

# Howard Talks Tech

## The Hazard of Risk Acceptance

Risk is a part of life. In fact, it is risk that may be the source of enjoyment for our beloved leisure time activities. *Wikipedia* defines *Risk* as the potential of gaining or losing something of value. An example may be the thrill of the wind in your face as over against the chance of crashing your motorcycle. *Risk* is also; a consequence of action taken in spite of uncertainty.

Every day we make evaluations of risk. Ideally those decisions should be made based on good substantiated data. Sometimes; we are clouded in our assessment of risk by past experience. It hasn't happened yet, so it won't happen. You choose to stand on the top of a step ladder, one hazard is known, a possible fall to the working surface and a chance of serious injury. However, personal or environmental factors may be less understood. A windy day, working on a live electric fixture, fatigue. While we may be aware of these influences we choose to discount their importance.

Many times our past **good luck** in escaping from undesirable consequences lulls us into complacency that accidents only happen to the other guy; we are too smart or have outstanding reactions, to ever fall prey to things that ensnare our less capable co-workers. The bottom line is we accept the risk associated with our "short-cut" method.

While many folks hold the opinion stated above there are some who just do not know the likelihood of undesirable consequences or their life-changing severity. To those folks **I plead, heed** the warnings offered by manufactures, safety experts, and those unfortunate victims of similar misguided thoughts. A second can change your life! Every regulation is "*written in the blood*" of people whose risk accepting decisions led to at-risk behaviors that led to unintended consequences and in some cases disfiguring injuries and even fatalities.

"Stinking thinking", beguiles us with the siren song and disillusionment that we will continue to escape the inevitable consequence of conducting at-risk behaviors. If we do a questionable behavior often enough; we will get the bad outcome eventually, it is just a matter of when. Statistics bear witness to the validity of all games of chance, no one wins every time. Risk acceptance is taking a bet against yourself and hoping that you will beat the odds. That is a risk it is unwise to gamble on. Follow the best practices and avoid betting your life on a dubious outcome.