Sustaining a Superior Safety Culture

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What Are We Talking About?

What is a Superior Safety Culture?

- Superior = of higher rank, quality or importance; excellent of it's kind, more comprehensive.
- Safety = the freedom from the unacceptable risk of harm.
- Culture = the collective behaviours, values and beliefs of the people in the company.

Why You Ask?



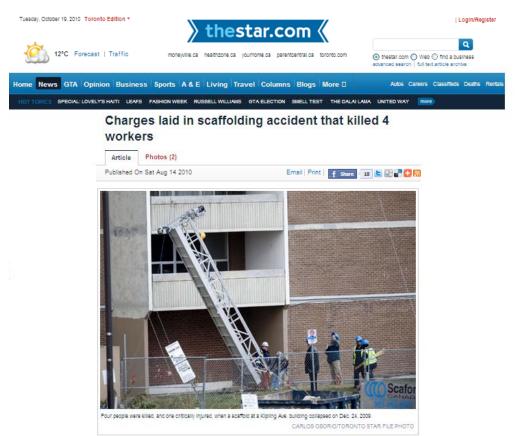
coroner's inquest into the death of a Fort Erie man while on the job centred around the piece of machinery he was working on.

Roger Hill, 45, died Jan. 21, 2008, after suffering fatal injuries while repairing a rock crushing machine at Ridgemount Quarries. Ridgemount is owned by Thoroldbased Walker Industries and material processing at the site had been contracted to The Hard Rock Group, where Hill had been an employee for 18 years.

The inquest, being conducted by Dr. Jack Stanborough, is expected to last three days and is being heard testimony from six witnesses, the jury, made up of four women and one man, will make



Inquest into worker's death begins. Tammy Hill stands outside the by a five-member jury. After hearing Welland Courthouse with members of her family Monday during a break in the coroner's inquest into the death of her husband, Roger, as the result of an industrial accident. Richard Hutton, staff photo



Joseph Hall



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DAILY NEWS Oct 7, 2010 11:47 AM - 1 comment

Ontario company fined \$150,000 after pipe falls 20 floors

By: Ontario Ministry of Labour OCTOBER 5, 2010

TEXT SIZE @ @

TORONTO (Ontario MOL)

Maple Leaf Structural Limited, now operating as Structform International Limited, of Toronto, was fined \$150,000 on October 4 for a violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act that caused a worker's death.

On May 12, 2008, Maple Leaf Structural Limited was a subcontractor doing concrete framework at a building project at 825 Bay St. in Toronto. At the request of the constructor, Maple Leaf workers began moving an outrigger platform from the 23rd story to the 22nd story of the north tower of the project. As the crane operator moved the platform away from the 23rd floor, a worker on that story noticed a piece of cast-iron pipe rolling towards the edge of the building. The worker was unable to grab the pipe before it fell. The falling pipe struck and killed a worker crossing a mezzanine twenty floors below.

A Ministry of Labour investigation found that the mezzanine was not secured or taped off while the platform was being moved overhead. There was also no overhead protection in that location and no signage or person warning workers of the overhead hazard.

Maple Leaf Structural Limited pleaded guilty to failing to ensure an outrigger platform was moved in a manner that did not endanger a worker.

The fine was imposed by Judge Robert Bigelow. In addition to the fine, the court imposed a 25-per-cent victim fine surcharge, as required by the Provincial Offences Act. The surcharge is credited to a special provincial government fund to assist victims of crime.



HOME > STORY

DAILY NEWS Oct 1, 2010 9:07 AM - 0 comments

Alberta makes good on its promise to post employer safety records online

TEXT SIZE @

Related Topics

Workers Compensation -Benefits Workplace accident -- fatality Workplace accident -- injury

By: The Canadian Press SEPTEMBER 30, 2010

EDMONTON (The Canadian Press)

Alberta has made good its promise to post the safety records of companies online but won't earmark which employers have bad records of worksite fatalities and injuries.

Employment Minister Tomas Lukaszuk says Albertans have a right to know the injury record of who they work for.

He says the website lists figures for accepted lost-time claims, claim rates and fatalities for 140,000 employers insured by the Workers' Compensation Board.

But it's up to individuals to check with companies for more detailed information.

Lukaszuk says it would be too subjective for his department to highlight companies with unusually poor safety records.

There were 110 job-related fatalities last year in Alberta.

