Safety Works - Keep Informed

Safety Nugget for 2020 - What Does Safety Mean To You?

As with anything there are numerous responses to this question. My 2020 challenge to each of you is to find what your safety nugget is and make it work for all employees at all levels. Yes, you might have a safety goal for 2020 but how are you going to implement that goal so it works for all? Finding that answer will be the safety nugget—which will be worth its weight in gold to you, your employees, co-workers and the company overall. Not an easy challenge to find the right approach since we all react differently to what is said and how the message is heard and delivered. Safety is a lifestyle. So how are you going to instill that at all levels from high risk to low risk positions?

When we put learning first, people first, relationships first, respect first and living first, then we might get to the heart of safety.

Remember: "No task is so important that it be done at the risk of safety."

⇒ Safety is a concept that includes all measures and practices taken to preserve the life, health and bodily integrity of individuals.
⇒ Safety in the workplace can refer to both physical and psychological safety. In both instances, it means having a workplace that's reasonably free from danger to all employees and actively preventing the workplace from becoming unsafe.
⇒ Being properly prepared, educated and understanding the risk involved so that the risk can be reduced to a manageable level.
⇒ It means taking the time to recognize the hazard(s) and taking the appropriate steps to protect yourself, your fellow workers, family and friends.
⇒ Describes policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety and health of employees within a workplace. Involves hazard identification and control according to government standards and ongoing safety training and education for employees.
⇒ The condition of being safe from causing hurt, injury, or loss
⇒ To protect against failure, breakage, or accident

Ask yourself the following questions:

◊ Do I know and understand the safety procedures for this job or task? Are they adequate?
◊ What tools and other equipment do I need to do the job safely? Are they the correct ones? Are they in good condition? Do I know how to use them?
◊ What personal protective equipment do I need? Is it in good condition? Is it adequate?
◊ Are there other risks to my safety or the safety of others? What if something happens quickly or unexpectedly? Do I know how to respond to avoid injury?

How often should we have thoughts about safety? Frequently since the human mind is one of the fastest processors of information. To think about all of this only take a few seconds.

Look for the positive actions, observe one employee per day and thank them for working safely and let them know the reason why you thanked them. Your most valuable assets are your "people". Nothing is more important than their safety and well-being. Your coworkers and families rely on this commitment.

There can be no compromise.

2020
Happy New Year

What Is the Meaning of Safety in the Workplace? *By Ruth Mayhew*

Employers are obligated to provide a safe working environment for their workers. Regardless of the type of work they perform, whether it's pouring concrete to repair heavily trafficked roadways or poring over accounts receivables in the finance department, employees should never be in a position where their physical safety is in jeopardy. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is the federal agency responsible for enforcing workplace safety regulations. The meaning of safety and employers' responsibilities to prevent injuries vary according to the type of working conditions.

What is Workplace Safety?

At its heart, workplace safety is the concept that employers must control recognized hazards in the workplace. This doesn't mean that a place of employment is completely free of any and all dangers, but rather that it offers an acceptable level of risk for all workers. Creating a safe work environment can include such actions as:

- Storing chemicals properly and keeping an SDS (safety data sheet) handy
- Requiring that spills be mopped up immediately
- Not allowing boxes to be stacked overly high
- Providing protective clothing for employees
- Holding training classes

What Are the Employer's Safety Responsibilities?

Employers are bound by the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and must adhere to the standards outlined in those regulations. Also, there are state laws that require private and public-sector employer compliance. For example, under the federal law, construction businesses are prohibited from requiring laborers or mechanics to perform duties in "working conditions that are unsanitary, hazardous or dangerous" to the health of their employees. Anything that poses a risk to the health and safety of workers could range from uneven ladders for construction workers to poorly lit offices for office employees. Deficiencies in the work environment are taken seriously by OSHA inspectors and employers can be fined for failure to correct them.

What Precautions Must an Employee Take?

Employers aren't the only ones who need to be vigilant about workplace safety. Employees also must be cautious about their working conditions and the manner in which they perform their duties. For example, employees should complete training for handling equipment and substances that could pose a risk to their safety and well-being. Safety wholesaler Arbill strongly recommends that employees be cognizant of their surroundings and report to their supervisor any hazards. Employees should also try to reduce their stress levels, which includes taking regular breaks. Fatigue contributes to workplace accidents, and employees who are overworked or tired may ignore the warning signs of impending danger in the workplace.

