Behavior-Based Safety

- Why Develop a Behavior-Based Safety Program? -------2
- Behavior-Based Safety Implementation Process-----------2
- Developing an Inventory of Critical Behaviors & Creating an Observation Checklist ----------------------------------3
- Implementing Observation & Feedback ---------------------4
- Baseline Measurements & Improvement Goals ---------------8

Tool Kit:
Behaviors-Based Process Outline
Sample Checklists
Critical Behavior-Analysis
Elements of Workplace Behavior-Based Evaluation
E. Scott Geller Articles:
  Two Common Coaching Mistakes
  20 Guidelines for Giving Feedback
  Seek and You Shall Get Feedback
Behavior-Based Safety

Why should you develop a Behavior-Based Safety Process?

- Safer work environment
- Frequency and severity of injuries decreases
- Safe behaviors increase, and at-risk behaviors decrease
- Employee participation in Total Safety Culture increases
- Reporting of near-misses increases
- Acceptance of responsibility and accountability for safety increases

The goal of a Behavior-Based Safety process is to create a Total Safety Culture in the workplace.
The process focuses on observing and correcting behaviors, not attitudes, that are critical to safety. Employee behavior is measurable; attitudes are not. But Behavior-Based Safety can affect attitudes. Behavior-Based Safety is successful because it fully engages the entire workforce.

As injuries decrease, employee morale increases, allowing more cooperation and efficiency throughout the company. Instead of focusing on accidents, failure, punishment, and managerial goals, employees focus on safe behaviors and work toward their own safety goals. Adopting a Behavior-Based Safety process further protects a company’s most valuable resource – its employees – while having a positive impact on productivity.

Safety in the workplace is a combination of three measurable components: the person, their environment and their behavior.

- The person component consists of the employee’s physical capabilities, experience and training.
- The work environment represents engineering controls, equipment, job tasks and the work culture.
- The final, most often overlooked component is behavior—what the person does on the job. The Behavior-Based Safety process addresses the employee’s behavior.

Follow These Steps to Develop and Implement a Behavior-Based Safety Process:

1. Form a design team.
2. Identify critical behaviors.
3. Develop a behavior observation checklist.
4. Develop observation and feedback procedures.
5. Identify and set improvement goals.
6. Develop procedures for positive reinforcement when employees attain goals or improve.
7. Measure success.
**Step 1. Form a Design Team**

A design team is composed of hourly workers, supervisors, managers and safety personnel. The team designs forms, establishes training protocol, collects data, sets goals, and identifies roles and responsibilities for the Behavior-Based Safety process. All team members must be committed to the process for it to be successful.

**Step 2. Identify Critical Behaviors**

Identify critical behaviors that are causing or have the potential to cause injury. As illustrated in the chart on the previous page, a small number of unsafe behaviors are generally responsible for the lion’s share of accidents/incidents. (These steps will help you identify behaviors that need to be changed. To determine why the employee is performing these tasks in an unsafe manner, refer to the Critical Behavior Analysis tool at the end of this module.)

- **Steps to identify critical behaviors:**
  a) Look at incident trends to determine which processes carry the greatest risk for incidents.
  b) Conduct a hazard evaluation of the facility to determine the areas that have the greatest risk for an incident.
  c) Look at tasks that have the potential for serious injury or death. An example would be a confined space entry operation into a vessel that contains a toxic chemical.

Once the critical behaviors have been identified, ensure that effective engineering and/or administrative controls have been implemented. Eliminating the hazard should be the first priority. You can then work on changing behaviors.

- **Pinpoint those practices:**

After the behaviors have been identified, break down each step in the process. The steps should be detailed enough so that independent observers evaluating the same employee will get the same results. For example, one of the items on the checklist is personal protective equipment (PPE). Be specific about what PPE is required. Don’t leave it up to the observer to decide.

- **Break down the task into the following four critical behaviors:**
  a) **PPE** – Determine what personal protective equipment is required to perform the task. Be specific so that the person conducting the observation knows exactly what to look for.
  b) **Housekeeping** – The observer will evaluate the work area and document its condition.
  c) **Using Tools and Equipment** – The observer needs to know the appropriate tools and equipment that are to be used while performing this task. They should also understand how the tools are to be used safely.
  d) **Body Positioning/Protection** – The observer will determine if the employee is performing the task in a manner that will protect him from strains, falling objects, exposure to a sudden release of chemicals, etc.
Step 3. Develop a Behavior Observation Checklist

Observation checklists help you provide direct, measurable information on employees’ work practices. The observer uses the checklist to document employees performing their routine task(s). The observer records safe and unsafe behaviors on the checklist. This information will be used to provide feedback and measure progress toward goals.

