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Safety+Health

Newsletter

NATIONAL GLAUCOMA AWARENESS MONTH

Who is to Blame?

DOWNED POWER LINE Safety

NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

THE DANGERS OF DEHYDRATION IN WINTER

January 2025

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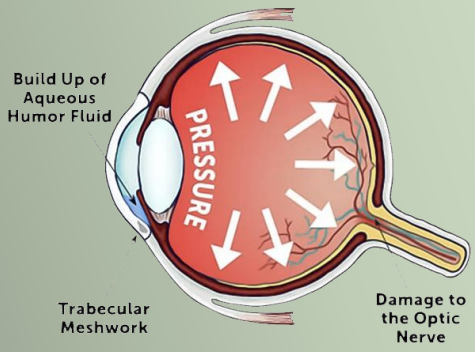
HAPPY NEW YEAR
2025
Work Smart...
Work Safely...

What is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases that gradually steal sight without warning. Although the most common forms primarily affect the middle-aged and the elderly, glaucoma can affect people of all ages.

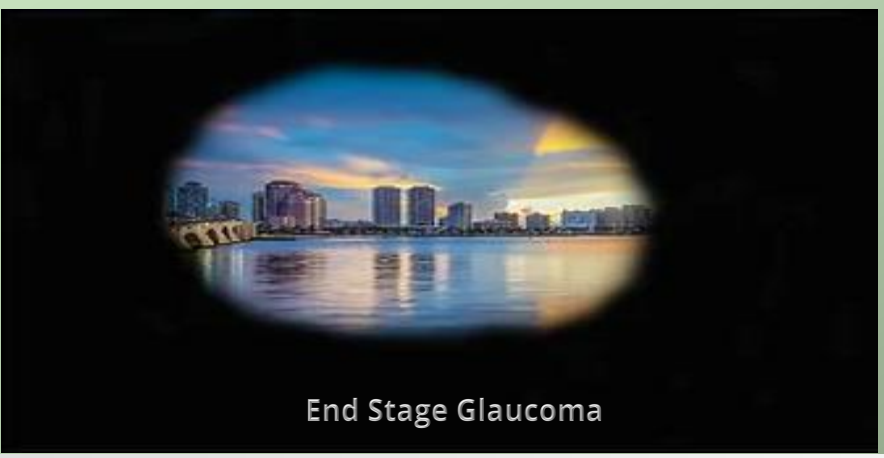
Types of this disease include open-angle glaucoma, which causes peripheral eyesight to slowly diminish, angle closure glaucoma, where pressure on the iris interferes with fluid draining; and low-tension glaucoma, which actually occurs without elevated pressure on the eye.



There is no cure for glaucoma yet. However, medication or surgery can slow or prevent further vision loss. Early detection is vital to stopping the progress of the disease.

NATIONAL
GLAUCOMA
AWARENESS MONTH

January is an important time to spread the word about this sight-stealing disease and reminds all of us to get regular eye exams. There's currently no way to restore vision lost from glaucoma. More than 3 million people in the United States have glaucoma, and it is projected to reach 4.2 million by 2030, a 58 percent increase.



Did You Know

Glaucoma

is called

"The Sneak Thief of Sight"

and

is a common cause of blindness?

Glaucoma doesn't usually have any symptoms at first. That's why half of the people with glaucoma don't even know they have it. Over time, you may slowly lose vision, usually starting with your side (peripheral) vision especially the part of your vision that's closest to your nose.

Because it happens so slowly, many people can't tell that their vision is changing at first. As the disease gets worse, you may start to notice that you can't see things off to the side anymore.

Without treatment, glaucoma can eventually cause irreversible blindness.

What causes glaucoma?

Scientists aren't sure what causes the most common types of glaucoma. Still, many people with glaucoma have high eye pressure, and treatments that lower eye pressure help slow the disease. But, unfortunately, there's no way to prevent glaucoma. That's why eye exams are so important so you and your doctor can find it before it affects your vision.