What is Psychological Safety in the Workplace?

Discussions about workplace safety primarily focus on the physical health and safety of employees; however, psychological safety is emerging as another type of workplace issue that can affect some employees. Psychological safety amounts to trust, risk-taking and assurance that your input and ideas as an employee won't be discounted, ridiculed or punished for speaking out.

Businesses that value employee opinions don't just gain the trust of people who work for the company, but they are perceived as employers who consider employees part of the workplace team. To guarantee psychological safety, employers can become more inclusive, meaning they invite staff to participate in meetings previously closed to anyone below the leadership ranks. Or, they ask employees who perform certain tasks how they feel the company could become more productive or efficient.

RISK — The faith and trust required to suspend uncertainty to take an action

HAZARD — *An object that is imagined to have the potential for harm*

SAFETY — *A temporary moment when physical harm is low*

8 Mistakes to Avoid To Ensure an Effective Lockout/Tagout Program—*By Adam Haroz, EIT*

Many people in general industry are all too familiar with some of the vague or confusing requirements in OSHA's lockout/tagout regulation. In my years working with Conversion Technology, and visiting all sorts of different manufacturing sectors, there have been several mistakes and misconceptions regarding lockout/tagout that have popped up.

1. Lack of Procedures
Specific procedures need to be written for all equipment where the unexpected energization, start up, or release of energy could cause injury. These specific procedures should identify all energy sources and the required energy isolation devices.

2. Training of Employees
Most facilities I visit do typically do a fantastic job making sure that those employees who apply locks and tags, and those who perform maintenance (also known as "authorized employees") are properly trained on the safe application of lockout/tagout programs and understand how to follow specified lockout/tagout procedures. OSHA's lockout/tagout regulation also requires training be conducted for "all other employees", which usually include both management and staff who occasionally walk near equipment that is locked or tagged out.

3. Working Under Someone Else's Lock
Each employee working on a piece of machinery should apply his/her own lock. No employee should take the responsibility of another person's life when lockout/tagout is involved. Also, under no circumstance should an employee use the lock belonging to another individual.

4. Not Bringing Equipment to a Zero Energy State
It is very important to bring equipment to a Zero Energy State prior to conducting maintenance on it. In my experience, OSHA can look at your lockout procedures specifically for the steps that bring the equipment to a zero energy state. Aside from this being covered in the regulation, and being a big hit spot for OSHA inspectors, equipment in a zero energy state are significantly less likely to pose a hazard of injury or death on employee conducting maintenance on the equipment.

5. I Don't Need to lockout, This Job Will Only Take a Few Minutes
This should never happen. When an employee rushes to finish working on a machine because they don't feel like conducting the full lockout, accidents happen.

6. I Don't Want to Lose My Key
Often an employee does not want to deal with the hassle of possibly losing their key, so they leave it in the lock. So many things can go wrong here. Now any person can walk up and remove the lock, not knowing that someone is inside the equipment performing maintenance.

7. Wrong Use of Locks
Simple. A lockout lock's only purpose is for locking out equipment. Under no circumstance is a lockout lock to be used to lock a toolbox or personal locker.

8. Annual Audit of Procedures
OSHA requires a review of all lockout/tagout procedures for all authorized employees. These employees are to physically follow the procedures and conduct lockouts in order to ensure all energy sources have been identified and that employees understand the procedures and energy isolation techniques.

Safety Tips

Tips for Avoiding Slips and Falls

Falls are the leading cause of injury in the workplace. Keep these tips in mind to avoid an injury:
As you walk, keep an eye on the floor in front of you for spills.

* If you see a spill, never just walk by it. Always clean it up or call someone to clean it up.
* Wear nonskid shoes when you work in kitchens, outdoors, or any other place where you will commonly be walking on slippery surfaces.
* Never climb on shelving units or storage units to get things. Use only approved ladders.
* Never lean on railings, even if they look solid. They could be improperly secured, and you could fall.
* Always use safety harnesses when working at heights.

