

SAFETY LEADERSHIP FOR EVERYONE

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

INTRODUCTION: A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION: These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to site-specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS: Use some or all of the discussion questions at the end of this conclusion to stimulate discussion about the topic at the conclusion of the video presentation.

INTRODUCTION

Often the only difference between a world-class safety operation and a program struggling to move beyond regulatory compliance is the courage and willingness to put safety leadership into action. In this video, safety professional Tom Harvey discusses the traits that make a good safety leader. Several true-to-life situations in the workplace are used to illustrate his points. Stressed in the program is the fact that all of us can be safety leaders no matter what job or title we hold.

Topics include connecting safety messages with actions, setting examples, why safety prizes often don't work, recognizing safe actions of co-workers and "employee-powered" safety.

PROGRAM POINTS

CONNECTING SAFETY MESSAGES WITH ACTIONS

- Our actions determine what our fellow workers think about our safety process.
- Often managers and supervisors proclaim safety to be job number one, only to later allow employees to bypass safety procedures in order to get the job done in a timely manner.
- When employees see the unsafe actions of their co-workers being rewarded, the credibility of safety is destroyed.
- Workers often see a big disconnect between what management says about the safety program compared to what actually happens on the shop floor. What's being said and what's really happening can be two totally different things.
- Actions that support the safety message determine the value of safety, not words. Good leaders connect their message with actions.

SETTING EXAMPLES

- Good leaders set the right example. It's not a question of whether or not you set an example, it's only a matter of what kind of example you set.
- "Do as I say, not as I do" doesn't work. When actions don't square with words, the integrity of the safety program is damaged.
- When we make exceptions to safety rules when it suits us or condone unsafe actions by walking away, others will use these inconsistencies as excuses to work in an unsafe manner.

HUMAN NATURE'S EFFECT ON SAFETY

- Working safely can go against human nature. We might have to follow a procedure that takes extra time or wear uncomfortable protective equipment without any perceived benefit, even if the job only takes a few minutes.
- The safe way may not seem worth the effort, especially when compared to the short-term benefits of making the job faster, easier or more comfortable.
- While working safely has the benefit of preventing you from being injured at some point in the future, human nature seems to prefer immediate gratification.
- When we ask people to work safely just for “safety’s sake,” we are fighting human nature.
- To encourage safe behavior, we as safety leaders must create positive benefits to working safely while at the same time creating negative consequences to unsafe actions.

WHY SAFETY PRIZES OFTEN DON'T WORK

- Often a safety prize is given for such a broad time frame and for such a large group that it doesn't impact any specific behavior.
- Often safety prizes are given to those who don't deserve them just because they are part of a larger group of workers who have earned them. This ends up demoralizing those who work safely and reinforcing those who don't.
- Another drawback to safety prizes is a tendency to drive injury reporting underground. No one wants to “spoil the price,” so injuries may go unreported.

PERSONAL RECOGNITION

- A great way to create positive consequences is to reinforce safe actions through personal recognition.
- Personal recognition in the presence of co-workers can make an employee feel good and he is likely to continue the safe behavior because you recognized him in front of everyone.
- Other workers who witness a co-worker being recognized for safe behavior are more likely to work safely also.
- Some people just aren't comfortable giving compliments, while others are used to pointing out negatives rather than positives. Whatever the reason for not reinforcing safe actions, we as safety leaders need to get over it. Personal, positive recognition for safe work practices is a very powerful motivation.
- When recognizing someone's safe behavior, make it personal. Call the person by name and tell him or her that you are personally thankful for their safe behavior.
- Be specific. Point out exactly what they are doing that is deserving of recognition and ask them to continue doing it.
- Be sincere. Look the other person in the eyes and don't miss the many opportunities you have every day. Recognizing safe work practices helps spread positive safety commitment throughout the workforce.

USE OF DISCIPLINE

- When all else fails, there has to be punitive consequences for continued unsafe actions. Discipline can be effective, but only if the rules are clear, the consequences are understood and the application is consistent.

