Observations and Inspections to Drive Accountability

BHHC Loss Control

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Berkshire Hathaway HOMESTATE COMPANIES
Workers Compensation Division®

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7 Years with BHHC

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94%

It is now estimated that only 6% of workplace accidents are caused by environmental factors - unsafe conditions, OSHA violations, dangerous equipment, etc., while the remaining 94% of accidents are caused by unsafe behavior.

(From Gene Earnest and Jim Palmer, Proctor & Gamble)

88%

Heinrich's Original study of accident causation, 88% of accidents are caused by unsafe behaviors

(Herbert William Heinrich, Travelers Insurance 1931)

Workforce Solutions Provider Needs Help

Background

A workforce solutions provider, faced rising safety incidents and workers' compensation costs across its logistics operations.

Challenge

High incident rates and escalating costs prompted leadership to seek a proactive safety strategy.

Reduced Accidents and Reduced Costs

The Effort

In 2021, the company launched a Behavioral-Based Safety Observations program focused on identifying unsafe behaviors and reinforcing safe ones in real time.

Implementation: Supervisors conducted regular observations, called out unsafe actions, and celebrated safe practices to build a safety-first culture.

Outcomes

- 40% reduction in OSHA-recordable accidents within months.
- 25% drop in workers' compensation costs over next three years.
- Increased employee engagement and accountability around safety.
- Safety became a shared value across all locations, transforming the culture and improving operational efficiency

AGENDA

1. How safety observations fit into overall accident prevention efforts
   - Prepare to conduct a safety observation
   - The role of SOP's and JHA's
   - Deciding to tell or not to tell
2. Performing the safety observation
3. Coaching towards desired behavior

We will focus on Best Practices

- The goal of an employee safety effort is to prevent injuries and increase the involvement of staff in your safety efforts.
- Regulatory standards are *minimum* requirements. Best in class employers go above and beyond.
- Remember that every workplace is different. Find the risk potential and address it proactively.

How safety observations fit into overall accident prevention efforts

ROLE OF SAFETY OBSERVATIONS

IDENTIFY UNSAFE BEHAVIORS

Observe and recognize risky actions

REINFORCE SAFE PRACTICES

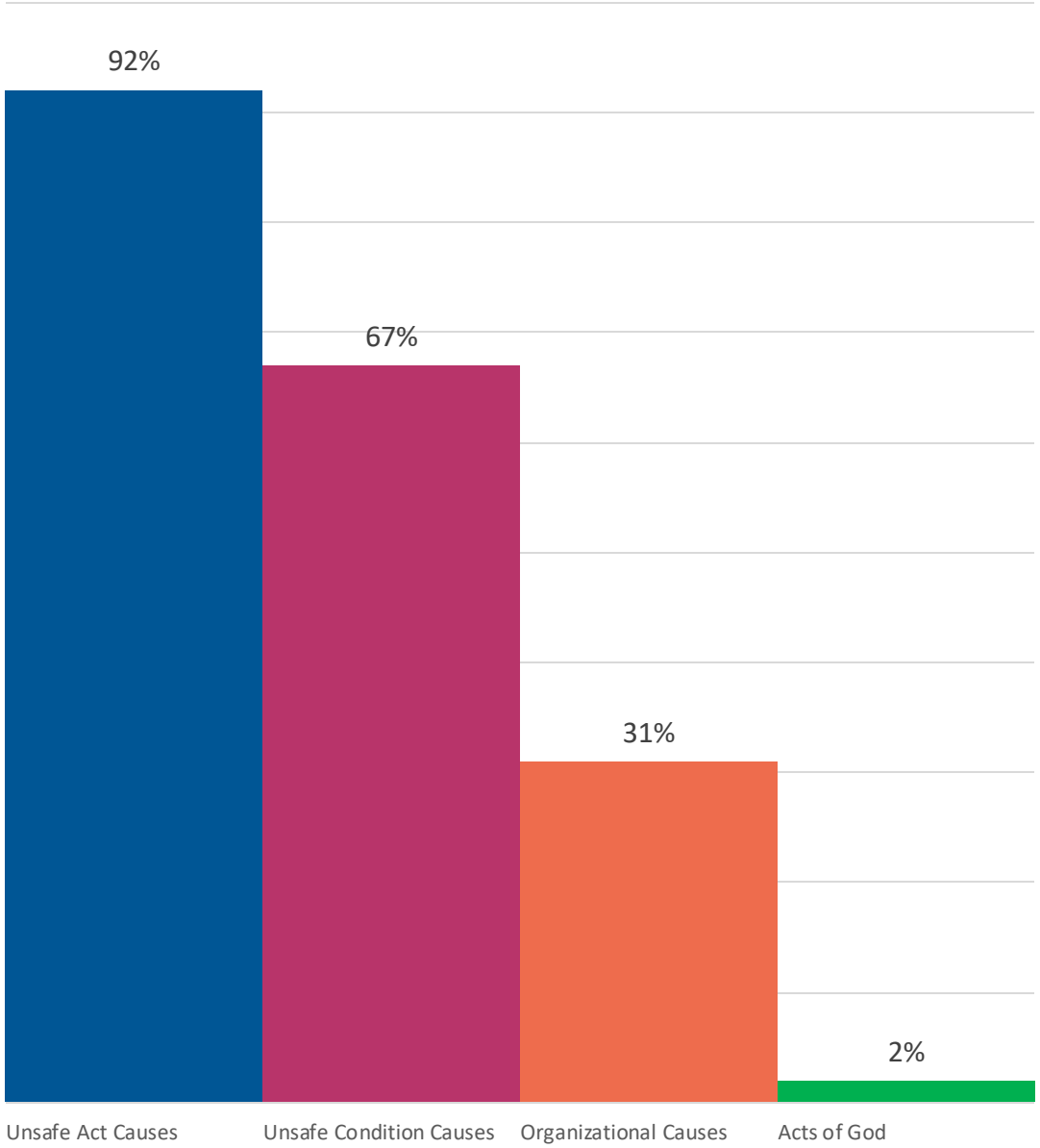
Encourage adherence to safety procedures

