

Beyond Behavior Based Safety

By Shannon Smith

Behavior Based Safety (BBS) is a term that has been thrown around a lot and is a favorite buzz word with clients. The idea is that if you can get a person into the habit of thinking about safety (through training, coaching) and then valuing safety (believing it is important at a personal level), it will be reflected in his or her actions.

A person's motivations and intentions are not observable or measurable, but their actions can be observed and measured. And you can get an idea of what a person values by how he acts.

If kindness is important to you, you will be kind to others. If generosity is important to you, you will give to others. If safety is important to you, you will look out for the safety of others.

The Cons

Management uses it as an excuse to distance itself from the process.

Safety officers act like or are perceived as safety cops.

Often with clients it becomes a statistics game measured only by the numbers of safety meetings held, safety cards turned in, actual injuries and near misses, etc.

I have yet to meet a safety professional who believes those numbers equate to actual improved safety. So while clients tend to be obsessed with numbers, **behavior based safety is OUR system to give employees a voice in their own safety.**

The Pros

There are several good points about the BBS approach to safety management. First it focuses on people, not rules.

Most importantly, it directly involves the front line employees, who are at the most risk and know the hazards they face better than anyone.

It makes no sense for the guy in the office to write a Job Safety Analysis for a job someone else will do. The guys doing the work are in the best position to analyze the hazards and risks in their own jobs. (JSAs)

There are **many** opportunities for employees to act on behalf of their own safety, such as JSAs, Safety Observation Cards, STOP WORK authority, the Management of Change process, suggestion fields in weekly reports, direct communication with supervisors and emails to the office.



“You cannot embed safe working practices in a crew if you don't follow them yourself.”

- Bob Couttie- Maritime Accident Casebook

We would rather have three good suggestions in one year that lead to improved safety and efficiency in operations than 3,000 safety observation cards. —

Pete Tatro
TDI Director of Operations

TOP Safety Card Hits
(Fleetwide last month)

Housekeeping 3
Permit to Work 1

Improving Communication

Improving Communications

Hello....Is anyone listening?

It's very easy to give up on hope for change if you feel you are being ignored and nothing you say matters. So if you make a suggestion and no one responds, how motivated are you to make another one? Not very.

So- we created a new email contact Suggestions@tdi-bi.com to send suggestions directly to mgmt. and get a response.

I remember when I was working the laboratory on one of our vessels doing a geotechnical job when we hit some clay that was saturated with hydrogen sulfide. In some sections, the gas was pushing the mud out of the core liner faster than we could contain it. We were storing many of the samples in the lab room and they continued to leak gas after we capped and taped them closed.

I was focused on getting the work done and didn't realize how strong the fumes were. I had a horrible headache that was getting worse as the day wore on and I was a little dizzy. At the time I didn't know anything about the dangers of hydrogen sulfide and didn't realize the headache and dizziness could be symptoms of exposure to it.

My party chief came in the lab to get something and was overwhelmed with the fumes. He immediately told me to take a break outside, opened both doors to the lab and searched the boat until he found a fan to start ventilating the lab. My party chief saw that I needed help and acted to protect me from a hazard.

Someone was looking out for me. Can you think of a time when someone looked out for you? Do you look out for others?

Safety Cards

Safety cards are meant to be an easy way for everyone on a vessel to bring concerns or a hazardous condition to the attention of the bridge crew in order to correct those hazards and prevent injuries/ accidents on that vessel.

This can include items like a leaky toilet that makes the floor slippery to pointing out that PPE supplies are running low and need to be reordered to suggesting changes in existing procedures to make them more efficient and safe.

The cards are supposed to be reviewed at each vessel safety meeting (weekly at a minimum) and corrective action taken as soon as practical. Issues requiring maintenance are entered into NS5 to be addressed by engineering.

Each week the bridge crew sends a count of the types of safety issues addressed in the cards and management reviews the counts to see if there are any trends that might need special attention.

If the bridge crew feel there is a particularly good suggestion or one that could be applied to other vessels/ operations, they can forward a scan of the card along with the weekly report.