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# Your Safety Matters

*This information letter is distributed to those people who ensure their workplace is safe and healthy. This includes members of OHS Committees, OHS Representatives, Safety Officers, Supervisors, Managers and Directors. "Your Safety Matters" is the new title for "Committee Member" - a free information letter which has been distributed since 1996.*

November - December 2004

## "It Must Be Safe

**- We've Always Done it That Way."**

Recently WorkCover prosecuted a company over a situation that has a lesson for all companies.



This particular company had a method of work that required an employee to roll a heavy metal coil from its storage area across the factory floor to a machine for processing. This work method had been used for 17 years and there had never been an accident.

Well, that is a great accident-free record and it would be easy to feel confident that this must be a safe method of work. However, the factory floor was uneven, the coil weighed 500 kgs and on one bad day the coil fell on the employee who was pushing it across the uneven floor.



The judge who heard this case pointed out that the 17 year accident-free record did not excuse the employer from the legal duty of identifying, assessing, and eliminating or controlling safety risks. The employer was fined \$90,000.

### So how are things in your workplace?

As this employer discovered, an accident-free work activity does not always mean there is no safety risk in that activity. It is vital that you find and control the risks before an employee is injured.