PROVIDE FEEDBACK

Discuss positive and negative findings

PREVENT INCIDENTS

Address hazards before they cause harm

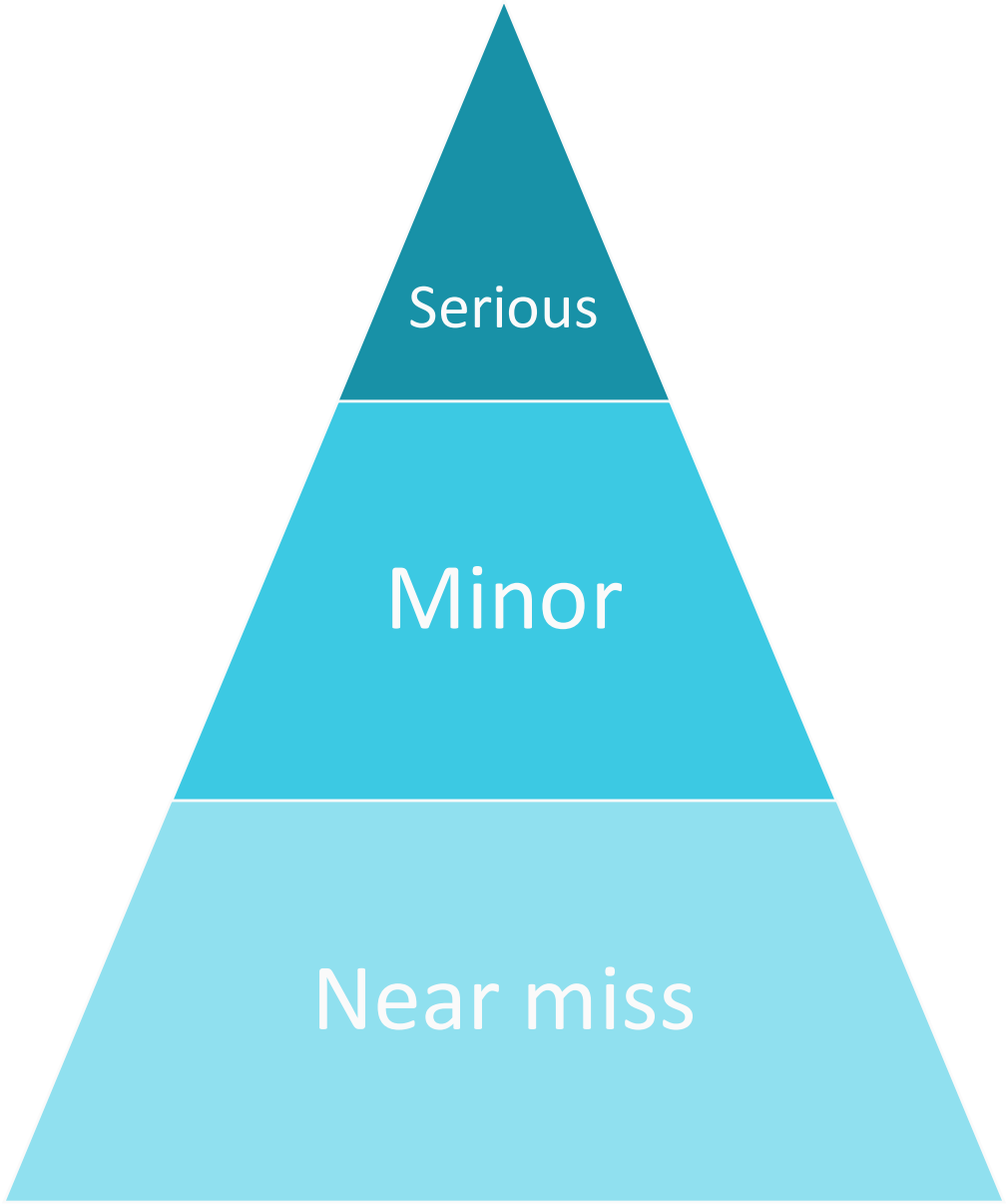


Multiple Causation Theories

Accidents are rarely the result of a single cause

They occur due to a combination of factors:

- Domino Theory
- Multiple Causation Theory
- Human Factors Theory
- Systems Theory
- Epidemiological Theory



Accident Triangle (adjusted)

