



# AA Safety Group Ltd

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## Behavioural Safety

We have engaged our H&S consultants to assist us with the implementation of a behavioural safety programme that combines with our H&S Management System to include induction and annual training on the subject which includes consideration of the following;

Why is it commonly used?

Significant number of accidents reportedly caused by inappropriate behaviour

Good vehicle for management and workforce participation

Can improve the visibility of managers

Behaviours and actions influence culture through attitudes and perceptions

Behaviours determine the performance of systems

Key features

Define 'safe' and 'unsafe' behaviour

All involve observation of behaviour in the workplace

By managers and/or peers

With/without targets

Provide feedback

Reinforce safe behaviour

're-educate' unsafe behaviour

Feedback ranges from on-the-spot specific feedback and discussion, to

impersonalised general data

Advantages

Discussing safety in the workplace

Learning to communicate constructively

Management visibility

Employee engagement in safety

Managers/supervisors (when involved)

- Learn to observe
- Learn to act promptly on unsafe acts
- Can learn about safety leadership
- Learn to think about aspects of human factors
- Can provide some leading indicators for safety
- Can actually change behaviour ("cognitive dissonance")
- Will identify dangerous situations

Pitfalls

- Rule violation vs good rules?
- BIG, disciplined effort required
- Very often fails through lack of real commitment or discipline
- Some changes will be expensive
- Not 'owned' by everyone
- 'Off the peg' or consultant-led programmes can fail because of poor fit with local style/culture (UK/US)
- Trust levels amongst management and employees must match.
- Lack of friendly communication/Directive style of management

More pitfalls

- May not be compatible with other messages
- Focus on easy, intuitive issues
- Tend to ignore low probability, high consequence risks. 'Boots not leaks' - can draw attention away from process safety
- Can shift onus away from management onto individual
- Don't address significant impacts of management behaviour
- 'Big brother' /blame culture /Oh no, not another programme. . .
- High short-term expectations
- Failed programme = worse situation than start

Inspection & assessment issues

- What is the evidence that behaviour change will improve safety? (as opposed to better procedures or easier to use equipment for example).
- How is the programme linked to the Safety Management System (SMS)?
- How do they address tough issues? (ie costly remedial work, time pressure)
- Do they understand the programme and its strengths and weakness (ie competence)?
- Are programme goals linked to other goals, ie team working?
- What happens when an observation card is completed? (workforce experience vs. management view)
- Are they knowledgeable, intelligent customers?

Advice for companies considering behavioural approaches: Some Do's and Don'ts

Do

- Be sure that it is really what you need right now
- Find out (from employees) whether signals they get from management about safety are the first issue to address
- Network with others - not only those suggested by the consultants
- Learn what you can from alternative techniques available
- Make sure the system is your own, in style, language, presentation etc.
- Pilot, and only roll-out when confident of success
- Use it as a dialogue – and that means LISTEN to your employees!

Spend considerable effort to get good, strong facilitators who understand safety

Make sure that participants focus on root causes of behaviours

Don't

Underestimate the effort and planning required

Be over-optimistic

Get carried away and lose focus on other aspects of safety

Believe that the 'Heinrich triangle' works for occupational ill-health, minor personal injuries and major accidents

Bother at all unless:

You're confident that you already have a strong SMS and a safe workplace

Senior management can be made to think it was their idea all along

Increasing the effectiveness /chance of success

Ownership - developed in-house is best

Good fit with organisations needs, culture and SMS

Commitment (involvement is better) from management

Good communication and understanding of programme

Approach seen as 'fair and just' - trust

Managers act as role models