Use the critical behaviors and practices you identified in Step 2 to develop the checklist. Limit the checklist to 5 – 10 critical behaviors. This will make it simple and easy to use. An example of a checklist for a grinding operation is shown below in Exhibit 1.

Exhibit 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Observer:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department:</td>
<td>Time:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating Procedures</td>
<td>Safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPE: Using required personal protective equipment. Face shield, safety glasses, gloves and hearing protection</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housekeeping: Work area maintained safely (e.g., trash and scrap picked up, no spills, walk ways clear, materials and tools organized)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using Tools and Equipment</td>
<td>Guards are in place, tool rest adjusted to within 1/8,” grinding wheel in good condition, grinder secured</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body Positioning/Protecting</td>
<td>Hand positioned to avoid pinch point.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*To determine percent safe, divide number of safe observations by the total number of observations for each task.*
Exhibit 2 is an example of how you can break an operation down into its critical behaviors and conditions. This type of checklist can be used to observe one employee or a number of employees performing the same tasks. If you want to develop this type of checklist, start by identifying the different conditions associated with the task. In the example below, the conditions of the forklift are identified and documented. Next, identify the different behaviors the employee must exhibit to perform the task safely.

Exhibit 2

Safety Observation Checklist

Observer: ____________________ Date: _______ Time: ______

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>At-Risk</th>
<th>Apprec. Feedback</th>
<th>Constr. Feedback</th>
<th>% Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Forklift warning devices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forklift driver’s compartment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>free of debris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Forklift propane tank clamps</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>locked in place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>At-Risk</th>
<th>Apprec. Feedback</th>
<th>Constr. Feedback</th>
<th>% Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Operator’s driver’s license</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>displayed above the waist.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forks 6” or less from ground</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>when traveling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seat belts worn during forklift</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sets parking brake, puts forks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to floor, puts gear in neutral,</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and shuts off when leaving</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forklift unattended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sounds horn when exiting trailer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wears authorized safety footwear</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gloves and eye protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uses approved lift cage when</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transporting or elevating people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Removes freight from side of</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>forks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Comments:

*To determine percent safe, divide number of safe observations by the total number of observations for each task.

Once the checklist has been developed, have the employees look it over, and get their “buy-in.” Have a few of the employees use it to observe the same task, at the same time. The goal is to have all observers get similar results.
Step 4. Develop Observation and Feedback Procedures

Observation and feedback are the most important components of the Behavior-Based Safety process. Observation provides the data that makes this process uniquely effective. Frequent, objective, feedback is essential in maintaining any safe behavior.

Provide positive feedback for safe behaviors, and non-threatening, instructive feedback on how to correct unsafe behaviors.

Finalize the checklist, then follow these steps to design the observation and feedback procedures:

- Determine who will conduct the observations.
- Determine the frequency of the observations.
- Develop the observation procedures.
- Determine who will provide feedback and when.
- Give training on conducting observations and providing feedback.

Determine who will conduct observations

The observers should include members of the design team and additional volunteers. Whether employees (peers), supervisors or members of management are used depends on the culture of the organization. You can use supervisors and managers as observers as long as employees trust that they won't use their observations for disciplinary reasons. Otherwise, it is probably better to use employees’ peers. One observer should be obtained from each shift or department. Management must also allow observers and other design team members the time needed to participate in this process. Without commitment from management, the process will fail.

Determine the frequency of observations

The risks associated with the task should determine whether the observations are performed daily, weekly, or monthly. If the task is high risk, the observations should be conducted daily. Different levels of management may also conduct observations at different intervals. Peers may conduct observations weekly, supervisors biweekly, and management monthly. Having management periodically conduct observations will help with quality control.

Develop the observation procedures

The observer will watch the employee work, and will use the checklist to record the number of safe and unsafe acts the employee performs. The observations should take no longer than 15 – 20 minutes to complete. In the example below, the observer will also record the number of times appreciative and constructive feedback was given. Positive feedback is given immediately to employees who exhibit safe behaviors. Constructive feedback is given in a non-threatening manner to employees who exhibit unsafe behaviors. The objective is to point out the unsafe behaviors the employee is performing, as well as the safe behaviors he should be performing.
## Safety Observation Checklist

**Observer:** ______________________  **Date:** ______  **Time:** ______

**Operation:** ______________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conditions</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>At-Risk</th>
<th>Apprec. Feedback</th>
<th>Constr. Feedback</th>
<th>% Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Forklift warning devices operational</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forklift driver’s compartment free of debris</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Forklift propane tank clamps locked in place</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behaviors</th>
<th>Safe</th>
<th>At-Risk</th>
<th>Apprec. Feedback</th>
<th>Constr. Feedback</th>
<th>% Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Operator’s driver’s license displayed above the waist</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Forks 6” or less from ground when traveling</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Seat belts worn during forklift operation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Sets parking brake, puts forks to floor, puts gear in neutral, and shuts off when leaving forklift unattended</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Sounds horn when exiting trailer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Wears authorized safety footwear, gloves and eye protection</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Uses approved lift cage when transporting or elevating people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>----</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Removes freight from side of forks</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Comments:**