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Corporate Safety Culture

Culture is defined as the product of Individual and Group Values, Beliefs, Attitudes, and Behaviour.

What does that mean in the workplace?

Individual & Group = personally and together.

 Values = principles held dear such as integrity, or living up to your word.

Beliefs = what you have faith and/or understanding in.

• Attitudes = the mental approach you/we take towards work.

• Behaviours = the physical approach you/we take towards work.

Superior Safety Culture

Given that we know that Safety = the acceptable level of freedom from the risk of harm

A Superior Safety Culture can be visualised as:

The approach a <u>specific group of people</u> take towards <u>work</u>, to meet <u>their agreed acceptable</u> <u>level</u> of freedom from the risk of harm for <u>themselves</u> and those that <u>they interface with</u> through business

Superior Safety Culture

The problem is:

- The leadership of many companies fail to live up to the words that they speak about safety and culture.
- The workers also fail to play their part through a lack of commitment in completing their actions.
- Companies often state that safety is their highest priority; their number one value, but fail to live up to that maxim.
- Pressure sometimes out-weighs safety to protect the bottom line.
- The real culture can become: "the way we do things around here".

Styles of Safety Culture

Defining the Company Safety Culture should be a corporate leadership decision, although it usually isn't. It's normally a non decision.

However, its Top Management's actions not their words that have a significant effect on the culture.

Styles of Safety Culture

Blame

Just and Learning

No Blame

As in all things, extremes are never the right choice, yet as an industry we have supported Blame for many years and more recently No Blame. Neither work!

Styles of Safety Culture

Increasingly informed society... increasing trust and accountability Generative Safety is built into the way we work and think **Proactive** We work on problems If not managed it can go the wrong way that we still find **Calculative** We have systems in place to manage all hazards Safety is important we do lots of it after every accident **Pathological** Who cares if we are not caught

Styles of Safety Culture

- The choice of the style Corporate Safety Culture you have is yours to take, but as managers you must be prepared to live up to the demands of your commitments.
- The corporate drive should be towards the generative organization in which safety is so deeply embedded into you and your staff's "ways of being" that safe outcomes can be relied upon.
- To achieve this, a just and learning culture is essential

Safety Culture and Performance

- The Company's safety culture is the most significant influencing factor on safety performance.
- The safety performance of the staff and the influences of their supervisors and managers can determine the level of human error suffered by the Company.
- The Company Culture can be improved if a high level commitment is there.
- The Company's safety performance is the product of the <u>Safety Culture</u> of the organization plus it's <u>Luck</u> <u>Factor</u>

Styles of Culture

Questions for management to ask about its culture?

- What is the safety culture in the company?
- Is it robust enough to support the safety performance we require?
- Does it need to change and if so what do we need to do?

Ideally Management should seek to develop be a <u>just</u> and <u>learning culture</u>, that is designed to be capable of supporting the Company's business principles and safety objectives.

Styles of Culture

A Just and Learning Culture should:

- be supportive of the staff and management.
- encourage open reporting.
- encourage honest participation by all.
- accept that mistakes will happen.
- seek to learn from its mistakes and errors.
- treat those involved in the errors justly.
- consider the implications of management's actions and their systems in all incidents.

Professional Sub-Cultures

Studies into company cultures in many industries have identified that beneath the corporate culture, there can also be professional sub-cultures.

This means that the approach taken to work by a specific grouping may differ to that which the company desire and envision.

There is no malice or ill intent in such sub-cultures, it just relates to the beliefs, attitudes and understanding of that group, and it affects the way they work.

An example of one such professional sub-culture lies within a maintenance area.

Maintenance Sub-Culture

The Maintenance Engineer can be seen as:

- A trained problem solver & trouble shooter!
- Committed to safety, but sets his/her own standards!
- Sees adversity as a challenge!
- A member of a team, but strongly individualistic and not a team player, or using the teams strength!
- Committed and devoted to getting the job done as soon as possible, often an enthusiast!
- And, as with most people, they accept controlled risk taking. Although rewarding, this is error prone.

Maintenance Sub-Culture

Not to offend anyone, but Engineers tend to have the wrong attitude, although a generalization, this can evidenced by:

- They have great faith in their ability to do the job!
- They'd rather find out for themselves rather than ask about the operation!
- They are highly reliant on their ability to memorize tasks and procedures!
- Related to work, they are poor communicators!
- They are averse to being monitored, or supervised!
- They are prone to believing they know better and are proud of what they achieve!

