

IT'S YOUR FAULT

It's that time again and by time you read this we will be moving into the holidays. I hope you stay safe and the Covid pandemic is soon put behind us all. October 12, 13th and 14th we had our UAW/Cat safety conference where all UAW Safety representatives and their Caterpillar EHS management counterparts from all Caterpillar facilities come together and present what Safety improvements we have worked together implementing through the year. This is a contractual obligation for the Union and the company to reaffirm their common goals for a safer, more productive workplace for our employees and members. Sadly these presentations are done by Caterpillar management and very few UAW facility Safety representatives are allowed to contribute or are included in any of the facility improvements or presentations.

The Union and the company have a difference of opinions on how certain safety programs are implemented. The company's favorite is Behavior Based Safety or sometimes referred to as BS Safety. It's founded on the principle that almost every injury or illness is the fault of the employee who is hurt or made ill. The particular percentage of injuries and illnesses that are attributed to the fault of the injured worker depends on the specific type of BS Safety, but they generally range from 75% to 96%. ***Building KK percentage was presented at 70% at this year's safety conference.***

Behavior based safety is not new. It is one of the oldest and most outdated theories and approaches to safety. In the 1930s and 1940s a researcher named Heinrich looked at thousands of injury and illness reports filled out primarily by supervisors. In these reports, the supervisors would have to either: A) take the blame for allowing workers to perform tasks while exposed to unsafe conditions, or B) blame the worker. Which of these two responses do you think Mr. Heinrich said would be most abundant? For a more in-depth description of BS Safety go to the following link http://uawlocal974.org/BSSafety/Warning!_Behavior-Based_Safety_Can_Be_Hazardous_To_Your_Health_and_Safety_Program!.pdf

I recently read an article ***Unions and Behavior Based Safety: The 7 Deadly Sins.*** (Proactsafety.com) The article research of complaints of behavior based safety **were** grouped into seven categories. Unfortunately, these seven methods commonly are used in many Behavior Base Safety approaches and almost guarantee resistance.

THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS OF BBS ARE:

- 1. Blaming** - Believing, teaching or assuming that most accidents are caused by unsafe behaviors of workers. Starting with this flawed premise creates a shaky foundation and instant animosity for a behavioral approach. Studies that often are cited to make this point are questionable and misquoted. Most classification of accidents into behavioral categories referred to prevention rather than root cause. One study stated that if anyone could have done anything differently to prevent the accident, it was classified as caused by worker behavior.

Dean Gano, who developed a problem-solving methodology for NASA, argues in the book Apollo Root Cause Analysis that behaviors never can be the root cause of an accident, since there always is a cause for the behavior. Starting BBS with such statements or assumptions suggests that workers are to blame and must solve their own problems. Ignoring conditional and organizational issues that can cause both

accidents and unsafe behaviors is a formula for failure: failure to produce maximum results and failure to solicit support.

2. **Confronting** - The belief that BBS must target the unsafe behaviors that cause accidents and eliminate them by worker-to-worker confrontation. The No. 1 reluctance of workers to be observers is the fear of confrontation. They are willing to watch and identify potential risks, but they truly dread having to convince their fellow workers to change.
There is a sense of pride in the way work is performed (especially among experienced workers) and such confrontations are a rude invasion of this pride. The first reaction usually is, "What makes you think you know more about safety than I do?" The training that observers receive in most BBS processes falls short of qualifying them as safety experts. It falls completely short of preparing them to successfully confront and change behavior on the spot. The whole idea of confrontation assumes that the problem can be solved by the individual and ignores the impact of other influences (i.e., conditional, organizational, cultural, etc.). ***Kerry Patterson et al., in their recent book Influencer, suggest that direct confrontation is almost always ineffective in producing a change in behavior.***
3. **Idealism** - The belief that BBS is a silver bullet that can replace your other safety efforts. Some of the academic experts in BBS have espoused the theory that BBS is some kind of miracle cure for all that ails safety. Such assumptions are alluring to managers who potentially could solve all their problems with one pill that they don't have to swallow. In fact, giving this pill to workers potentially could absolve managers of all responsibility in safety and give them a handy scapegoat for anything that goes wrong. In addition, managers may think they can save money in their budget. Instead of spending money to fix things and make them safer, they simply can alter the workers' behaviors to avoid the hazards. BBS has been most successful as a supplement to traditional safety efforts, not a replacement or redundant process.
4. **Punishing** - The belief that it is OK to use punishment for failure to shape behaviors. Discipline is a tool that infers blame and willful disobedience. **Attempts to use discipline in voluntary processes almost always fail and cause resistance.** When early behavior-based safety processes tried to use discipline as a tool to establish behavioral change, the unions instantly protested. This approach created the perception that BBS was being used to get union brothers and sisters spying on each other. Including behaviors on a BBS checklist that overlap or duplicate safety rules or procedures almost ensures that punishment will follow observations.
5. **Isolationism** - The belief that management should be completely omitted from BBS processes. Some approaches to BBS utilized workers exclusively and asked managers and supervisors to take a hands-off position. This hindered the BBS process from being able to address organizational issues and furthered the stigma of blaming workers and expecting them to work out their own behavioral problems.
6. **Exclusion** - The belief that it is not necessary to involve unions in the decision to implement a behavioral approach. Many unions were completely excluded from the decision to apply BBS and from any discussions about how to structure the process or select participants.
Unions care deeply about the safety of the employees. Not involving the elected representatives in collaborative discussions about an employee-led safety process is an ineffective change strategy and most importantly, disrespectful.
7. **Inflexibility** - The belief that one form or methodology of BBS is right for every site. Ignoring cultural, regional, organizational and conditional differences from site to site and organization to organization was the norm among the early approaches to BBS. Academics tend to seek elegant, universal solutions and sometimes overlook the significance of site-to-site differences. Unions have good ideas of how to better fit safety processes to their sites and they were largely or completely ignored in favor of the "perfect" solution.

