

MANAGER'S TOOLKIT

Behavior-Based Safety



Manager's Toolkit: Behavior-Based Safety

Although most safety programs and research center around safe work practices and engineering solutions to safety and health problems, those strategies are not likely to have the desired effect if you don't also have an effective way to encourage employees to engage in safe behaviors every day on the job.

Behavior-based safety (BBS) programs can help provide that essential element. But in order for these programs to be effective, your supervisors must understand what influences employee behavior and how they can change employee behavior to promote workplace safety and prevent accidents and illness on the job.

Employees must understand the necessary steps to change at-risk behavior into safe behavior when such behavior occurs.

In order to use behavioral safety successfully to improve employee safety performance, supervisors must understand the concepts and techniques. This requires training. To be effective, your behavioral safety training program should contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- How to conduct an ABC analysis
- Types of consequences
- How to strengthen consequences
- How to pinpoint, observe, and measure behavior
- How to give effective feedback and set reasonable safety goals
- The types of positive reinforcement
- Reinforcement mistakes

This kit includes BLR's 7 Minute Safety Trainer, which can be used to educate both supervisors and employees on the principles of BBS and when it is best used. Also included are two toolbox talks to educate employees on how to develop a good safety attitude and how to take responsibility for safety.



This kit is brought to you by Safety Forum, part of Forum Events. Specifically designed for Safety decision-makers who are from mid- or large-sized company (200+ employees), attendees can expect to:

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- Attend workshops and sessions
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GOALS

This safety session should teach employees to:

- Understand the purpose of behavior-based safety and how it works.
- Use observation and feedback to shape and reinforce safe behavior.

Applicable Regulations: General Duty Clause, Occupational Safety and Health Act



1. The purpose of behavior-based safety is to create a safer workplace.

- Behavior-based safety is a method of avoiding human error and improving workplace safety by observing and analyzing employees' behavior while they work.
- The guiding principle of behavioral safety is doing a job safely as the product of a series of safe behaviors.
- Behavior is defined as any action you can see someone doing.
—Behavior includes visible actions only, not things you can't see, such as attitudes or thoughts.
- Behavior-based safety helps determine why at-risk behavior occurs on the job and the steps necessary to change at-risk behavior into safe behavior.
- This method uses materials and activities to encourage safe behavior.
—For example, safety signs, training, safety rules and policies, safety meetings
- It also uses observation of behaviors to determine whether behaviors are safe or unsafe.
- And it uses positive or corrective feedback on performance to reinforce safe behavior and change unsafe behavior.

2. Behavior-based safety involves selecting and observing desired safe behaviors.

- Behaviors selected for observation must be:
—Observable (can be seen or heard)
—Reliable (seen the same way by two or more people)
—Something over which an employee has control
—Described in a positive way (what should be done, not what shouldn't be done)
- Selected safe behaviors (usually no more than five at one time) are compiled into a checklist.
- Employees carry the checklist with them during the workday and spot-check for the different selected safe behaviors.
—For example, if you observe a coworker performing a behavior on the checklist safely, you put a check in the "safe" column.
—If a coworker is observed performing a behavior unsafely, a check goes in the "unsafe" column.
- Behavior-based safety observations must be objective—that is, based on what you actually see a person doing, not on opinions or interpretations about a coworker's performance.

3. Positive feedback is an essential part of behavior-based safety.

- Positive verbal feedback is a powerful way to reinforce safe behavior.



- When you give coworkers feedback about safe behavior, be specific about what you observed.
 - For example, to a forklift operator, you might say, “Thank you for driving slowly around that corner and using your horn to warn others.”
 - Avoid generalizations such as, “Thanks for driving the forklift carefully.”
- Deliver feedback on performance immediately after or as soon after the behavior as possible.
- Also, identify the person or group to whom you’re giving the feedback by name.
 - For example, “John, thanks for mopping up that spilled water. You just prevented someone from slipping and falling and getting injured.”
 - Avoid saying things like, “Thanks everyone for keeping the floor clean.”
- Don’t use the word “but” or “however” when giving positive feedback, since these qualifiers diminish the effect of the positive message.
 - For example, if you say, “Good to see you wearing safety glasses, Sally, but...” Sally may only hear the part after the “but,” not the positive reinforcement preceding it.

4. Corrective feedback is required when at-risk behavior is observed.

- When you observe a coworker engaging in unsafe behavior, you must give corrective feedback.
- Corrective feedback is giving information on what a coworker is doing incorrectly and also providing information for improvement.
- Never ignore unsafe behavior—it could result in an accident.
- When giving corrective feedback:
 - Be specific and focus on the correct behavior only—don’t discuss other behaviors.
 - Be objective and talk about the behavior, not the person.
 - Describe the safe behavior, and make sure coworkers understand why this behavior is important to their safety.



DISCUSSION POINTS:

Ask participants to identify three to five behaviors essential for performing their jobs safely. Create a checklist and have participants observe one another on the job the following day and give one another feedback on performance. Meet again briefly to discuss the results of the observations.