Maintenance Sub-Culture

Maintenance Managers can add to the problem:

- They often condone poor work practice issues, such as working from memory not procedures!
- Through the operational pressures, they can allow safety controls to be eroded!
- The attitude of "Nothing's ever happened before!" or "We've done it like this for years"
- While everything is going right, managers may accept these shortfalls, but are quick to criticize when things go wrong!

Developing the right Safety Culture

To develop your Safety Culture, **Executives** should:

- Establish your <u>Corporate Principles for Safety.</u>
- Define your <u>Safety Objectives</u>.
- Establish your <u>Safety Action Plan.</u>
- Lead by example, <u>Live Your Word</u> (do what you say, say what you do).
- Use the <u>Substitution Test</u> (could the same thing happen to others) when things go wrong.
- Motivate your staff to work safely.
- <u>Communicate</u> well and frequently, expressing your commitment to safety.

Human Error

- Controlling human error within the environment is the most significant challenge we face today in our industry.
- The Company's safety culture is a powerful tool that can be used to reduce the likelihood of human error progressing to an accident.
- This is particularly important in an organization, where, provision of resources, human factors considerations, technical and development training, and the function's perceived importance have and are still been minimized.

Human Error

- The vast majority (80%+) of incidents & accidents are caused by human error.
- Error is a natural condition of being human! It is a primary function of personal development.
- We are all error prone, even the most experienced engineers and managers!
- Management should not be surprised when Human Error occurs!
- But they should be surprised if their systems of work are not robust enough to contain that error!

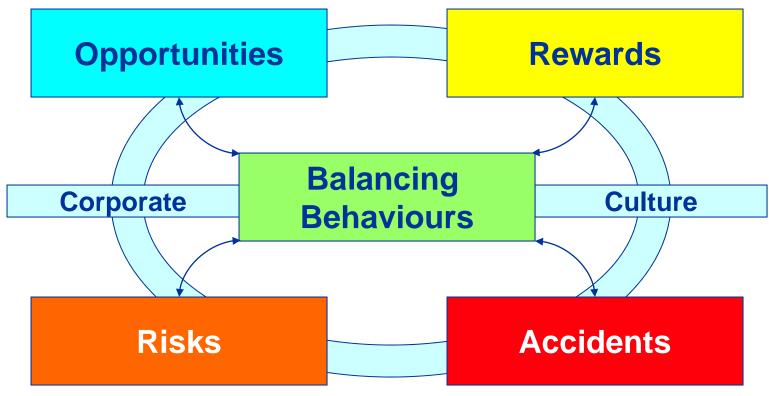
Human Error

Error prone practices are frequently found in organizations and are common causal factors in accidents. These are the risks industries routinely face!

Typically:

- Failure to work to the procedures, flaunts the stated organizational systems we build our safety upon.
- Non-standard practices used to get the job done.
- Supervisors working hands on and not supervising
- Interrupted work is common. We try to multi-task.
- Paperwork not completed as work is done.
- Poor standards for shift handover.

Risk Theory



Businesses need to take some risks to challenge the organization to grasp the opportunities and gain the potential rewards. At the same time the staff and management must maintain the tension between all the forces in play through the balancing behaviours they apply to manage the risk.

Risk Theory to Practice

- Risk taking is a part of life and a part of the culture of any company and managing those risks are part of good business practice.
- The level of risk that is acceptable to any company must be determined & managed. This must be clearly understood by the management and staff.
- The values and beliefs of the workforce are needed to support the intended levels of safety achievement.
- The balancing <u>behaviors and attitudes</u> are a key part of the Superior Safety Culture that govern the actual safety outcomes.

Summary

Companies developing and sustaining a Superior Safety Culture must set out:

- Their corporate principles for safety.
- Their safety objectives.
- Their safety action plan.
- Lead by example.
- Check if the occurrence could happen to others.
- Motivate staff.
- Communicate well.
- Express their commitment to safety and
- Confirm their systems of work are error tolerant.

5 Steps for Achievement

COMMUNICATE
EDUCATE
EVALUATE
INTEGRATE
CELEBRATE

Conclusion

Safety Is No Accident!

The <u>Safety Culture</u> of your organization is of <u>your making</u> and can be used to reduce the risks to <u>your business</u>

The **Choice** is **Yours**

LIFE IS FRAGILE:

HANDLE WITH CARE