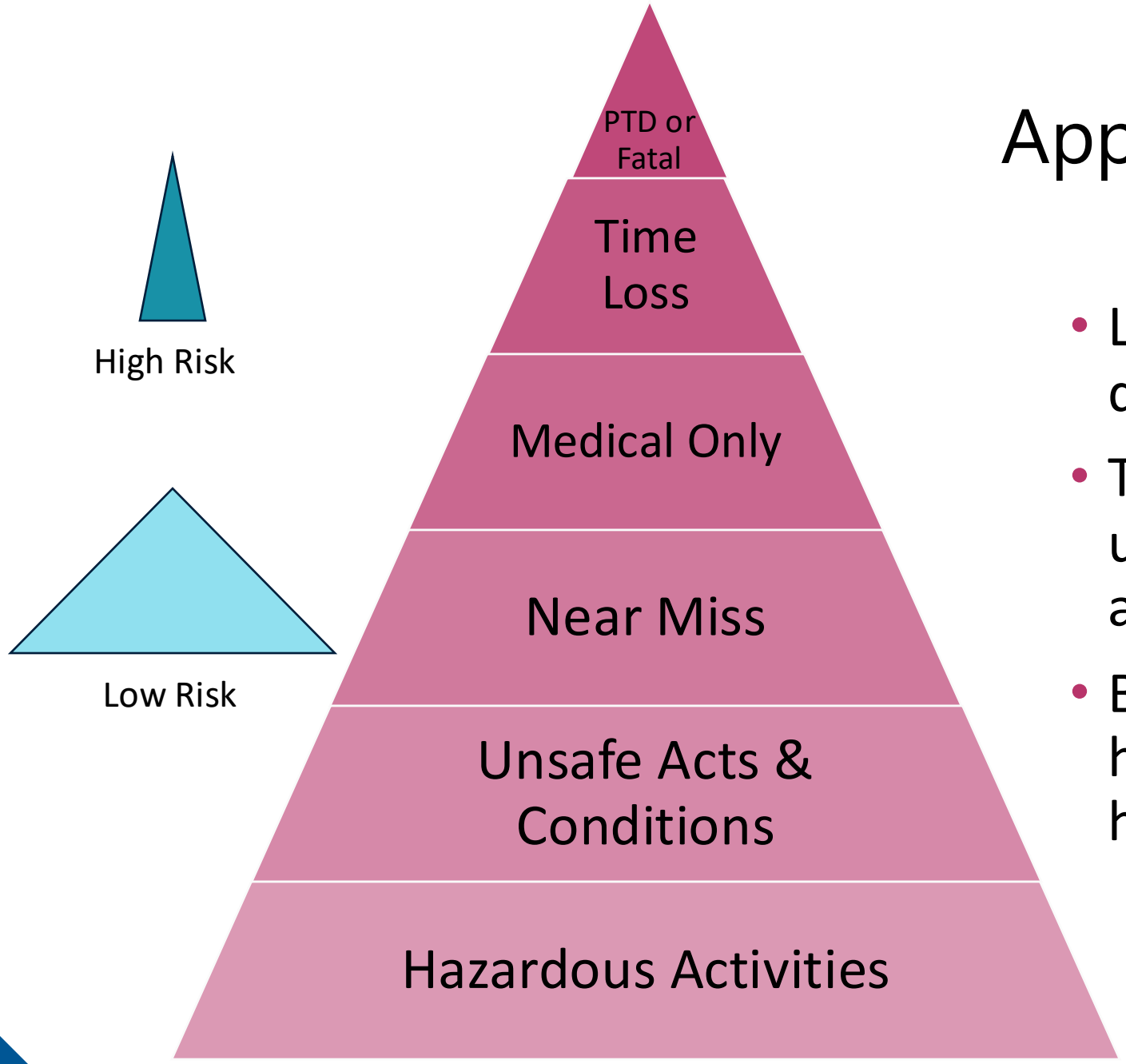
1931 Heinrich looked at 75,000 accidents

