

JIFNEWS

A Quarterly Newsletter from the Somerset County Joint Insurance Fund featuring Safety, Health & Wellness



Becoming a Leader

by Shawn M. Galloway

Leadership is determined by what you do, not just by the passion that drives you or the results you achieve. World-class organizations are realizing the importance of moving the focus in operations away from results and towards performance. Outlined below are six practices to facilitate this journey.

Live Emerson's Quote | Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "What you do speaks so loudly that I cannot hear what you say." Behavioral integrity is a critical principle of great leaders. Successful executives reach an eventual point of realization: telling others to "support safety" pales in comparison to showing them what support looks like (and also what it doesn't). Can your employees provide any example where a leader was observed not following a policy or rule that is expected of employees? Hypocrisy is known to be demotivational to organizational culture. Ensure what you do reinforces the message sent to the organization.

Encourage Specific Safe Precautions | "Be safe today" stated 10 times a day will certainly add more value than reminding once a week, or once a month. But is "be safe" sufficient advice? What specifically, does, "be safe" really mean? For ownership and personal accountability of risk reduction to occur, there needs to be a focus

Physical Fitness Trumps Body Weight in Reducing Death Risks, Study Says

According to new research, becoming less fit was linked to higher death risk, regardless of BMI changes.

If you maintain or improve your fitness level—even if your body weight has not changed or increased—you can reduce your risk of death, according to research reported in *Circulation: Journal of the American Heart Association*. In a study of 14,345 adult men, mostly white and middle or upper class, researchers found that:

- **Maintaining or improving fitness was associated with a lower death risk even after controlling for Body Mass Index (BMI) change.**
- **Every unit of increased fitness (measured as MET, metabolic equivalent of task) over six years was associated with a 19 percent lower risk of heart disease and stroke-related deaths and a 15 percent lower risk of death from any cause.**
- **Becoming less fit was linked to higher death risk, regardless of BMI changes.**
- **BMI change was not associated with death risks.**

BMI is a measurement based on weight and height (kg/m²). MET measures the intensity of aerobic exercise—specifically, the ratio of metabolic rate during a specific physical activity to a reference rate of metabolic rate at rest. "This is good news for people who are physically active but can't seem to lose weight," said Duck-chul Lee, Ph.D., the study's lead researcher and physical activity epidemiologist in the Department of Exercise Science at the University of South Carolina's Arnold School of Public Health in Columbia. "You can worry less about your weight as long as you continue to maintain or increase your fitness levels."

Results of the study underscore the importance of physical inactivity as a risk factor for death from

heart disease and stroke, said researchers. Researchers also found no association between changes in body fat percentage or body weight and death risk.

Participants, who were an average 44 years old, were part of the long-term, large-scale Aero-bics Center Longitudinal Study. They underwent at least two comprehensive medical exams. Researchers used maximal treadmill tests to estimate physical fitness (maximal METs), and height and weight measurements to calculate BMI. They recorded changes in BMI and physical fitness over six years.

After more than 11 years of follow-up, researchers determined the relative risks of dying among men who lost, maintained, or gained fitness over six years. They accounted for other factors that can affect outcomes, including BMI change, age, family history of heart disease, beginning fitness level, changes in lifestyle factors such as smoking and physical activity, and medical conditions such as high blood pressure or diabetes.

One possible explanation for these results: about 90 percent of the men were either normal weight or overweight at the beginning of the study. Among obese people, changes in BMI might have a significant effect on death risks. So it's unclear whether these results would apply to severely obese people, Lee said.

A BMI score under 25 is considered healthy, 25 to less than 30 is overweight, and 30 or greater is obese.

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Worker Habits that Annoy Safety Pros the Most

by Fred Hosier



We wrote about a survey that put “safety” as the No. 6 most annoying thing in the workplace. So, we asked you what is most annoying about workers when it comes to safety. Here are your answers:

One of the most common complaints was workers who say things like, “I’ve been doing that this way for 20 years and have never gotten hurt.” A slight variation on the theme: “I have 20 years experience. Don’t tell me how to do my job.”

When it comes to one specific worker action that is annoying, “wearing safety glasses /goggles on top of their heads” was mentioned the most.

Some other annoying worker practices when it comes to safety:

- Supervisors who walk right by obvious safety violations.
- “Safety is the safety manager’s job, not mine.”
- Employees who say they don’t have time for safety.
- Safety costs too much.
- Managers who require workers to attend safety meetings and then don’t show up themselves.
- Workers who prefer not to know about safety rules and then say they were out of the loop.
- Not reporting injuries. “It happened a month ago, but I thought it would quit hurting, so I didn’t tell anyone.”
- “I’m the engineer. I get the thing to run. You’re the safety person. You figure out how to do it safely.”
- Upper management that won’t get serious about safety.

- “Where does it say that I have to ____?”
- Blocking exits, aisles, fire extinguishers, eyewash stations, etc.

After reading all of those (and probably recognizing many, if not all of them), are you really annoyed?

We don’t want you to spend the rest of the day that way. So, we’ll note that a number of you seemed to have a good sense of humor while writing about these annoyances. And while safety is, of course, very serious business, it can help you get through the day to have a sense of humor about it.

Here are some worker annoyances from safety pros that show that they’re not about to let the few employees who ignore safety get them down:

- “We are safety-ed to death.” (The workers who said that obviously didn’t think about their statement.)
- “Safety, safety, safety. All we ever talk about is safety, and we don’t even have any accidents around here.” (Well, must be working, right?)
- “We never had all this safety s*** before,” from the guy missing part of his thumb because it was ripped off in a drill press.
- Right out of the childhood playbook: “They’re not doing it, so why should I?”
- “That wouldn’t be in the aisle for someone to trip over if we didn’t have to participate in this Safety Tour during our clean-up time.”
- When people open a meeting by saying, “Let’s get this party started.” If it were a party, there’d be more beer and hot people in the room.

Leader (continued from front)

on what specifically one can do to personally mitigate risk they are exposed to. Off-the-job topics are also necessary to further this level of personal ownership.

Always Be Positive About Safety With Employees | Occasionally new regulations or legislation will be passed that offer little value to the operations supervisor or manager. A salaried leader voicing this frustration in front of their direct reports is not tolerated in excellent cultures. A feeling of frustration is occasionally to be expected. Voicing this to leadership and the safety department is encouraged. However, exposing your employees to lack of support of a company direction will often result in further disconnect from organizational direction or objectives.

DOC vs. COP (Demonstrate Opportunities to Care, rather than Catch Opportunities to Punish) | Regrettably, some actions that are carried out with the purpose of improving safety performance leave employees with the sense of being policed in safety, rather than feeling cared for. There are two types of feedback that are often given. A COP might say, “I’m concerned you were driving 20 above the speed limit; let’s talk.” A DOC might say, “I’m concerned about your medical test results, and I’d like to speak with you.” When giving feedback, it is important you do so in a manner that lets people know you truly care, rather than punishing them. Try to sound more like a DOC than a COP.

Eliminate Barriers to Safety | We must never forget that people are motivated to perform for a reason. If we do not address the reason, we will perpetuate a barrier to safe performance. Most people are motivated to work safely. Often the job of a leader is to identify and eliminate what is demotivating them, or getting in their way. These demotivators are either internal (complacency, knowledge, risk-identification, focus, etc.) or external (organizational, physical, design, etc.).

Remember the Dash | When you retire or leave your organization, few will remember in detail the date you started and the date you left. What they will remember is all that happened within the dash in-between the dates. Be proactive in your leadership legacy and remember... how you feel is important, but it’s what you do that is critical.