*To determine percent safe, divide number of safe observations by the total number of observations for each task.*
Determine who will provide feedback and when

- Some of the questions that must be considered are:
  - Who will provide the feedback?
    This will be based on the culture of the organization. There are usually four options: train employees to be coaches, assign feedback to specific positions, confine feedback to design team members, or begin with one option and gradually involve all employees.
  - How often will feedback be given?
    The frequency of feedback is important. Daily or weekly feedback is the best way to support lasting behavioral change. Issues to consider are the risks associated with job tasks, the number of targeted employees, whether different areas or levels of employee will coach at different frequencies, and whether feedback is voluntary or required.
  - What training will these coaches need?
    Consider the existing skills and training needs of the identified coaches. For the Behavior-Based Safety process to be successful, coaches may need training in at least three areas: observation skills, observation-based feedback skills, and job-related skills identified on the checklist.

- The feedback is typically given immediately following the observation. The observer lets the employee know which critical behaviors they are performing safely and which ones they are performing unsafely. In the course of the discussion, the observer may uncover system barriers to safe performance. During the feedback session, the observer asks the employee why he is not wearing a face shield. The observer may learn that the face shield the employee had been using was cracked and there were no others available. If the unsafe behavior may call for a disciplinary action, a peer should not provide feedback. The supervisor should deal with the concern.

- Feedback should also be given to the department as a whole. The safe and unsafe behaviors being observed should be discussed with everyone so the department can make needed corrections.

Step 5. Identify and Set Improvement Goals

Setting improvement goals increases the effectiveness of feedback and the success of the Behavior-Based Safety process. These goals should be based on the workers’ perceptions of their work practices and how they can improve. Action plans are then developed to support their efforts and help them achieve their goals. These goals can take different forms:

- Percent safe goals:
  These goals can be based on safe work practices observed. They must be based on a realistic evaluation of the area’s level of safety. They should also be set for a short time period. One to three months is common.

- Process goals:
  These goals focus on improving a specific work practice, such as using proper lifting techniques. If any employee is observed using unsafe lifting techniques, the goal could be to reduce the percentage of times that technique is observed.
✓ Implementation Goals
These goals focus on maintaining the Behavior-Based Safety process. An example would be setting a goal to increase the number of observations conducted in a week.

The first step in developing goals is to develop a baseline. Conduct the observations for at least 4 weeks to develop the baseline. After the baseline is developed, compare future observations with the baseline, and track them for improvements. For example: If there were 20 items on the checklist, and the worker performed 17 of them safely, then he would get a score of 85% safe. The improvement between observations could be graphed and displayed for employees to view. When the graph shows improvement, it provides positive reinforcement feedback to employees. Below is an example of a graph that tracks improvement of safe behaviors in a forklift operation.
For the Behavior-Based Safety process to be successful, employees will need training in these areas:

- The rationale and basic theory of the Behavior-Based Safety process
- Observation skills
- Use of the checklist
- The observation procedure
- Feedback skills
- Leading meetings to review safety data
- Job-related skills identified on the safety checklist

This training can be accomplished by:

- Individual coaching (tell, show, observe and provide feedback)
- Mentors
- Seminars or workshops
- Videos and slides

Once management has approved the process and training has been conducted, meetings should be scheduled with small groups of employees to explain the Behavior-Based Safety process. Small groups of eight to ten are ideal because they provide trainees with a better opportunity for discussion and questions. The design team, as well as members of management, should be included in the presentations. It is best to have upper management represented to show their commitment to Behavior-Based Safety, as well as the entire safety process.

**Step 7. Measure Success**

The success of the Behavior-Based Safety process can be measured in different ways. Reaching the goals that you set is one measurement of success. If employees are performing their tasks with a higher percentage of safe behaviors, injuries are less likely to occur.

Your company’s incident rate can be calculated at the beginning of the process and evaluated at different intervals. The decrease in unsafe behaviors should correlate with a decrease in the incident rate. Incident rate is calculated by multiplying the number of claims by 200,000 and dividing that by total man-hours worked.

A Cultural Assessment Survey can be conducted at the beginning and later on in the process. You should note an improvement in your company’s Overall Cultural Profile score as the process progresses.

