



Best Practices for Positive Safety Contacts

Scope

This best practice is based on positive experiences from a member company and provides ideas on improved front line communications between managers and employees regarding safety observations, including when the employee is working safely. Having a program to promote conversation around safe behavior not only improves communications but provides positive reinforcement to the safe behaviors.

Tools Needed

- Training on the program.
- A computer and database or spreadsheet to document the positive safety contacts
- A person responsible for maintaining the database or spreadsheet to report metrics.

The Program

The details of the program were determined by a cross functional team of employees and front-line supervisors. All employees were expected, but not required, to participate in the program. A positive safety contact was defined as a positive two-way conversation (with no “buts”), specific, sincere, and brief. Unlike some behavior based safety programs that use cards and address both positive and corrective feedback, this program has no card and is for positive feedback only. Corrective feedback is a separate conversation. Positive safety contacts should far outnumber corrective feedback.

The person who made the positive safety contact then documents this contact in a database or spreadsheet providing the date, brief summary of the contact, and the home area of the person giving the contact. Metrics are then run by contacts per month and contacts by area. In a mature program, contacts by employee can also be reported. To demonstrate management support, managers select one good exceptional contact in routine meetings to relate to the group.

The Results

This company has been able to correlate a reduction in injuries with the increase in logged safety contacts after a few years. Although less tangible, this program has modified the safety culture at the facility in a positive way. The positive safety contact program has also improved one-on-one communication between supervision and the work force. When at-risk behavior is observed, the conversation is now much easier since the lines of communication have been improved.

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