Tips for Lifting Properly

You may work with patients who need help getting around or at a factory where you're lifting boxes on a continual basis. No matter who or what you may be lifting, there are some key points to consider:

* If you are approaching a box and don't know what's in it, try moving it a little with your foot first to see how easily it moves. This will help you gauge how heavy the box is.
* Always wear nonskid shoes when you are lifting often or lifting potentially heavy objects.
* Never bend at the waist and lift the box up with your back. Keep your upper body straight and parallel with your lower legs. Grab the item and push up with your legs, not with your back.
* Never jerk your body around when lifting. You may feel fine after doing this once, but repeated occurrences can easily lead to injury in even the healthiest workers.

Fire Safety Tips

Some jobs carry an increased risk of fire, but understanding fire safety is important for any occupation. Keep these tips in mind:

♦ Have a fire plan in place for your worksite, and make sure your employees understand it fully. Having a fire drill every now and then is a good way for employees to keep escape routes, meeting spots, and procedures in mind.

♦ Avoid the use of so-called "power strips" whenever possible. They are often prone to overuse and can start a fire if too many appliances are plugged into them.

♦ Keep cleaning chemicals and other work chemicals in a well-ventilated room. Many chemicals emit vapors that are highly flammable and which can be set off with something as small as a spark from a faulty wire.

♦ Know where all the fire extinguishers are throughout your worksite and know how to use them.

♦ Remember that grease fires cannot be fought by dousing them with water. Oil is hydrophobic and also is the fuel source in grease fires. Water will simply splash the oil around and spread the fire even further.

Planning for a Safe Workplace

Falls, lifting injuries, and fires are dangerous and common in the workplace, but that's just the beginning. There are many possible safety issues that can occur at your office or factory. Sometimes the best workplace safety arises out of simple good planning and smart thinking.

Every single workplace should have a safety committee and safety plan in place. If you don't have safety committees at your workplace, then propose one. If you work at home, you are the safety committee. Working at home or for a very small business isn't a reason to get out of safety planning.

If you don't have a safety plan in place yet, follow these steps when you recognize a workplace safety issue:
1. Make sure that everyone else in your workplace is aware of the problem.
2. Notify your supervisor.
3. File any reports or documents about the problem.
4. Follow up. Telling someone there's a problem is not a guarantee that the problem will be resolved satisfactorily. Report it and later follow up to make sure the problem was addressed.

Why Creating a Safety Culture Is Better Than Relying on Compliance

Timothy McFarlain, COSS, OSHT, ASHM | *Source: Metropolitan Transportation Authority of the State of New York*

> **Takeaway:** *Reaction-based safety programs yield lower compliance rates when compared to programs that convince employees to buy in to the workplace safety culture.*

There is a big difference between a true safety culture and one based on compliance. This is a concept that many professionals do not fully grasp.

For those who scoff at my statement, I'm not finished. Compliance is necessary. Rules, standards and codes are very important. In fact, they give us a baseline from which we ought to derive training and knowledge sharing. But the problem with compliance thinking is simple: it is reactive thinking. Meaning, simply, that something almost always has to happen in order for these regulations to get put into effect. Someone has to suffer in order to save another's life or limb.

Why? I could write volumes in an effort to explain my theory. The short answer is that often no one pays attention to anything other than production, until something terrible happens.

Safety Culture and Proactivity

According to Merriam-Webster, a culture is defined as a way of thinking, behaving or working that exists in a place or organization. If you apply safety to this definition, you get my definition of a safety culture: "Where a group of co-workers think safely before they act, behave appropriately in the work environment, always apply safe work practices in every job task they are involved in, and never compromise safety over production." In my opinion, this is what safety is all about. This type of attitude is what keeps workers coming home to their families after each working day. You will find that this group of workers not only will have a superior safety record, but when compared with other groups where safety records are not kept as well, you will find that this group also saves their company more money than one that holds safety as less of a priority.

This is where proactive thinking comes into play. For example, you might think, "What can we do in order get ahead of something happening?" Obviously, you would look to what happened before, known as lagging indicators; however, it is essential to focus on what is currently being done. This action or behavior can be tracked which will show us progress toward stated goals and objectives, or leading indicators. From the aspect of training and education, this is a good start, but you still need more to get you where you ought to be.

