

No small thing

25 March, 2020

Checking news today, I clicked on a video that interested me and was met with a popup that said, "WARNING! This video contains flashing images!"

This wasn't the first time I'd seen such a warning but as always, it made me glad. For those of you who don't know, there are conditions (including photosensitive epilepsy) that make exposure to flashing lights of certain types dangerous. So, while this warning wasn't strictly worded the way experts might prefer, it at least provides a measure of safety. Another good example of this sort of warning is 'This product may contain nuts' or similar warnings that we see on packaging and even outside some restaurants.

In manufacturing plants around the country you'll see floors painted with lines indicating where it is safe to step – or not – so you don't have an unfortunate meeting with a spinning blade or swinging arm. When I was a nuclear plant operator in the Navy, the door to my work space carried the trefoil pictogram advising those without extensive training and personal dosimetry to stay out. And of course, you can't put your car in drive without it reminding you to buckle up, if such advice is warranted.

Warning signs are a great idea. But they're only useful to those who heed the warning.

There's a lesson here somewhere. And it's no small thing.

Mary and I are doing everything we can to stay safe but engaged. Please make sure the same is true for you.