Individual departments, or the company as a whole, can compare these measurements. Sharing these successes with employees is another form of positive feedback that can contribute to continued success.
TOOL KIT

- Critical Behavior Analysis Tool
- Behavior-Based Safety Checklist
- Industrial Safety & Hygiene News
Critical Behavior Analysis Tool

After forming your design team for the Behavior-Based Safety implementation process, use the Critical Behavior Analysis Tool to help you identify why the at-risk behaviors occur. The goal of the process is to encourage safe behaviors that are self-reinforcing. By encouraging self-reinforcing safe behaviors, you will greatly reduce the potential for accidents. Don’t expect changes in your company’s safety culture to happen over night or by the end of the week. You should, however, expect some positive changes reasonably soon when you use this tool.

Why does the Critical Behavior Analysis process work?

Employees
- Because it teaches employees how to perform their job duties safely. Once involved in this process, employees take ownership of it and support safe behaviors with minimal peer pressure or direct supervision.

Positive Reinforcement
- Focuses on doing the right things correctly.
- Rewards the appropriate behaviors.
- Increases recurrence of the appropriate behaviors.

Behavior Input
- Gives information regarding the behaviors.
- Reminds us of what the rules and procedures require.
- Raises awareness of accident and injury prevention.
- Strengthens the safety culture of the company.

Behaviors are what we do in response to an encouragement to act. How we respond depends on many factors.

Critical Behaviors are those behaviors that put workers at risk for injuries and other losses. When critical behaviors are undertaken without appropriate safe guards, they become At-Risk Behaviors.

When we observe an at-risk behavior, we make assumptions as to why it is occurring. The truth is, we really don’t know why until we go further into the critical behavior analysis.

- Bad Habit
- Peer Pressure
- Inadequate Training
- Confusing Procedures
- No Supervision
- Imperfect Memories
- Time/Pressure
- Lack of Accountability
- Poor Communication
- Poor Ergonomic Job Design
Critical Behavior Analysis

A stimulus plus a reward drives our behaviors. The stimulus occurs before the behavior, and the reward occurs after the behavior.

Example: Thirst is a feeling (the stimulus) that stimulates drinking a glass of water (the behavior), ending in the satisfaction of not being thirsty (the reward).

Stimulus - The driver and the trigger for us to initiate the behavior. A stimulus can be any form of communication, training or thought. As in the example above, the feeling of thirst is the stimulus to drink a glass of water.

Reward – Reward is the consequence of the behavior. Together, the stimulus and the reward drive us to either repeat or not to repeat behaviors. The reward, especially its quality, is the strongest factor when we consider why the behavior occurs. It also plays a role in determining our behavior. As in the example above, the satisfaction of not being thirsty is the reward that would result from drinking the glass of water.
Qualities of the Reward

Reward qualities have these three characteristics:

1. **Positive (+) or Negative -** Positive rewards support the recurrence of a behavior. E.g. Positive rewards can include job satisfaction, recognition, bonuses, an easier way to do a task, or peer support. Negative rewards tend to discourage the recurrence of a behavior. Examples of negative rewards are a reprimand, an injury, extra work, and criticism.

2. **The timing of the reward being Now (N) or Later (L).** Rewards that occur immediately after the behavior have more impact on the behavior's recurrence. E.g. We are more likely to repeat the behavior if the reward's quality is positive and Now. Negative rewards occurring Later do less to discourage an at-risk behavior.

3. **The Certainty (C) or Uncertainty (U) of getting the reward.** Are we certain to get a reward each time we perform the behavior? If the positive reward is certain to occur, there is more encouragement to repeat the behavior. E.g. refilling your car’s gas tank. In the case of an at-risk behavior, if the negative reward is uncertain to occur, there is more encouragement to repeat the at-risk behavior and less encouragement to repeat the desired behavior.

These three reward characteristics can be combined to give different reward qualities. The following two reward qualities have more impact on the recurrence of the behavior than other combinations of the reward characteristics.

- **+NC:** Rewards with Positive (+), Now and Certain qualities encourage the recurrence of the behavior. This is the desired reward quality to encourage and maintain safe behaviors. Example: Immediate positive feedback to an employee who is performing a desired behavior.

  This same reward quality can also encourage the recurrence of an at-risk behavior. Example: Not following safety procedures in order to finish a task much quicker. If the +NC reward qualities are experienced as a result of the at-risk behavior, then it is encouraged to recur.

- **– NC:** Rewards with Negative (-), Now and Certain qualities discourage behaviors. This reward quality can help eliminate at-risk behaviors. Example: Knowing that you may suffer an injury or be immediately reprimanded if you perform an unsafe act.

Also, care should be given not to provide rewards with -NC qualities to any desired behavior because, as mentioned above, these rewards decrease the behavior!