Safety Culture and Buy-In

You can have alphabet soup behind your name (CSP, CSHT, CSHM, etc.), but that does not mean that you can be an effective leader that people will want to follow. This is not intended to offend anyone; I'm only stating that just because a person has certain credentials, does not make him/her an effective leader. It only means that they have met a set of criteria to take a test, which they passed, to show that they know the material necessary to gain said credential.

It takes more than a credential to effectively "lead" the development and sustainment of a safety program. Qualities such as being visible, approachable, empathetic and personable are some of the missing components necessary in order to build a efficient and exemplary safety culture.

An effective safety culture stems from employee buy-in. This occurs when employees feel that when a company or supervisor say, "Nothing is more important than an employee's safety, and if something is observed that compromises the safety of an employee or the team, anyone has not only the right, but the responsibility to stop a job before someone gets hurt," they believe it and practice it.

Do you represent a company where this rare gem of values is actually practiced as it is preached?

5 Reasons You Struggle with Safety Buy-in and What to Do About It   *Kevin Burns* /

Takeaway: *Advice to achieve safety buy-in.*

The *McGraw-Hill Dictionary of American Idioms and Phrasal Verbs* defines "buy-in" as "to agree with; to accept an idea as worthwhile." And that gets to the core of the problem: safety professionals who struggle to get employees to buy-in to safety aren't positioning safety as worthwhile.

Checks, balances, paperwork, rules, processes, meetings, penalties, fault, and impending doom? That's how safety has been traditionally presented. Employees resist it. Little wonder, really. Employees feel like they are controlled by the safety program. It matters little whether they actually are or not—perception can be a person's reality.

Here are five reasons you're likely not getting the buy-in to your safety program and how to fix it:

1. You're Making Safety Boring
I know, you can't help it. You have forms, paperwork, inspections, rules, procedures, and incidents to talk about. The problem is likely that you are lumping the content and the presenter into one when they are clearly not. A great presenter can make any subject less boring. So, get good at presenting. Make it fun. Make it interesting.

Here's your takeaway idea: buy a book on presentation skills. Don't buy a book on using PowerPoint. (Please. Stop.) Read the book on presentations—all of it. Mark the pages. Dog-ear the corners. Invest yourself in it. Then buy another and do it again. Get good at presenting. Rely less on using PowerPoint.

2. You're Talking at Them
Recall the empty faces of employees who couldn't wait to leave the last safety meeting. That's because you're talking *at* them, not *with* them. It's what telemarketers do: while you wait for an opportunity to get off the phone, telemarketers keep talking at you, not with you. You do the same thing in your safety meetings. Get good at having conversations one-on-one about safety. Help employees see how safety helps them, not you. Focus on making safety about employees and less about them following rules.

Here's a takeaway idea: start building your legacy. Help others succeed. It's a simple leadership philosophy. Talk with your people one-on-one as often as you can, be helpful to others, build trust and rapport. People can buy-in to that.

3. You're Waiting for Senior Management to Go First
It's not unusual for safety managers to blame upper management for employees not buying-in to the safety program. Too many safety professionals claim that the safety culture cannot improve until upper management buys-in. And that's just wrong. Oh sure, it's easier if management buys-in, but it is certainly not a requirement. Furthermore, if senior management doesn't buy-in today, does that mean you are unable to help your people stay safe? Of course not. You have to go to work in spite of the perceived barriers to your success.

Your takeaway idea: stop making excuses and waiting for someone else to do something. Instead, do something that helps a front-line employee be better and safer at the job. Do it one employee at a time if you have to. But don't make excuses for not being better.

For many purchasing organizations, contracted services are frequently the largest single source of risk to the organization. This is why qualifying contractors is a critical purchaser activity.

4. Balance Your Position Between Manager and Leader
The difference between a manager and a leader is that one manages and one leads. (I realize that this is an oversimplification - but it's true). You're supposed to be leading too, not simply managing. To manage is to maintain the status quo. To lead means to move on to something better. If you're not improving the safety program's results, then, by default, you're managing them. That means there's little forward momentum. You have to build momentum. Safety becomes more exciting and easier to buy-in to when it looks like it's moving forward. People will get behind something with momentum.

Failure to Consider the Human Will Result in Failure of the Human

Geary A. Rummler was a pioneer in the performance improvement field, most famous for saying "If you put a good person against a bad system, the system wins almost every time." He knew that using lean manufacturing and other continuous improvement methodologies without considering human factors could potentially lead to catastrophic failures of the entire system. The results would mean increased injuries and decreased profitability.