- 1 Serious Accident
- 29 Minor Accidents
- 300 Near Misses

1966 Bird analyzed 1.7 million accidents

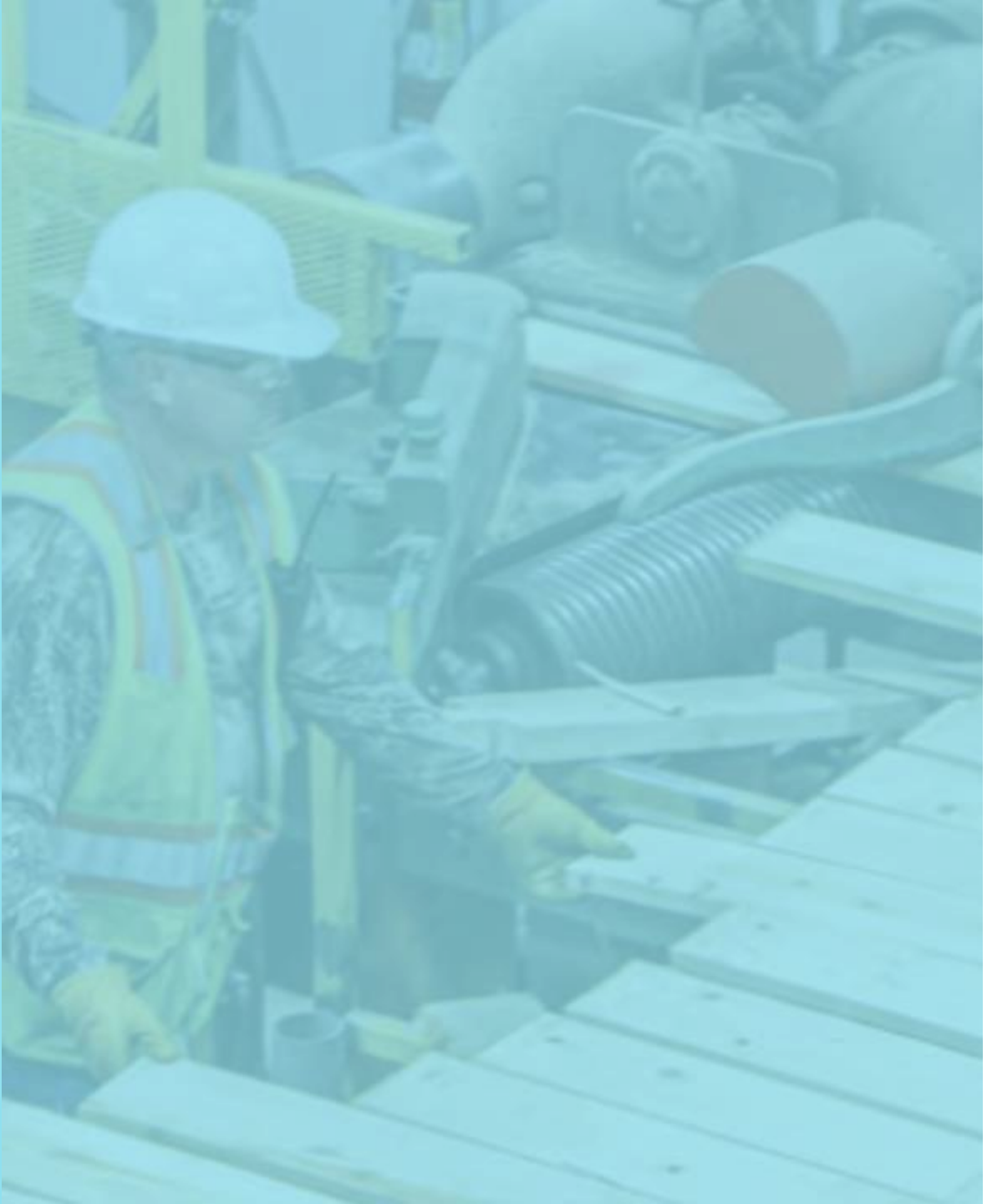
Updated Triangle:

- 1 Serious Injury
- 10 Minor Injury
- 30 Damage-Causing Accidents
- 600 Near Misses



Applying the Theory

- Layers permanent total disability or fatality at the top
- Time loss, medical, near miss, unsafe acts and conditions, and activities underneath
- Base of the triangle varies by hazard – narrower base the higher risk



Safety Observations Focusing on the Bottom

- Check the effectiveness of training programs
- Promote on-the-spot correction of unsafe acts
- Provide opportunities to compliment and/or reward safe behaviors
- Develop cooperative safety attitudes
- Promote more learning about employees
- Suggest and identify better job methods

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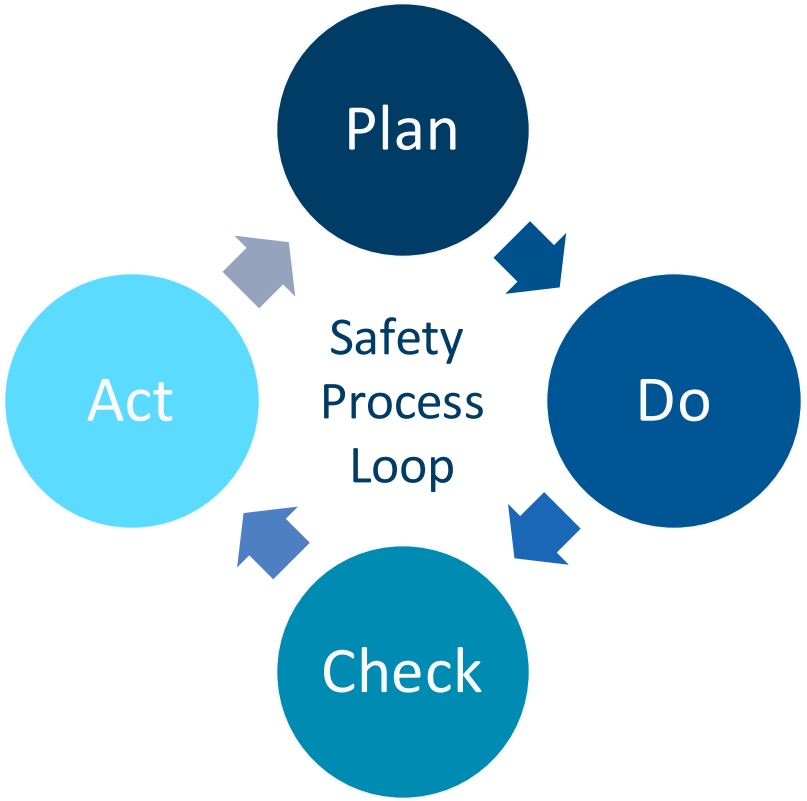
Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