Note that the absence of a negative reward also encourages behavior to recur, such as when we "Got by with it" or, "Didn’t get caught this time."
Making the Critical Behavior Analysis Process Work

Use the following steps to identify the at-risk behavior and why it is occurring. Once you determine the why, develop an action plan to change the at-risk behavior. Changing the at-risk behavior involves eliminating the +NC reward qualities that are stimulating the at-risk behavior.

Charge the group participating in the at-risk behavior with developing the analysis. These are the people experiencing the day-to-day behaviors, so they may know details that are pertinent to the behavior.

It is best to have a meeting place with a flip chart or a writing board. This will provide a setting for the group to give input to the Critical Behavior Analysis process.

Step 1: Identify the at-risk behavior. It should be an at-risk behavior that happens often. You can identify at-risk behavior by examining near-misses, loss trends, and behaviors that have resulted in losses. Always be specific when describing at-risk behavior. See the example below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of at-risk behaviors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Too General</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Not wearing PPE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Bad body position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Not following safety rules</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Write the identified at-risk behavior at the top of the page, as in the example below.

Step 2: List the stimulus. Remember, the stimulus occurs before the behavior. Ask this question: “What is starting the behavior?” or “What is blocking the stimulus for the desired behavior?” The answer may be peer pressure, policies/procedures, convenience/inconvenience, damaged equipment or equipment availability, job tasks, time of day, time of task, or environmental factors. Concentrate only on what starts the behavior. Write “Stimulus” at the left side of the chart/board. Number the stimuli, as in the example below.
**Step 3: List the rewards.** Remember, rewards occur *after* the behavior.
Ask the question, “What could happen to the person engaged in the behavior?”
Write “Reward” to the right of the “Stimulus” column. Number the rewards, as in the example below.

**Step 3 – Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At-Risk Behavior: An employee not wearing safety glasses when they are required.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulus</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. In a hurry, takes too much time to find safety glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Safety glasses not always available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Damaged glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Knowledge that rules are not always enforced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. More comfortable without safety glasses</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The length of the reward list does not have to match the length of the stimulus list. The stimulus and the reward should not be linked to each other. List the stimulus without thinking forward to the possible rewards of each stimulus. Keep the stimulus and the rewards as separate and independent lists.

**Step 4: Evaluate the reward qualities.** As noted earlier, the rewards on the list will have different qualities. Rewards with Positive, Now and Certain (+NC) qualities support the recurrence of the at-risk behavior.

**Step 4 – Example**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>At-Risk Behavior: An employee not wearing safety glasses when they are required.</th>
<th>Quality of Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stimulus</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reward</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. In a hurry, takes too much time to find safety glasses</td>
<td>1. Injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Safety glasses not always available</td>
<td>2. Get in trouble (reprimand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Damaged glasses</td>
<td>3. Nothing happens (get by with it)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Knowledge that rules are not always enforced</td>
<td>4. Get through quicker without safety glasses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. More comfortable without safety glasses</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The rewards with Positive, Now and Certain (+NC) qualities drive the behavior. Getting in trouble or receiving an injury is rewarded with Negative, Later and Uncertain (-LU) qualities. These rewards are not perceived as being certain to occur (he/she got by with it). Both of these reward qualities encourage recurrence of the at-risk behavior, but the (+NC) qualities are the main drivers.

**Step 5:** Develop an action plan to eliminate the reward qualities driving the undesired behavior. These will be the +NC qualities.

### Step 5 – Example

**At-Risk Behavior:** An employee not wearing safety glasses when they are required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stimulus</th>
<th>Reward</th>
<th>Quality of Reward</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. In a hurry, takes too much time to find safety glasses</td>
<td>1. Injury</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Safety glasses not always available</td>
<td>2. Get in trouble (reprimand)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Damaged glasses</td>
<td>3. Nothing happens (get by with it)</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Knowledge that rules are not always enforced</td>
<td>4. Get through quicker without safety glasses</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. More comfortable without safety glasses</td>
<td>+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Referring to the example in Step 4, develop an action plan that eliminates the rewards with **+NC** Qualities.
**Action Plan:**

Action Item: Ensure personnel are wearing safety glasses when they are required to be worn.
Target Completion Date: 
Supervisor’s Signature: 

“Nothing happens (get by with it)”
Enforce rules regarding PPE:
- Conduct additional observations for PPE use.
- Supervisors are held accountable for safety policy.

“Get through quicker without safety glasses”
Review task planning:
- JSA (Job Safety Analysis) review
- Ensure safety glasses are available prior to start of task.

