

WE STOP IF THE UNEXPECTED OCCURS



We normally plan our activities carefully, thinking about how we expect the activity to proceed and what could potentially go wrong. However, in real life there are times when things do not occur as planned or expected.

Often process safety incidents have occurred when an activity has deviated from the expected path, but those involved have continued anyway or informally adapted the plan on-the-run. While this may be well-intended, to get the job done, it has the potential to lead down a path that has not been fully evaluated and risk assessed.

This process safety fundamental highlights the importance of recognizing when things are not progressing as expected and being disciplined about stopping or pausing to understand what has changed and why things are not as planned. Often this may need a change to the plan or an update of the risk assessment, or it may prompt consultation with others to seek specialist input. We should be ready to speak up and challenge in unexpected situations and engage with supervision to discuss our concerns. Pausing or stopping a task may feel inconvenient at the time but keeping an activity on plan and under control will avoid incidents, keep people safe, and support good business performance.

Tips for Managers:

Positively recognize people who stop to reevaluate a task if it is not going as planned.

Communicate to front-line workers that they should pause and seek guidance if an activity is not proceeding as expected.

Additional guidance:

- Center for Chemical Process Safety Beacon (July 2014): [Persistence – Good or Bad?](#)