ELEMENT	DESCRIPTION
Task Definition	Specifies what the employee is expected to do
Step-by-Step Instructions	Details how to perform each task safely and efficiently
Training Tool	Used for onboarding and refresher training
Compliance	Ensures adherence to quality, production, timeliness and safety standards
Foundation for JHA	Provides task breakdown for hazard analysis

Job Hazard Analysis (JHA)

JHA COMPONENT	DESCRIPTION
Hazard Identification	Analyzes each SOP step for potential risks – Supervisor and employee review job with SOP as guide
Risk Assessment	Evaluates likelihood and severity of hazards
Control Measures	Recommends engineering, administrative, or PPE controls
Worker Protection	Ensures employees understand safety protocols
Continuous Improvement	Updates JHA with changes in tasks or environments

Preparing for the Observation



Identify who needs an observation

- New hires, change in position, outside influences, hazardous operations, other

Decide what you are looking for including job steps, hazards, and proper controls:

- Job Specifications, Job Hazard Analysis, Care Plan are all sources of data
- Look at a scheduling of tasks in the workday and ensure observation coincides to task
- Decide if you should tell the employee prior to completion of the observation

Who Needs an Observation

- New hire
- Transfer employee
- Returning after leave of absence
- Traumatic event
- Positions with high defect rate
- Positions with significant changes in productivity
- Positions with high accident rates
- Non-routine tasks
- Other

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Performing the Safety Observation

What are you going to observe?

Job Step Review

- Review the SOPS
- Review and use the JHA
- What are the critical behaviors
- Consider recent incidents or near misses
- Observation guides

Job Safety Analysis	Type of job: Helping to hitch an implement (wagon, machine) to a tractor Date: March 3, 2003	
Personal Protective Equipment to be worn: Work boots with steel toe, shank, leather gloves		
Basic Job Steps	**Potential Hazards**	**Recommended Action or Procedure**
Check the position of the implement wheels.	Implement could roll when tongue is picked up, causing a crushing injury.	Check that the wheels of the implement are blocked.
Check the position of the implement tongue.	Straining the back if the tongue is heavy.	Use blocks to keep tongue at hitching height, squat down and use leg muscles to lift rather than bending over and lifting with your back; use implement's jack stand if it has one; use temporary jack if tongue is heavy and implement doesn't have a jack stand.
Have tractor driver back to within a few inches of implement tongue.	Crushed between tractor and implement if tractor operator miscalculates while backing. Run over by rear tractor tire.	Stand outside of tractor and implement until tractor driver stops tractor. Use hand signals.
Helper moves in to align implement tongue and pin hole with tractor and pin hole.	Crushing injury to the hands or body.	Keep hands in back of drawbar connection point. Wear leather gloves. Tractor operator backs with low gear and low engine speed.
Insert drawbar pin to connect tractor with implement. Insert safety pin or attach safety chains.	Helper can be run over by tractor implement; suffer crushing injury to the feet if the implement tongue slips off of the tractor drawbar.	Operator puts tractor in park or sets brakes before helper drops in the hitch pin. Helper steps from between tractor and implement before tractor operator moves tractor. Helper wears steel-toe work boots.

Observation Guides
Hazard Specific & Job Focused

Safety Observation: Manual Lifting
Hazard Control Toolkit

SPECIFIC RISK FACTOR(S) IDENTIFIED						
Please check the items below where improvement is possible in order to address the risk factor						
MANUAL LIFTING						
NEEDS FOCUS	RISK FACTOR IDENTIFIED	CORRECTIVE ACTION APPROACH				
		A	B	C	D	E
	Body position (steps out of neutral)					
	Gripping Surface					
	Grip Method					
	Use of Mechanical Lift Assisting equipment					
	Twisting4					
	Bending at Waist (Below knee work)					
	Weight Limits					
	Two or More Person Lifts					
	Stretching					
	Other (List):					
	Other (List):					
	Other (List):					

A: Redesign Task to reduce manual lifting (engineering)
B: Retraining
C: Work with a mentor
D: Share with Team
E: Increase frequency of safety observations

Corrective Action Plan	Responsible Party	Corrective Action Date

BHHC Loss Control - Because everyone deserves to be safe, valued and respected.

Remarkable Construction
Safety Observation Checklist

Description	Used Properly	Not Used Properly	N/A	
1. Tailgate Discussion	O	O	O	
2. Wheel Chocks	O	O	O	
3. Personal Protective Equipment	O	O	O	
a. Hard Hat	O	O	O	
b. Eye/Face Protection	O	O	O	
c. Hearing Protection	O	O	O	
d. Hand Protection	O	O	O	
4. Traffic Control Devices	O	O	O	
a. Cones	O	O	O	
b. Signs	O	O	O	
c. Flagman with Proper Equipment	O	O	O	
5. Vehicle Grounds	O	O	O	
6. Personal Grounds	O	O	O	
7. Rubber Gloves and/or Sleeves	O	O	O	
8. Cover-up Material	O	O	O	
9. Fall Protection	O	O	O	
a. Climbing Belt and Safety Strap	O	O	O	
b. Harness (full body)	O	O	O	
c. Lanyards	O	O	O	
d. Ladders Secured	O	O	O	
10. Proper Equipment Use and Location	O	O	O	
11. Trench/Shoring	O	O	O	
12. Safety Signs	O	O	O	