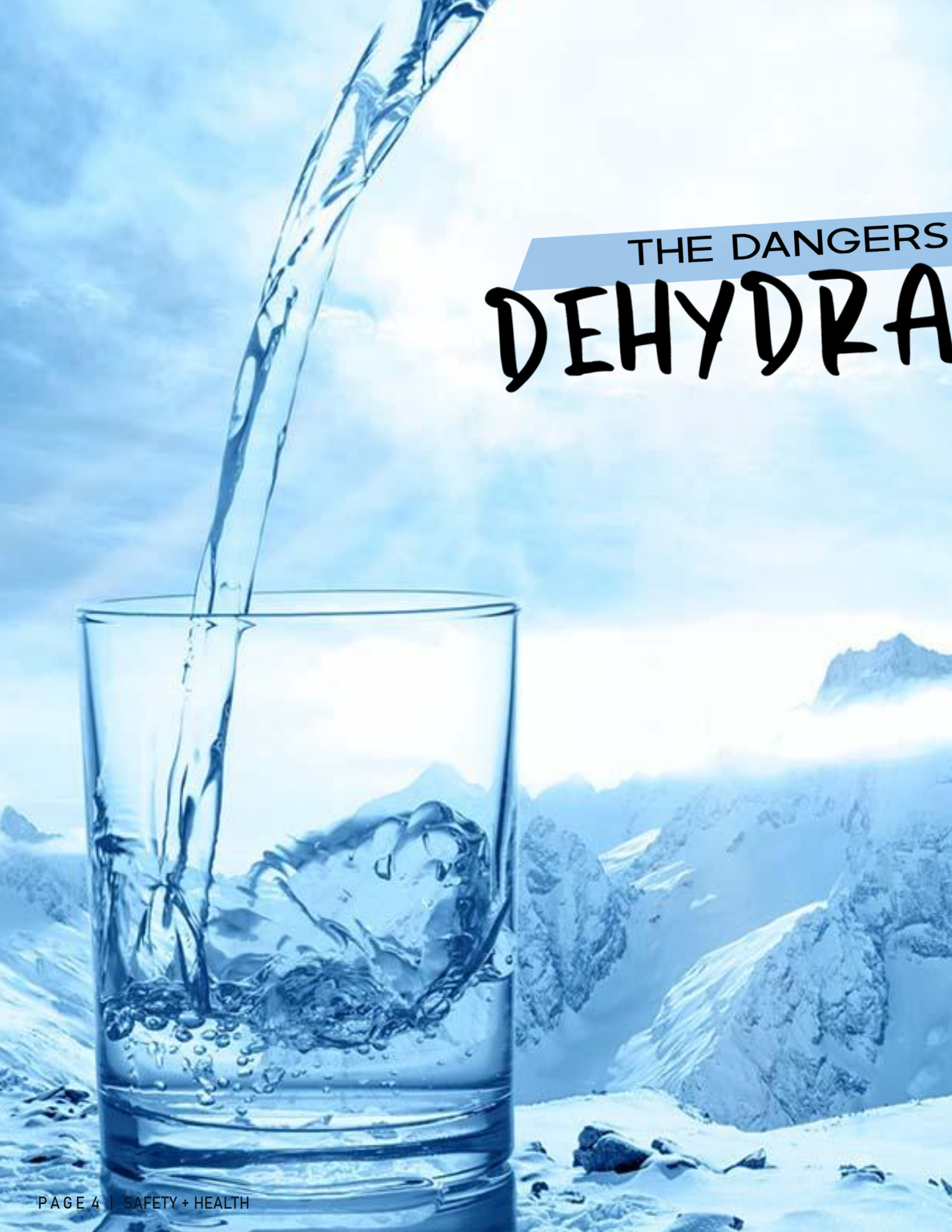
Are you at risk for glaucoma?

Those at higher risk include people of African, Asian, and Hispanic descent. Other high-risk groups include people over 60, family members of those already diagnosed, diabetics, and people who are severely nearsighted. Regular eye exams are especially important for those at higher risk for glaucoma and may help to prevent unnecessary vision loss.

Ask your eye doctor about your risk and how often to get checked. A comprehensive dilated eye exam is painless and includes a visual field test to check your side vision.

What's the treatment for glaucoma?