- All too often punishing employees seems to be the first option when an organization tries to drive safety from the top down without input from employees. Management then wonders why procedures aren't followed and why employees don't participate.
- When we start using the word "accountable" toward employees in areas with poor safety performance, we need to be very careful. "Accountability" without "authority" equals "blame."
- In other words, holding employees accountable for the outcome of a safety process in which they have no authority is just casting blame. When we start blaming employees rather than involving employees, our safety train is headed down the wrong track.

WHAT MAKES A GOOD SAFETY LEADER?

- Safety leaders practice what they preach. They lead by example and don't ask you to do anything that compromises your safety.
- They put a stop to unsafe actions immediately; they don't just walk away.
- They have the courage to do the right thing, regardless of outside pressures to take a chance or a shortcut.
- A good safety leader is someone who really cares. Safety is a core value, an internal belief, not just some rules to follow.
- A good safety leader isn't necessarily a manager, supervisor, CEO or safety director. Your title does not make you a safety leader; only your actions can do that.
- All of us can be safety leaders because no matter what job we do or what title we hold, safety leadership is driven by action, not words or titles.
- Strong safety leaders do not bend to the intense pressure to work miracles, even though they are caught in the crossfire coming from all directions.

EMPLOYEE-POWERED SAFETY

- Employee-powered safety starts by including employees in the decision-making process.
- It involves management letting go of the reins and requires a lot of trust on all sides.
- When employees participate and have some ownership of the process, they are much more likely to contribute and encourage their co-workers to contribute as well.
- This is also where good communication comes in. Employees need to know why things are changing before the "buy in." They need to know that the idea was studied and that workers who do the job were consulted for recommendations and their input was part of the process.

SUMMARY

- Be careful not to reward the wrong behavior. Praising workers who increase productivity or meet deadlines by taking safety shortcuts destroys the safety culture and wipes out all our good work.
- Your actions are always louder than your words. Safety leadership is defined by actions, not words or titles. Lead by example.
- Understand that while it is usually quicker and easier to work unsafely, it is never better. The negative results from working safely can easily outweigh the positive consequences. Safety leaders offset this factor of human nature through motivation and encouragement; they give praise and recognition for specific safe behaviors.

- Safety leaders never condone unsafe acts by walking away. They are consistent.
- Employee-powered safety encourages safety leadership at all levels. For this to occur, all employees must be involved in the process so their contributions make a difference.

PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING OR TRAINING SESSION

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on health and safety and how each person must be an active member of the safety team.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Make an attendance record as needed and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record as written documentation of the training performed.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.

Place or secure extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to stress the point that all employees can be good safety leaders if they make the contributions necessary to create a positive safety culture.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Lead discussions about specific actions employees can take at your facility that would indicate they are good safety leaders.

Use some or all of the discussion questions at the end of this Leader's Guide to get input from viewers.

After watching the videotape program, the viewer should be able to explain the following:

- The actions to take to be a good safety leader;
- Why safety prizes and discipline often do not have a positive impact on employee behavior;
- How to reinforce safe actions through personal recognition;
- How "employee-powered" safety involves workers in the overall safety process.

SAFETY LEADERSHIP FOR EVERYONE
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you feel if you were asked to do “whatever it takes” to get the job done if it compromised your safety? Would you let your feelings be known?
2. What kind of examples have you or your co-workers set that have had a positive effect on safety? What else could you do on your job that could influence co-workers to work safely?
3. How do you feel about the use of safety prizes to reward safe behavior? If you have ever received a safety prize, did it have any impact on your subsequent behavior?
4. How would you go about recognizing the safe actions of a co-worker?
5. After watching this video, are you more likely to approach others and give them recognition for their safe behavior? Why or why not?
6. What do you think makes a good safety leader?
7. Are there specific actions an employee can take at this facility that would indicate he or she is a safety leader? If so, what are they?
8. Would you be willing to become more involved in the company’s overall safety process? Why or why not?