Comments

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Benefits of Structured Data Collection

Trend Analysis

- Better understanding of risks and safe practices
- Increased vigilance and proactive behavior

Focus department and company training

- Clear guidance helps employees feel more capable and secure in their roles
- Ensures consistent competencies for staff

CheckList: Construction - 1926
Users: All Users
Category: All Categories
Company: All Companies
Date Range: 6/1/2018 - 9/30/2018

Total Inspections: 82

Aerial/Boom Lifts	Pos	Neg	Total	%
Workers tied off to approved anchorage point in basket? 1926.453(b)(2)(v)	38	13	51	75%
Workers not tied off to adjacent structure/equipment? 1926.453(b)(2)(iii)	17	2	19	89%
Operator(s) trained and/or authorized? 1926.453(b)(2)(ii)	26	6	32	81%
Both feet on floor of basket? 1926.453(b)(2)(iv)	11	19	30	37%
Boom/basket load limits not exceeded? 1926.453(b)(2)(vi)	9	4	13	69%
Aerial lift stationary when elevated? 1926.453(b)(2)(viii)	10	2	12	83%
Aerial lift controls clearly marked/identified? 1926.453(b)(2)(ix)	6	3	9	67%
Aerial lifts inspected prior to use/documented? 1926.453(b)(2)(i)	5	2	7	71%
Access gate/opening closed when working in lift? (ANSI/SIA A92.5)	4	2	6	67%
Operated on level surface per equipment specs? (ANSI/SIA A92.5)	2	0	2	100%
Outriggers (when available) utilized as needed? (ANSI/SIA A92.5)	3	0	3	100%
Work platform kept reasonably clear of debris? (ANSI/SIA A92.5)	3	1	4	75%
Are Boom Lifts operated within the wind speed service limit? (ANSI/SIA A92.5)	3	0	3	100%
Good compliance/no safety violations? (1926.453)	1	0	1	100%
Category Total	138	54	192	72%

Behaviors	Pos	Neg	Total	%
Eyes on path/looks in direction of travel?	7	1	8	88%
Looks back prior to stepping backwards?	6	0	6	100%
Pushes instead of pulls when possible?	6	1	7	86%
Avoids overhead work when possible?	3	0	3	100%
Lifts with legs not back when possible?	2	1	3	67%
Forms a bridge with free hand when lifting?	1	1	2	50%
Category Total	25	4	29	86%

Effective Coaching

Behavior Based Feedback

Observe

Watch how employee work and identify safe and unsafe behaviors

Intervene

Use positive reinforcement to encourage safe behaviors

Continue to Improve

Adjust for efficiency

Analyze

Look at underlying causes of unsafe behaviors

Offer Feedback

Offer continuous feedback (Praise and constructive comments)

Behavior Based Feedback

What makes this successful:

- Focuses on observable actions rather than personal traits
- Reinforces safe behaviors and corrects unsafe ones constructively
- Encourages continuous improvement without blame

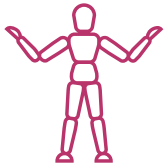
Elements of Effective Coaching

Ask Questions

Listen Intently

Be Non-Judgmental

Align feedback with desired behaviors



Model Strategies and Behaviors

Provide Honest Feedback

Create Safe Environment

Use Positive Reinforcement

Common Pitfalls to Safety Coaching

The Message

- Overemphasis on Compliance
  - Focusing only on rules without mindset
  - Leads to minimal engagement and poor understanding
- Ignoring Data and Trends
- Coaching Only After Incidents
  - Reactive rather than proactive coaching
  - Misses the chance to prevent issues before they occur
- Lack of Supervisor Training
  - Supervisors may not be equipped with coaching skills or safety knowledge
  - Leads to ineffective or counterproductive sessions.

The Approach

- Lack of Personalization
  - Using a one-size-fits-all approach
  - Reduces relevance and impact of coaching
- Inconsistent Follow-Up
  - Coaching is treated as a one-time event
  - Missed opportunities for reinforcement and improvement
- Poor Communication Skills
  - Lack active listening or constructive feedback techniques
  - Can result in misunderstandings or defensiveness
- Failure to Build Trust
  - Coaching without safety
  - Employees may withhold concerns

People Learn Differently

Visual Learners

- Prefer diagrams, charts, videos, and written instructions
- Benefit from visual aids like infographics, signage, and safety walkthroughs

Auditory Learners

- Learn best through listening and verbal explanations
- Respond well to safety talks, coaching conversations, and recorded briefings

Kinesthetic Learners

- Learn by doing. hands-on practice and physical engagement
- Thrive in simulations, role-playing, and on-the-job demonstrations

Read/Write Learners

- Prefer reading manuals, writing notes, and reviewing documentation
- Benefit from written safety procedures, checklists, and self-paced modules