Doctors use different types of treatment for glaucoma, including medicines (usually eye drops), laser treatment, and surgery. If you have glaucoma, it's important to start treatment right away. Treatment won't undo any damage to your vision, but it can stop it from getting worse. Eye exams are vital to eye health, even if you have no symptoms. □



THE DANGERS OF DEHYDRATION

OF TION IN WINTER

Hard to believe, but the risk of dehydration is just as great, if not higher, in the winter as it is in the summer. Dehydration isn't limited to hot weather; we are even more at risk of being dehydrated in the winter for the following reasons.

We aren't as thirsty: Studies show that people feel about 40% less thirsty in the winter, despite the fact that the body's need for water doesn't change throughout the year.

Breathing in cold and dry air causes a significant amount of fluid loss: We lose more fluid (vapor) when we breathe as cold weather causes us to breathe harder. When you can see your own breath, this is actually fluid loss from our bodies.

Even if working indoors, the cold weather outside reduces the moisture content in the air, causing indoor air to have less humidity. Low humidity is friendly to germs and viruses, paving the way for the flu and colds, especially for those who are dehydrated.

We sweat more when we wear warm clothing: In the colder months, we often sweat more as we are wearing extra layers. While these keep us warm, they also make our bodies work harder causing more fluid to be lost through sweating.

We aren't reminded to hydrate: We often rely on visual cues such as sweating which reminds us to drink. However, in cold weather, the sweat turns into vapor and doesn't sit directly on our skin. Because of this, there is no excessive perspiration that acts as a visual cue for us to drink.

Don't let cold weather's hidden hazard fool you: Stay hydrated. □

STAY AWAY

Downed power lines can be deadly…

even if they look harmless.

DOWNED POWER LINE Safety

Standing or walking near a downed power line can be just as dangerous as touching the line. This hazard is called *step potential*.

Step potential means a person can get an electrical shock when they step or stand on the ground with a voltage between each foot. This can happen when a power line lies on the ground (or on your car), and the power line is still energized.

The closer someone gets to the power line, the more the voltage-

Always assume a downed power line is LIVE.

- *Immediately call 911*
- *Keep at least 30 feet away*
- *Avoid using anything to try to move the line*
- *Never drive over downed power lines*

increases between steps.

That's because electricity from the broken line spreads around the area it touches, creating different voltage "shells" on the earth's surface. If you step across one of these "shells," you could encounter a voltage shell with enough voltage to cause physical harm or even death.

If a vehicle collides with an electric pole, the power line may fall onto the vehicle. If anyone tries to exit the vehicle while touching it, they risk electrical shock due to the flow of electricity through their body to the ground. This is called *touch potential.*

Surprisingly, the best thing to do in this situation is to stay inside the vehicle if there is no immediate danger. However, if a fire ignites in the car, it is crucial to leave the vehicle right away. Follow these steps carefully:

1. Exit the vehicle by jumping out and landing with both feet together and knees locked.

It's essential to land with your feet close together to avoid stepping across any "voltage shells." If you land with your feet apart, electricity could flow from one foot to the other, creating a hazard called *step potential*.

2. Once outside, shuffle away from the vehicle without lifting your feet, moving about half a foot at a time. Maintaining your balance is essential; falling and touching the ground may create a risk of shock.

   The recommended distance is about 30 to 35 feet, which is roughly equivalent to the height of the power pole that is above ground.

Touch potential and Step potential are two risks associated with downed power lines. You can minimize your chances of electrical shock by taking the right precautions during an emergency, thanks to this valuable information.

Share this knowledge with others! □

Many household dangers are apparent, but radon is a silent intruder that often goes unnoticed. Radon is a radioactive gas that arises from the natural decay of uranium found in the earth's soil, rock, and water. This insidious gas is invisible and odorless, meaning many homeowners may unknowingly be living with it, regardless of their home's age, design, or cleanliness.

Radon primarily infiltrates homes through cracks and crevices in the foundation but can also seep in through drains, pipes, and gaps around service lines. These entry points allow the gas to accumulate in enclosed spaces, creating a potentially hazardous atmosphere.

What makes radon particularly alarming is its association with severe health issues, most notably lung cancer. The danger lies in the fact that radon exposure typically occurs without any immediate symptoms or warning signs, allowing it to silently impact your health over time. In addition to lung cancer, research indicates that long-term exposure to radon may also increase the risk of leukemia, particularly concerning vulnerable populations such as children.

