Preventing Hero Culture: When Good Intentions Create Risk Stats and Facts

FACTS

- **Risk-Taking to "Save the Job":** Workers may bypass procedures or controls to fix problems quickly, increasing exposure to serious hazards.
- **Bypassing Safety Systems:** Interlocks, guards, and lockout/tagout procedures are often ignored when workers try to act fast or independently.
- **Unplanned Rescue Attempts:** Workers may attempt to help others without proper training or equipment, leading to multiple injuries in the same incident.
- **Normalization of Unsafe Behavior:** Repeated shortcuts can become accepted practice, creating a culture where risk-taking is seen as commitment.
- **Pressure to Perform:** Production demands and peer expectations can push workers to act beyond their training or authority.
- **Lack of Stop-Work Culture:** When workers feel they must "push through," they are less likely to stop operations even when conditions are unsafe.
- **Overconfidence and Experience Bias:** Experienced workers may rely on past success and underestimate current hazards, increasing risk of error.

STATS

- In the United States, approximately 60% of workplace incidents involve human factors such as decision-making and risk-taking behaviors, including bypassing procedures (NSC, 2022–2024).
- U.S. data shows that over 30% of serious workplace injuries are linked to failure to follow established safety procedures, often associated with shortcuts or urgency (OSHA and BLS, 2021–2023).
- In Canada, nearly 40% of workplace injuries involve unsafe actions or deviations from standard procedures, including unauthorized interventions (AWCBC, 2021–2023).
- U.S. safety reports indicate that up to 70% of incidents involve multiple contributing factors, including behavioral decisions such as rushing or taking unnecessary risks (NIOSH, 2021–2023).
- In Canada, overexertion and contact incidents—often tied to rushed or unplanned actions—account for more than 50% of lost-time injuries (AWCBC, recent data).
- U.S. research shows that workers under time pressure are significantly more likely (over 2x) to take unsafe actions, increasing injury risk (NIOSH and industry studies, 2021–2023).