Unions have resisted behavior based safety based on each of these seven problems, but BBS can be implemented in a union-friendly way that does not include these issues. In fact, unions have embraced BBS when they carefully replaced each of these seven concerns with more effective and union-sensitive approaches.

THE RIGHT APPROACH INCLUDES THE FOLLOWING:

1. Rather than fixing the blame, focus on fixing the problems.
2. Realize that people make behavioral choices for a reason. If you don't change the reason, you probably won't change the behavior. So rather than confronting a fellow worker taking a risk, try to find out what is influencing that behavior, document it and take it to a steering team who will prioritize and address the issues.
3. Acknowledge that BBS is no silver bullet, but just another tool in your safety toolbox. Carefully separate BBS from traditional safety programs and allow them to work synergistically together without duplication or overlap.
4. **Carefully separate any punishment from the process.** BBS should be separate from traditional safety, and behaviors on BBS checklists should not overlap with rules and procedures. This ensures that no one is disciplined for BBS observation data.
5. Define management and supervisor's roles, responsibilities and expectations in BBS in such a way that they support without taking over the process. Enforce these guidelines to ensure they are executed properly.
6. Include the unions in the decision to implement BBS, and in the design and customization of the process for the site. Their input is valuable and essential to success.
7. Stay true to the basic tenets of BBS, but customize and innovate approaches to fit the culture, the site and any other programs in place, such as 5S and Lean and Six Sigma.

So the question I ask you is why do we get hurt? What causes our injuries? Is it the new job? Are we in a hurry? Do we get complacent? Is our mind not on the job? Are we accident-prone? Could we have taken a shortcut? Are we concerned about our job security? Have we been up all night with a sick child or an aging parent? Do we have a teenager in trouble? Is our relationship or marriage falling apart? Do any of these things sound like something a human being might reasonably be expected to experience? According to Behavioral Safety, these are the things you do to cause of your injuries and illnesses.

If you only remember one thing from this article, remember this, there is really only one thing that causes every injury or illness that has ever occurred or ever will occur and that is when a worker is exposed to a hazard. Your employer, not you, has the legal obligation under the Occupational Safety and Health Act to provide a safe and healthy workplace for their workers that is free of recognized hazards.

Behavioral Safety Programs are so attractive to management because it turns the obligation to provide a safe workplace upside down and places the responsibility for remaining safe on the workers. Think of what is taught in these BS Safety classes. Stay out of the line of fire. Keep your mind on the task. Keep your eyes on the path. Watch out for pinch points. Granted, we have to follow rules and training we receive on specific hazards, but to me, listening to the tenants of BS Safety, it sounds like the hazards are just out in the open waiting to swallow you up. To this day, I have yet to see an incident where BS Safety would indicate an injury was the fault of the employer and not the employee.

The facility I work at Caterpillar has been allowed 4 accidents to be their goal for the year. When the number of accidents surpassed 4 then the blaming and punishment began. One of the injuries that recently occurred the employee was being shadowed by a Manufacturing engineer and their function is

to support the employee in being able to perform the production process correctly and safely. The employee made an assembly error and tried performing a task that should have been done by a repairman and was injured. The employee was suspended. Manufacturing engineer was present and made no attempt to warn or instruct the employee.

After being injured, workers are especially vulnerable when it comes to answering questions. Remember, everything you say in medical or during an investigation can and will be used against you later on. Ask for your union representative to be present when you are asked to answer any questions that you feel could lead to you being disciplined or worse. Once you ask for your representative, wait in silence and do not answer any questions about the incident until you've had a chance to speak with your union rep. Remember, the less you say, the better, but be truthful no matter what. Ask your representative to copy what you say word for word, then ask for a copy of what management has written down. Read it thoroughly and clear up any discrepancies right there and then.

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