Given that we spend countless hours inhaling the air in our homes while cooking, bathing, or sleeping prolonged exposure to radon can be significant. Recent studies highlight that children may be especially susceptible to the dangers of radon, making environments like daycares and schools critical areas for investigation and concern.

To determine if radon is present in your home, conducting a radon test is essential.

While scientists have known about the link between radon gas and lung cancer for decades, it wasn't until the 1980s that the risks linked to indoor radon levels in homes were fully acknowledged and addressed.

If you find yourself wondering, "What exactly is a radon test, and why is it important?" you are not alone. Despite being a considerable risk factor for lung cancer, funding for radon awareness campaigns by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state health organizations is often limited.

NATIONAL RADON ACTION MONTH

Most states provide residents with brochures and educational materials about radon, but these resources can have restricted circulation and may not reach a broad audience. As a result, many individuals remain unaware of the dangers posed by radon.

By taking the initiative to educate yourself about this silent intruder, you can take

10 Symptoms of Radon Poisoning

- Persistent Cough
- Chest Pain
- Wheezing or Shortness of Breath
- Frequent Infections
- Loss of Appetite
- Fatigue
- Frequent Headaches
- Hoarseness
- Difficulty swallowing
- Skin Lesions

Exposure to radon gas is considered to be one of the causes of lung cancer in nonsmokers, accounting for about

21,000

lung cancer deaths each year.

proactive steps to minimize your exposure and safeguard your family's health.

Radon levels can vary significantly throughout the year, with concentrations typically peaking during the chilly winter months when homes are less ventilated. Testing for radon is the only reliable method to ascertain its presence and concentration within your living environment. Therefore, homeowners are encouraged to conduct tests at different times of the year, especially in winter when the risk may be elevated.

Testing for radon is a straightforward process. You can easily obtain testing kits for an independent assessment or hire professional inspectors to conduct a thorough evaluation. To protect yourself and your family from the potential dangers of radon, it's vital to learn about this invisible threat and take effective measures to limit your exposure. For more information, visit: www.epa.gov/radon

Who is to Blame?

