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Key to Safety III

How do we make decisions?

At first glance, this seems to be an easy question to answer:

1. Gather all the relevant data.
2. Evaluate all the relevant data.
3. Determine the pros and cons.
4. Select the best option.

OK so let's take purchasing a phone as an example. How many of you take the time to gather all the information for the iPhone, Samsung, Google, Motorola, LG, Etc. We don't have time for all that; right? So how is it we selected the phone we have? Likely your decision was based on and/or influenced by a number of other factors picked up over time even before you knew you needed or wanted a new phone.



Efficiency vs Thoroughness

Factors that influence our decisions include the time we have to gather and evaluate the information, the amount of information we can actually find, our past experience and the experience of others. We can also be influenced by advertizing, lobbying, our personal needs and our sense making. However, people are always looking to shorten any process. Decision making is no different. "People's decisions are a trade-off between the available information and the available time" (*The Human Element v1*). These shortened decision chains can also be referred to as shortcuts.

Shortcuts can Really Hurt

The "cut" in Shortcut is real! Too often we take the shortcut and end up in the "Law of Unintended Consequences" land: and in that land people get hurt. In making decisions about safety, make sure you have gathered and evaluated all the relevant information. That one key piece of information can make the difference between going home at night...or not. Involve others and utilize their experience. If experience is lacking, crawl up the chain of command to get the advice you need. It takes effort to make good decisions: don't be afraid to expend that effort.



Please share and discuss with your crews.