“More comfortable without safety glasses”
Evaluate other styles of safety glasses:
- Contact supplier
- Evaluate cost
- Narrow down the selection, and provide more than one style of safety glasses.
- Enforcing safety policy/rules will eliminate the stimulus driving the undesired behavior.
- Provide rewards with (+NC) qualities for the desired behaviors.
- Provide rewards with (-NC) qualities for the at-risk behaviors.
- By changing the reward, you also alter the stimulus. Positive recognition is a reward. Also, positive feedback reminds us of the rules and encourages the desired behavior.

If you develop a Critical Behavior Analysis process, you will be able to:

- Identify at-risk behaviors
- Eliminate the stimuli directing at-risk behaviors
- Provide appropriate rewards that encourage desired behaviors

An effective Critical Behavior Analysis process will help encourage self-reinforcing safe behaviors, which will reduce the potential for accidents.
## Elements of Workplace Behavior Based Safety Evaluation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location:</th>
<th>Audited By:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
<th>Degree of Implementation</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Comments</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SAFETY PERFORMANCE</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have clear safety-related goals and objectives been developed at the corporate level?</td>
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<td>• Are goals and objectives communicated to all levels of the organization?</td>
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<td>• Is each area of the organization able to attain its own specific safety goals?</td>
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<td>• Is individual participation by all members of the organization encouraged?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are employees empowered to set and achieve their own safety goals?</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOTIVATIONAL INFLUENCES</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are employees allowed to set their own productivity and safety-related goals?</td>
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<td>• Are opportunities for personal learning and peer monitoring provided?</td>
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<td>SECURE WORKING ENVIRONMENT</td>
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<td>• Are work areas free from recognized hazards?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is a system for good hazard communication, hazard identification and hazard evaluation in place?</td>
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<tr>
<td>DEFINING BEHAVIORS</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have you defined safe behaviors you wish to increase?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have you defined at-risk behaviors you wish to decrease?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are all defined behaviors described in observable terms?</td>
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<tr>
<td>OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have you developed a checklist for observing defined behaviors</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have all employees been trained in proper observation and feedback techniques?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are employees instructed to intervene immediately when they observe a person performing a behavior that could lead to injury?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do all employees view the safety orientation video and take the accompanying test?</td>
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<td>TEST, MEASUREMENT, AND RECORD KEEPING</td>
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<td>• Do you have a record keeping system in place to track employee observation checklists?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Do you have a system in place to evaluate employee observations?</td>
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<td>• Has your injury frequency been reduced after implementation of a behavior-based safety process?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>TEAM BUILDING</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have all employees been trained on the importance of teams in a successful behavior-based safety process?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>• For all teams, has a team mission and team goal been established?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is a system in place to build interpersonal trust among members of work teams?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have employees been trained in guiding a team to consensus regarding an issue or decision?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does your company have a designated team that directs the behavior-based safety effort?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Does the staffing service conduct an on-site investigation for all accidents/injuries?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Is there an accountability system in place that encourages employees to be responsible for their own safety?</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Have employees been trained on the importance of a safety accountability system?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Can employees distinguish between accountability and responsibility for safety?</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Are methods in place to increase employees' feelings of empowerment?</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Two Common Coaching Mistakes

The key process underlying the success of behavior-based coaching is interpersonal observation and feedback. After appropriate education and training, workers follow these steps:

1. A list of critical safe and at-risk behaviors is derived for particular work areas or for an entire work site.
2. Critical behaviors are defined precisely and operationally so all participants can observe them objectively and reliably.
3. A critical behavior checklist (CBC) is developed to record safe and at-risk behaviors.
4. Observers use the CBC to observe and evaluate the work practices of individuals or groups.
5. Observers share the results with the people they observe in one-to-one coaching sessions and at group meetings.
6. Participants periodically discuss successes and failures with their observation and feedback procedures to continually improve the process.
7. Participants develop intervention techniques to decrease resistance and increase long-term involvement in the process.

This is only a brief overview. I have obviously left out numerous details. But this basic framework allows even readers who have not participated in the process to understand what this article is about: two common mistakes that crop up in behavior-based coaching.

Personal experience:

Let me describe these mistakes by relating a personal experience. I recently met with a group of line workers who had been implementing a behavior-based coaching process for about a year. Reaching an all-time low in recordable injuries, management considered this program successful. In fact, part of my visit was to discuss a broader implementation plan. But these workers were not satisfied. Many one-on-one coaching sessions were constructive, but many were not. Some workers were quite negative about one-on-one observation and feedback. So while injuries were on the decline, several safety coaches were seemingly discouraged and "burning out" on the whole process.

During our discussion, I realized a basic reason for the increasing disinterest in observation and feedback: Too often the safety coaching sessions were more negative than positive.