Learning Styles Impact on Safety Coaching

One-size-fits-all coaching is ineffective

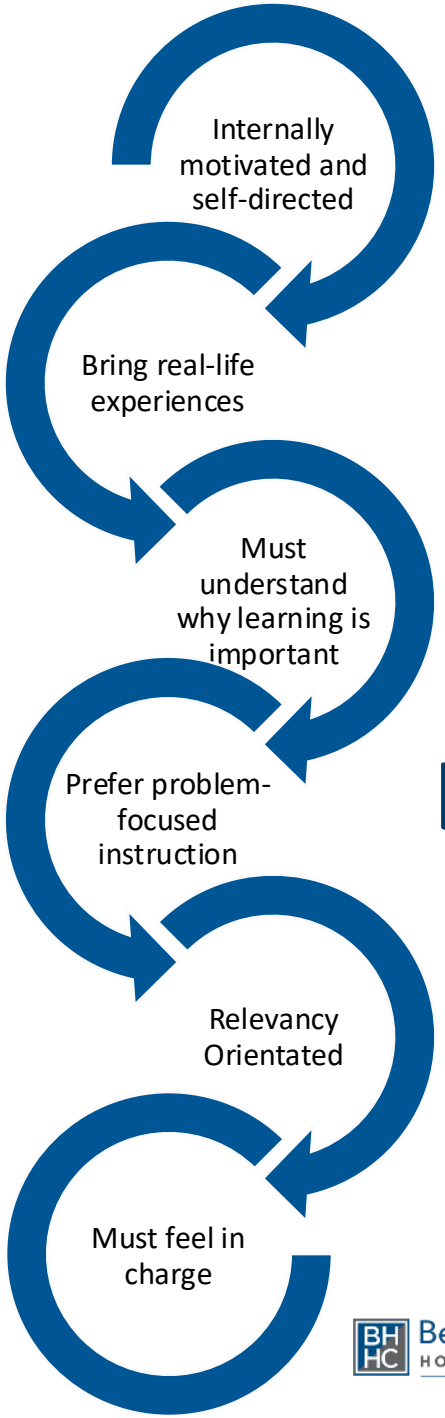
- tailor methods to individual preferences

Blended approaches

- (visual + verbal + hands-on) increase retention and engagement
- Misalignment between coaching style and learning preference can lead to confusion or disengagement

Supervisors should observe and adapt

- ask employees how they best absorb information



Adult Learning

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Active Listening

Safety Communication Techniques for Supervisors

What makes it successful:

- Shows employees their concerns are heard and valued
- Builds trust and encourages open dialogue
- Helps supervisors identify underlying safety issues

Empathetic Communication

What makes it successful:

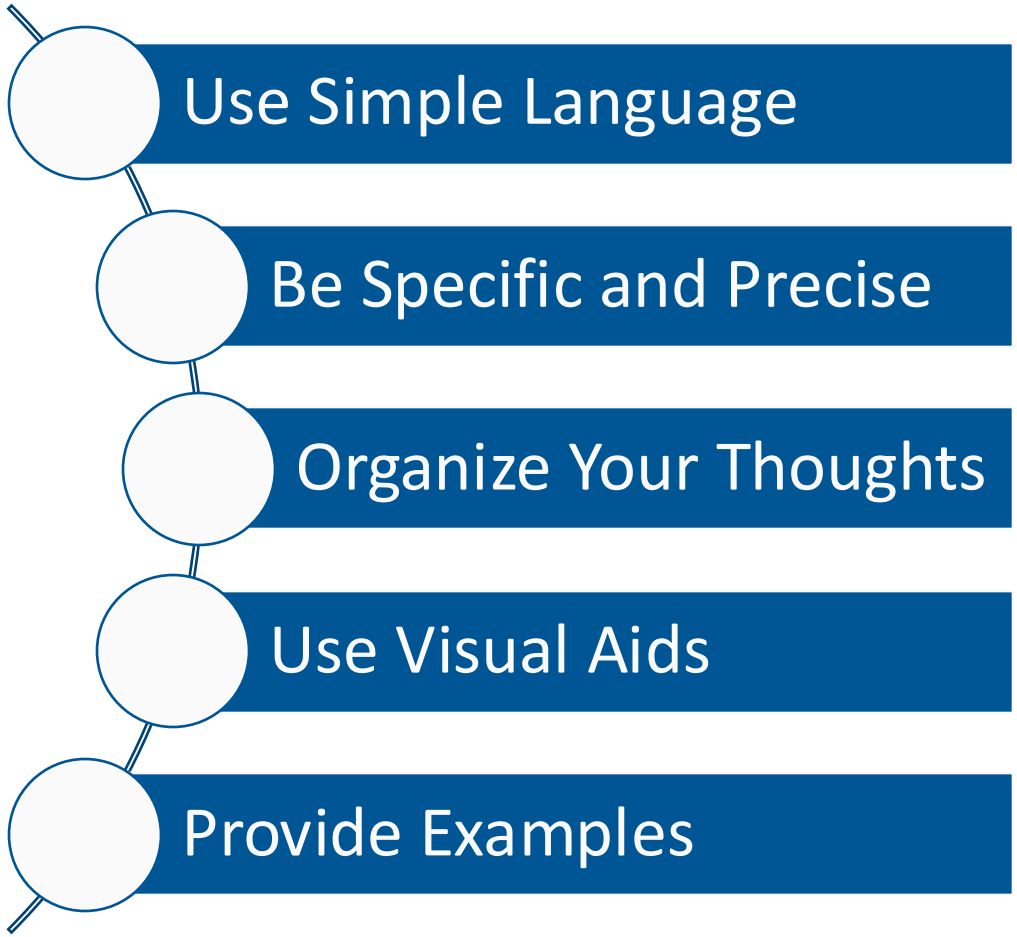
- Shows genuine concern for employee wellbeing.
- Builds psychological safety and trust.
- Encourages openness about near misses or unsafe conditions.

