. However, we must remember each as the right to a harassment free environment. We must respect one another's feeling to create a positive team environment.

CHALLENGE

Like kids, we like to tell jokes and play pranks. It can be great fun and reduce stress in the workplace. Sharing laughter can be the framework for building stronger teams and friendships.

However, jokes and pranks have come under increasing scrutiny in recent years. This is because too often the jokes have been at the expense of an individual's dignity. The line has been crossed when the subject of the joke does not enjoy it. Ultimately this is the true test of whether we have gone too far.

Many districts have had complaints and law suits filed against them as a result of activities that have created a "hostile" work environment for the person being targeted. Inappropriate jokes can create morale problems and destroy team camaraderie. Let's make sure our jokes are truly "harmless."

DISCUSSION

- Are practical jokes played on team members at our district?
- What types of jokes are told?
- Is "one" person targeted more than others?
- Would you enjoy the joke if it were played on you?
- Have you heard jokes you didn't like?
- What did you do or say?
- Has the district had problems resulting from firefighter complaints?
- How has the district handled the situation?
- Do you feel this was adequate?
- Was there any retaliation against the person filing the complaint?
- What's the district's policy on harassment?

The greatest asset of the fire service is our people; protect them!

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