This is a common mistake that can be made in coaching. For example, one individual explained that he recently approached a co-worker who was working without the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) and asked if he could conduct a behavioral observation. After receiving reluctant approval, he proceeded to fill out his checklist. Since it included many more checkmarks in the "at-risk" than "safe" columns, the feedback session with this employee was necessarily more negative than positive.

I suggested that the way to assure a positive feedback session would have been to ask the worker if you could return in about ten minutes to conduct a behavioral observation. This would have given the employee ample time to find the appropriate PPE and put it on for the observation. Then the evaluation would have more "safe" than "at-risk" checks, and the coaching session could be more positive than negative. This could increase the acceptability of the entire behavior-based coaching process.
The group's immediate reaction seemed to be confusion or outright disagreement. One employee remarked, "If we did our observations that way, we'd never get true data." This basic misconception about using a CBC is the second common mistake I see in behavior-based coaching:

Workers get so involved in completing their observation checklists, tallying results, and posting group percentages that they lose sight of the primary purpose of the process. I explained that coaching is not done to obtain "true" measures of safe versus at-risk behavior. In fact, results would only be acceptable as "true" by the scientific community if two observers independently observed the same work process and scored their checklists exactly the same for 85 percent or more of the categories.

The primary purpose for participating in a behavior-based coaching process is to support safe behavior, reduce at-risk behavior, and thus prevent injuries. Yet it's easy to get caught up in the numbers. I've seen observers continue to complete their CBC while the person they were observing continued to perform at-risk behavior. Of course, it is easier to check columns than step in to change behavior, especially if the one-on-one feedback is perceived as negative.

The most important information to track in behavior-based coaching is amount of participation. The number of CBC cards turned in is more diagnostic than the number of "safe" versus "at-risk" columns checked per card. To be sure, comparing the percentages of safe behaviors across CBC categories helps pinpoint problem areas. But degree of participation is far more predictive of outcome success (or injury reduction) than individual percentages of safe behavior.

It's essential that safety coaching is positive and non-threatening. This builds confidence, group cohesion, and interpersonal trust -leading to increased participation. This is key to making a difference with behavior-based safety.
20 Guidelines for Giving Feedback

How do you use interpersonal feedback to improve safety? This is what I want to talk about this month (and next). There are many issues to consider, so here you’ll find a list of 20 guidelines to help how you use and deliver feedback. It’s a critical tool for influencing the type of behavior you want to see in the workplace.

1. Feedback can be positive or negative, and can influence the quality and frequency of performance.

2. When you want to motivate the frequency of a particular behavior, try to deliver appropriate feedback immediately after the target behavior.

3. Safe behavior should be followed by positive feedback (or praise) to support that behavior and increase the odds it will occur again.

4. At-risk behavior should be followed immediately with negative feedback to stop the behavior and reduce the chance of recurrence.

5. When you see an unsafe behavior, you should usually do more than just attempt to stop it. Give specific direction for improving the behavior to make it safer.

6. Direction for changing behavior is most influential when it occurs just prior to an opportunity to perform the behavior. So take note of the corrective action needed to make a certain behavior safer, and when an occasion arises for that behavior to occur again, this is the best time to offer instruction.

7. Sometimes at-risk behaviors -incorrect lifting, running down stairs- begin and end too quickly for you to intervene. You might not be able to step in, but the right corrective feedback can help prevent future risks. If a situation calls for a sequence of at-risk behaviors, corrective feedback following one behavior will serve to direct the next behavior.

8. If the opportunity for another at-risk behavior is delayed, feedback is more powerful if given later, preceding an opportunity to be safe or at-risk. Delaying such correction is also less embarrassing for the performer.

9. It’s not necessary for you to tell the person about the prior at-risk observation, just remind him or her to perform the upcoming behavior in a safe manner. Then, statements like "Remember to avoid twisting," "Don’t forget to use the handrail," and "I’m sure you’ll buckle-up and use your turn signal," come across as friendly and caring reminders rather than "gotcha" indictments.

10. Safety feedback needs to focus on specific behavior.

11. Feedback needs to be given with straightforward and objective words. Ambiguous and subjective language that try to judge internal states of mind are not useful, and can be counterproductive. For example, statements like, "It seems you’re careless, lazy, unenthusiastic, unaware, disorganized, or out-of-touch" only add resentment and lessen acceptance of the behavioral message.

12. When you give positive statements watch for the use of "but." Rather than giving pure praise or appreciation, we often feel obligated to add a negative (or corrective feedback) statement to balance the communication. Such mixed messages can weaken your feedback. Some people hear only the positive; some hear only the negative; and others discount both messages.
13. It’s often best to make your specific behavior-focused feedback “short and sweet.” Rather than combining both positive and negative feedback in one exchange or overloading a person with several behaviors to continue or change, focus your advice on one area of performance.