Two Way Communication

What makes it successful:

- Encourages feedback from employees.
- Creates a collaborative safety culture.
- Helps supervisors stay informed about frontline challenges.

Clear and Concise



What makes it successful:

- Reduces confusion and misinterpretation.
- Ensures everyone understands expectations and procedures.
- Enhances compliance and consistency.

Question	Example Response
Closed question: Have you used the website before?	Yes.
Open-ended question: Tell me about the last time you used the website.	I think it was last week. I was trying to find an article I could send to my colleague on how to do a usability test. I found a really nice one that had lots of visuals.
Closed question: How long did it take you, roughly, to find that article?	I can't remember. Maybe 10 minutes?
Open-ended question: How did you decide which article to send your colleague?	There were quite a few of them when I searched "usability test". I basically just skimmed the titles. I think I opened a few in new tabs and just quickly scanned it to make sure it had the right information…

Open Ended Questions

What makes it successful:

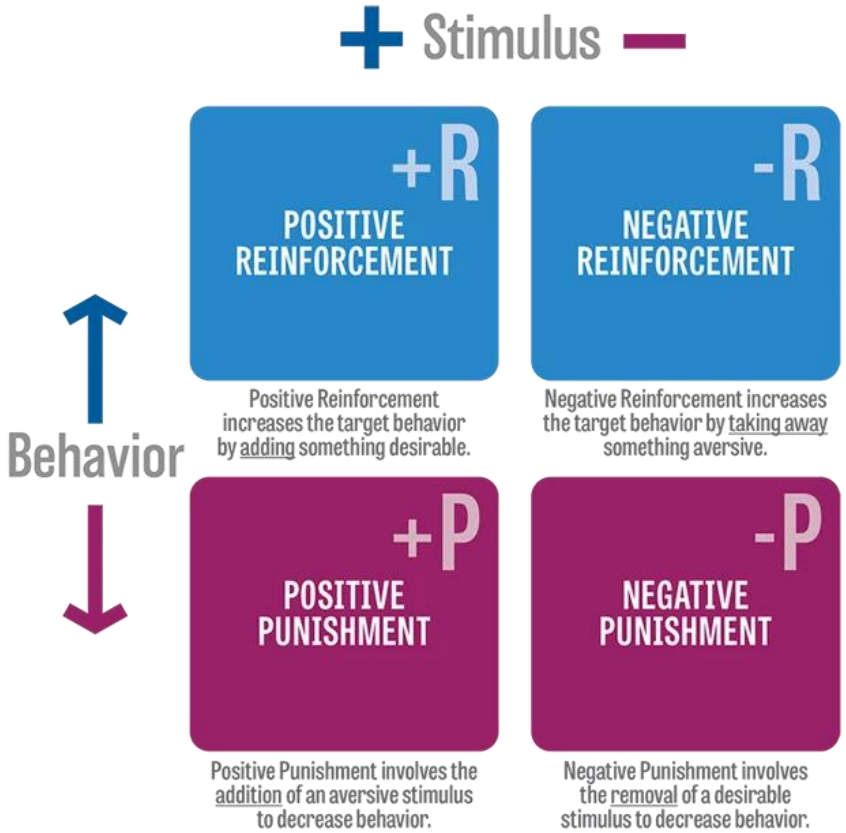
- Promotes deeper thinking and self-reflection
- Helps uncover root causes of unsafe behavior
- Engages employees in problem-solving

Coaching with Questions

What makes it successful:

- Guides employees to discover solutions themselves.
- Builds ownership and accountability.
- Strengthens critical thinking and decision-making.

Positive Reinforcement



What makes it successful:

- Recognizes and rewards safe behavior
- Boosts morale and motivation
- Encourages repetition of desired actions

Use Visual Aids

What makes it successful:

- Supports different learning styles (especially visual learners).
- Makes complex safety concepts easier to understand.
- Reinforces verbal instructions

Regular Safety Huddles

What makes it successful:

- Keeps safety top-of-mind.
- Provides a platform for updates, reminders, and recognition.
- Builds team cohesion and shared responsibility.

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Summary

Why Effective Safety Communication Matters

Promotes Hazard Awareness

Clear communication helps employees recognize and respond to risks before incidents occur.

Encourages Safe Behaviors

Regular coaching and feedback reinforce safety protocols and correct unsafe actions.

Builds Trust and Openness

Employees are more likely to report near misses or unsafe conditions when they feel heard and supported.

Improves Response Time

Timely communication ensures quick action during emergencies or when hazards are identified.

Reduces Misunderstandings

Clear instructions and expectations prevent errors caused by confusion or assumptions.

Strengthens Safety Culture

Consistent messaging from supervisors sets the tone for safety as a shared responsibility.

Enhances Training Effectiveness

Communication tailored to different learning styles ensures better retention and application of safety knowledge.

Supports Continuous Improvement

Feedback loops allow for ongoing refinement of safety practices based on real-world observations.

AGENDA

Recap

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Questions?

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