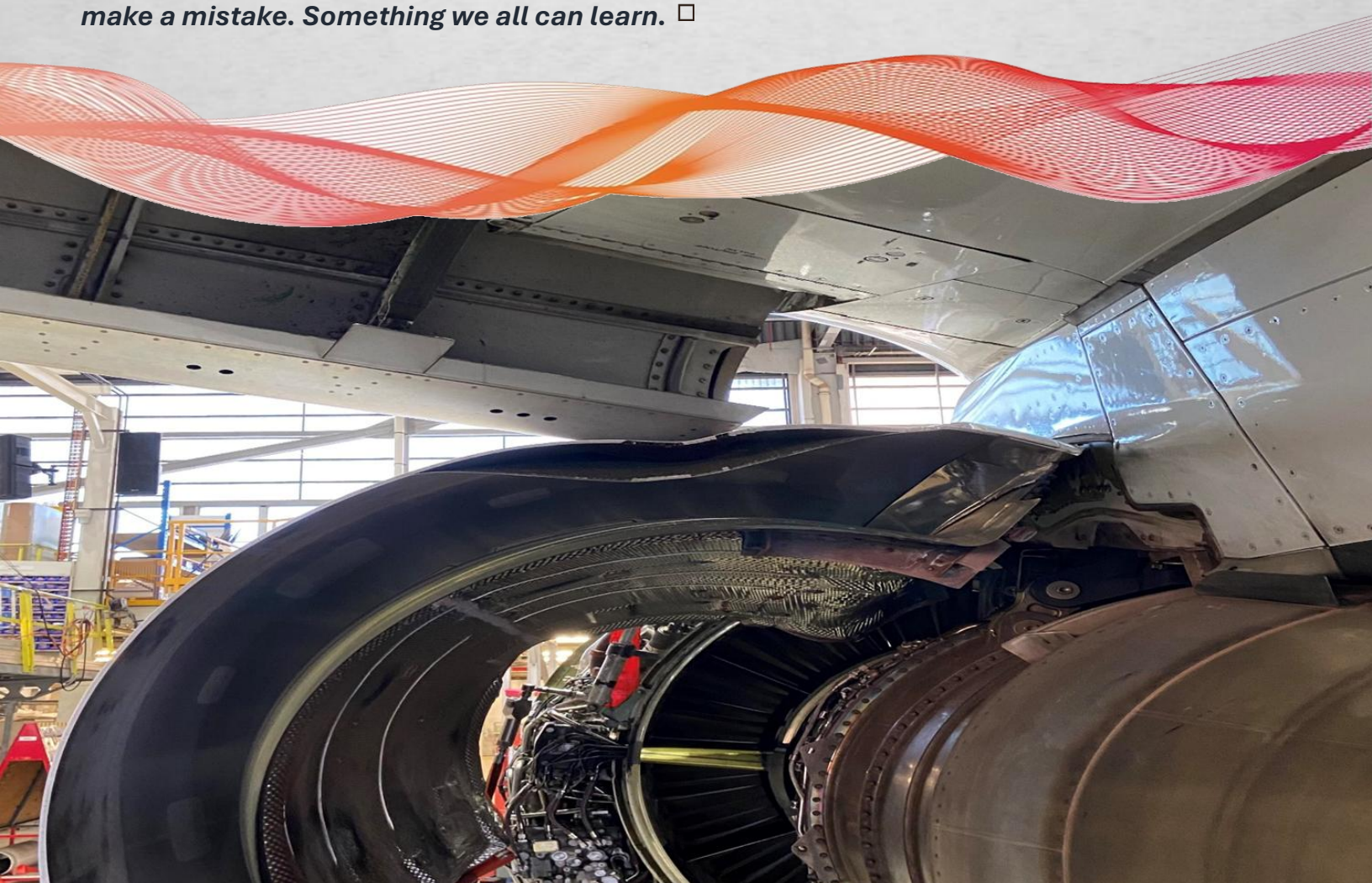
What do we assume when reading an accident report relating to incorrect or improper maintenance? Was the mechanic a lousy mechanic? If you say yes, then the learning is over. After all, a good mechanic would never make a bad judgment call.

On the other hand, if you assume that the mechanic is skilled and has good judgment, the question becomes, "What might have influenced this good mechanic to act in such a way that it caused an accident?" You will then investigate factors that might cause you to make that same mistake.

Once we place blame on a person, concentrating on the "who," we often stop looking for the underlying reasons and miss the opportunity to learn the "why." The question "why" deals with influences. Understanding these influences is such a subtle task that blaming will overpower understanding. Underlying reasons often sound like excuses, deflecting blame, or refusing to take responsibility.

When learning of maintenance errors, you need to suspend your judgment long enough to understand the "why." This will point you to the situational influence that prompted the mistake and allow you to understand what might trip you up.

Your learning begins when you understand how the situation influenced the mechanic to make a mistake. Something we all can learn. □



Upcoming Events

TAKE ACTION ON RADON

January is National Radon Action Month. Over the last few years, CDC has chosen the last week of January to observe Radon Awareness Week. This important event sheds light on the dangers of radon, the second leading cause of lung cancer deaths in the United States after cigarette smoking.

January 27-31, 2025, is Radon Awareness Week. This year's theme is "What's Your Radon Story?" Each day of the week features facts about radon with related graphics, social media messages, and highlighted radon stories. Visit www.cdc.gov/radon

The CDC estimates that approximately 250,000 people suffer injuries from falls in the bathroom each year, with a significant percentage occurring while entering and exiting the bathtub.

This January, as we observe Bath Safety Month, it's important to take extra precautions to avoid injuries at home. Bathing is such a routine activity that we often overlook the safety measures needed in one of the most dangerous places in our homes. Installing safety bars or grab handles and using non-slip mats inside the tub or shower are two effective and common strategies to enhance safety in these slippery environments.

PPE ROADSHOW

- ✈ **LAS – January 15th**
- ✈ **SAN – January 28th**

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Safety+Health Matters!

Got Feedback?

Suggestions on Safety topics in upcoming Newsletters?

Email: Safety@local591.com