Here are a few pitfalls to avoid when implementing continuous improvement methodologies in your workplace:

1. Making processes too "lean." Not allowing adequate recovery time for the employee can result in increased injury due to mental and physical fatigue, as well as repetitive motion injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

2. Not allowing for the variability of workers. If you only design processes for the average population, the smaller and larger-statured workers are more at risk for work-related injury. Adjustability of the workstations or being able to accommodate smaller and larger-statured workers is vital to worker well-being.

3. Automating processes, but not allowing proper access points for preventive maintenance, troubleshooting, and/or repairs. Although automation or semi-automation is meant to improve productivity and decrease the potential for work-related injury, failure to account for the forces and/or awkward postures a person must generate/sustain when repairing and/or performing preventive maintenance may result in injury.

Avoiding the Pitfalls
You can stay ahead of these problems by incorporating ergonomics into all phases of continuous improvement initiatives.

5 Reasons You Struggle with Safety Buy-in and What to Do About It

5. Certification Doesn't Make You a Leader
You don't need to be certified in safety before you can buy-in to safety. Anyone who embraces safety as one of their personal values can buy-in to safety—front-line employee to CEO. You may need to have certification in order to manage the safety program, but to buy-in to safety as one of your personal values needs no schooling, courses, or certification. Let's be clear about that. Employees are inspired by the person you are—not your designation, and not your certification. Safety management is supposed to be selfless. Safety professionals are supposed to care about people, not try to impress them by the number of courses they take.

Here's your final takeaway: refrain from using your certification as your hammer. People are impressed by people who care about them. They are not impressed by people who hold their titles, positions, and certifications over them. Be a caring person and let your schooling help you make better decisions for others. Become people-focused first, and allow yourself to care for the people you work with.

You have the control over your safety program and how many of your good people buy-in to the program. Observe your own participation. Be aware of the things you're doing that helps others to buy-in and the things that hinder that effort. Correct the latter.

Need a Safety Slogan for the Month?

Safety Is A Choice You Make

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Safety Rules Are Your Best Tools

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Get smart use safety from the start.

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It's Easier To Ask A Dumb Question Than It Is To Fix A Dumb Mistake

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Learn From Others Mistakes, Don't Have Others Learn From You.

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Make Safety A Reality And Don't Be A Fatality

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Safety First... Because Accidents Last.

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Safety...One Habit You Never Need To Break

Safety Definitions

Safety Statistics - DEFINITION - WHAT DOES *SAFETY STATISTICS* MEAN?

Safety statistics are the records that contain the casualties, injuries, near misses, illness ratios, etc. about the organization. It shows the overall standards of safety practices that are being carried out in an organization. *By Safeopedia*

Accident Statistics - DEFINITION - WHAT DOES *ACCIDENT STATISTICS* MEAN?

Accident statistics include a record of road crash statistics and can be used to identify hazardous driving locations. In doing so, distinction is made between accidents based on accident experiences and accidents based on the specific geographic or physical features of the location. *By Safeopedia*

Accident Causation Model - DEFINITION - WHAT DOES *ACCIDENT CAUSATION* MODEL MEAN?

An accident causation model is a systematic method of ascertaining the causes of an accident. An accident is a complex coincidence of activities or phenomena in a single time and space. Therefore, determining the causes leading to an accident can be quite difficult, as there are so many variables to consider.

Accident causation models vary from simplistic linear models to complex non-linear models. *By Safeopedia*

Domino Theory - DEFINITION - WHAT DOES *DOMINO THEORY* MEAN?

The domino theory of accident causation stipulates that injuries occur because of a series of factors, one of which is an accident. In the domino theory, all factors are connected and each of them is dependent on the preceding factor. This means that personal injury (represented as the final domino) occurs only as a result of an accident and the accident itself occurs only as a result of a personal or mechanical hazard.

The theory is structured in ten statements known as the Axioms of Industrial Safety. It identifies a total of five factors in the sequence of events that lead to an accident:

- Ancestry/social environment
- Fault of person
- Unsafe act/mechanical or physical hazard
- Accident
- Injury

By Safeopedia

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