CONCLUSION:

- Behavior-based safety observations and feedback improve workplace safety.
- Doing a job safely is the product of a series of safe behaviors. Behavior-based safety is a method for avoiding human error and improving workplace safety by observing and analyzing employees’ behavior while they work.



TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE:

Have your employees take the Behavior-Based Safety quiz. By testing their knowledge, you can judge their ability to use this knowledge to work more safely and whether they need to review this important topic again soon.



Facts About Behavior-Based Safety

- Behavior-based safety helps determine why at-risk behavior occurs on the job and the steps necessary to change at-risk behavior into safe behavior.
- This method uses observation and feedback to encourage and reinforce safe behavior.
- Behaviors selected for observation must be:
 - Observable (can be seen or heard)
 - Reliable (seen the same way by two or more people)
 - Something over which an employee has control
 - Described in a positive way (what should be done, not what shouldn't be done).
- Behavior-based safety observations must be objective—that is, based on what you actually see a person doing, not on opinions or interpretations about a coworker's performance.
- When you give coworkers feedback about safe behavior:
 - Be specific about what you observed.
 - Deliver feedback on performance immediately after or as soon after the behavior as possible.
 - Identify the person or group to whom you're giving the feedback by name.
- When you observe a coworker engaging in unsafe behavior, you must give corrective feedback
 - never ignore unsafe behavior that could result in an accident.
- Corrective feedback is giving information on what a coworker is doing incorrectly and also providing information for improvement.
- When giving corrective feedback:
 - Be specific and focus on the correct behavior only—don't discuss other behaviors.
 - Be objective and talk about the behavior, not the person.
 - Describe the safe behavior, and make sure coworkers understand why this behavior is important to their safety.



BEHAVIOR-BASED SAFETY QUIZ

- 1. Behavior-based safety is a method for:**
 - a. Avoiding human error
 - b. Preventing accidents
 - c. Both a and b
- 2. Behavior-based safety analyzes employees' attitudes about workplace safety.**
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 3. Behavior-based safety helps determine why at-risk behavior occurs and how to change it.**
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 4. To promote safe behavior on the job, behavior-based safety uses:**
 - a. Positive feedback
 - b. Disciplinary action
 - c. Both a and b
- 5. When using the behavior-based safety method, you should NEVER correct a coworker who is doing something unsafe.**
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 6. Behaviors selected for observation must be:**
 - a. Reliable
 - b. Described in a negative way (what NOT to do)
 - c. Out of the employee's control
- 7. Behavior-based safety observations should be subjective, based on your interpretation of what a person you are observing is doing.**
 - a. True
 - b. False
- 8. Feedback on observed safety performance should be:**
 - a. Specific and immediate
 - b. General
- 9. Which of these statements would be considered effective feedback on safety performance?**
 - a. "That was good. You lifted with your legs, not with your back."
 - b. "Good job."
 - c. Either a or b.
- 10. When using behavior-based safety, focus only on safe behavior and ignore unsafe behavior.**
 - a. True
 - b. False

When you have completed this quiz, turn it in to your supervisor.

Name: _____

Date: _____



ANSWERS TO BEHAVIOR-BASED SAFETY QUIZ

1. c. Behavior-based safety is a method for avoiding human error, preventing accidents, and improving workplace safety.
2. b. False. Behavior-based safety focuses only on observable behavior (what you can see and hear) not on attitudes (which you can't see).
3. a. True. This is how it helps improve workplace safety.
4. a. Behavior-based safety relies on positive feedback to reinforce safe performance.

5. b. False. Corrective feedback is used as well as positive feedback.
6. a. Behaviors selected for observation must be reliable, which means they must be seen the same way by two or more people. They must also be described in a positive way and be within the employee's control.
7. b. False. Observations should be objective, based only on what you actually see, not on what you think might be happening or on what you imagine someone might be thinking.
8. a. Feedback should be both specific and immediate.
9. a. This feedback is specific about the behavior. "Good job" is not specific and, therefore, is not effective behavior-based safety feedback.
10. b. Never ignore unsafe behavior. It could lead to an accident. Use corrective feedback when you observe a coworker doing something risky.

SAFETY CULTURE

DEVELOP A GOOD SAFETY ATTITUDE



This talk reminds workers of the importance of approaching safety with a positive attitude in order to prevent accidents.

Items for attendees to consider during talk:

- What are some signs of a poor safety attitude?
- Why is it important to have a positive safety attitude?

TALK

You know your job. You have the ability to do it well. But do you have the attitude required to do the job both well and safely?

If you have a poor attitude about safety, it will show up in everything you say and everything you do. Sometimes, workers develop the attitude that safety rules were made to be broken—especially when no one is looking.

Even those who are hardworking and conscientious about every other aspect of their jobs can have a poor safety attitude. They may take shortcuts not because they are lazy but because they want to get the work done more quickly. Remember, though, that ignoring safety in order to get a job done more quickly is likely to cause accidents and injuries that slow down production more than working safely in the first place.

Other workers may think that not following the rules won't cause a problem if they think a risk is small.

They take chances, and this leads to accidents. These individuals don't take safety seriously—until it is too late.

Most people don't intend to work with a bad safety attitude or even realize they have one. They think their last couple of accidents were just that—accidents that couldn't have been prevented.

Here's how you can develop a good attitude concerning safety:

- Keep your mind focused on the job at hand. Put aside any personal problems that have been bothering you so that you can watch for hazards and accomplish what you have set out to do.
- Tell yourself that you will not let nearby noises or conversations interrupt your concentration or prevent you from doing the job safely.
- Don't give in to pressure from your coworkers to be unsafe. You don't have to join in with horse-play, take shortcuts, or participate in cover-ups. Instead, take the lead in behaving in an adult and responsible manner. If coworkers are behaving in an unsafe manner, tell a supervisor.
- Report all accidents and near misses, even if they seem unimportant at the time. *[Instruct workers on your specific accident and near-miss reporting procedures.]*
- Try to understand why an accident occurred to avoid making the same mistake twice.

Continued

Talk Date: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/ _____

Presenter: _____

Attendees: _____

Comments: _____

SAFETY CULTURE

- Always follow safe work practices and wear any personal protective equipment (PPE) that you are required to wear.
- Practice good housekeeping. Keep your work area free of clutter, and clean up spills promptly.
- Be considerate of your coworkers. Don't do anything that would endanger them. In fact, go a

step farther and remind coworkers about safety. Say something when they forget to put on PPE or when they ignore the rules.

By following these suggestions, you can develop a positive safety attitude, one that others will respect and look up to as an example. But even better than that, you'll be able to do productive work and stay safe at the same time.

SAFETY CULTURE

TAKING RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY



This talk reminds workers of the importance of taking responsibility for safety and making sure the workplace is safe for everyone.

Material to have on hand:

- Example of a recent incident or near miss that could have been prevented if someone spoke up about an unsafe condition (if applicable)

Items for attendees to consider during talk:

- Who is responsible for making sure our work-place is safe?
- What should you do if you notice a hazard in the workplace?
- What kinds of hazards do we need to particularly be aware of at our worksite?

TALK

You're probably aware of the safety rules we all need to follow at work. Most of you do a good job at wearing your personal protective equipment (PPE) and following safe work practices. But when you see something unsafe, what do you do? Do you think to yourself, "I'm following the rules, so it's not my problem"? Or do you say or do something to make sure the hazard is fixed before someone gets hurt?

It's important to watch out for your own safety, but it's just as important to take a look around you and

make sure the workplace is safe for everyone. Safety isn't just the job of the safety manager or the supervisors—it's everyone's job.

Consider this example [*or share a real example from your workplace if applicable*]: Steve was walking through a worksite one morning on his way to do some painting when he noticed a broken guardrail. He thought to himself, "Someone should fix that," but he was in a hurry to get to work, so he continued walking and forgot about the guardrail. Several more people walked by the same area, but like Steve, they were all focused on their own tasks, so the guardrail remained broken.

Later that day, Bob was carrying some bulky materials through the area. He couldn't see very well around the materials he was carrying, so he got a little too close to the edge of the walkway. Because the guardrail was broken, he fell 8 feet down and broke his leg.

This story is a good example of why you should always say something when you see something dangerous. It may not be your job to inspect guardrails, just like it wasn't Steve's job. But if Steve or any of the other people who noticed the broken guardrail had said something to a supervisor, the guardrail could have been fixed before Bob got hurt.

Whether you're at work or at home, make it a point to look around with an eye toward safety. Do you see anything dangerous? Some hazards are very easy to overlook. For example, a loose extension cord in

Continued

Talk Date: _____

Location: _____

Supervisor/ _____

Presenter: _____

Attendees: _____

Comments: _____

SAFETY CULTURE

a walkway is a trip hazard. A burned-out lightbulb makes it more difficult to see what you're doing, which can increase the chance of getting hurt. A machine with a broken or missing guard can easily cut off or crush someone's hand.

When you notice a hazard, don't assume that someone else will see it and fix it. Take the time to report it to a supervisor. If the hazard is something you can easily and safely fix, like a trip hazard in a hallway, go ahead and do so. It is still a good idea to tell a supervisor, though, so that he or she can take steps

to make sure it doesn't happen again. *[Review your specific procedures for reporting hazards.]*

Never put yourself in danger to fix a hazard. If you can't safely fix a hazard yourself, and no one who can fix it is available, the best thing to do is to put up a sign alerting your coworkers to the issue so they know to avoid the area or piece of equipment.

If we all make a little extra effort to be aware of workplace hazards and fix them or report them, the workplace will be a safer place for everyone. Remember, safety is everyone's responsibility.

A nighttime photograph of a city park area. In the foreground, a large, calm reflecting pool mirrors the lights from the surrounding buildings and trees. The middle ground features several large, leafy trees and a paved walkway with benches. In the background, several tall skyscrapers are illuminated, with one prominent building having a distinctive triangular top. The sky is a deep twilight blue.

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