14. It’s much better to give people brief and specific feedback messages over weeks or months than to give people fewer but longer feedback sessions with mixed and potentially confusing motivators and directives.

15. Motivational feedback to increase or decrease the frequency of behavior should follow the target behavior as soon as possible. On the other hand, when the purpose of behavioral feedback is to shape the quality of a response, it often makes sense to give such direction as an activator (preceding the next opportunity to perform the target behavior).

Remember, the ABC model of behavior change reflects the basic principle that behavior (B) is directed by activators (A) and motivated by consequences (C). Activators precede our actions and are most apt to influence the quality of our performance (how we do things); consequences usually influence the quantity of our performance (how often we do things).

16. Receiving feedback about errors (a consequence) can be perceived as punishing and frustrating if an opportunity to correct the observed errors is not available in the near future. When the person eventually receives an opportunity to correct the behavior, the advice might be forgotten. By giving corrective feedback as close as possible to the next opportunity for the behavior to reoccur, you increase its directive influence and reduce the potential negative effect of catching a person making a mistake.

17. Feedback should fit the situation. Specific and well-timed feedback must be appropriate for the needs, abilities, and expectations of the person on the receiving end. It should be expressed in language the performer can understand and appreciate, and it should be customized for the performer’s abilities at the particular task.

When people are learning a task, directive feedback needs to be detailed and perhaps accompanied with a behavioral demonstration. In such learning situations, it’s important to match the advice with the performer’s achievement level. Don’t give more advice than the individual can grasp in one feedback session.

Often at-risk behavior is performed by experienced workers who know how to do the job safely, but they have developed poor habits or are just taking a risky short-cut. It could be insulting and demeaning to give these individuals detailed instructions about the safe way to complete their job. In these situations, it’s appropriate to give brief corrective feedback as a reminder to be safe and set the right example for others.

18. Giving good feedback requires up-to-date knowledge of the performer’s abilities regarding a certain task. It also requires specific knowledge about the safe and at-risk ways of performing the task. This is a prime reason why the most effective safety coaching usually occurs between co-workers on the same work team.

19. Feedback will be ineffective if it’s viewed as a way of exerting top-down control, or demonstrating superior knowledge or motivation. The only reason for giving safety feedback is to reduce personal injury.

20. The “gotcha” perspective associated with safety often interferes with a manager’s sincere attempt to correct at-risk behavior. Corrective feedback is often perceived as most genuine or “real” when it occurs between co-workers on the same work team. These individuals know most about the situation and the person, and thus have sufficient information and opportunity to give the best feedback.

These guidelines can be summarized by the word “SOAR.” Effective feedback delivery must be Specific, On time, Appropriate, and Real. This is how you can "soar" to success using interpersonal feedback.

I think it’s important for me to reiterate that there is special value in co-workers giving each other safety feedback. Co-workers’ comments are less likely to come across as a “gotcha” indictment of performance, and more in the spirit of the "brother’s/sister’s keeper" idea. Plus, fellow employees are more likely to be present when immediate feedback is necessary. And they can best shape a message -probably without even giving it much thought- to the expectations, abilities, and experience level of the recipient. Finally, encouragement or especially corrections from a co-worker are more apt to be taken as a sign of true caring.
Seek and You Shall Get Feedback

Last month, I offered 20 guidelines on how to deliver feedback on safety issues. But for feedback to be effective, you must give it regularly. And for many people this is not easy, particularly when it comes to safety. Compared to production, safety is usually perceived as personal. We might feel comfortable discussing personal issues with family members, but not with co-workers. We don’t hesitate to remind family members to "buckle up," in the car, for instance, but if co-workers choose not to use personal protective equipment, that’s their own business.

So how do we increase the willingness to give and take safety feedback? I suggest starting by consistently asking others what they think of our own safety performance.

When you ask someone for feedback and show appreciation when it's given, you boost the likelihood that your own advice will be accepted when given to that other person. Show a desire to improve your own performance through feedback and you teach others by example. If you ask questions that direct the observer to give specific, timely, appropriate, and real feedback, you are teaching an excellent tool for safety improvement.

Don’t “fish” around
Merely asking "How did I do?" after performing a certain job assures timely advice, but the reaction you get might not be specific enough.

In fact, this kind of question might come off as though you're "fishing" for a compliment -especially if your performance was pretty good, which is usually the case when a person asks for feedback.

It’s quite rare for people to ask for feedback when they know their performance was inferior or below average. Ironically, this is when feedback is most instructive. But if you don’t ask for specific details, it’s possible you’ll never learn how to improve. Another barrier to getting better is that your friends and co-workers are most reluctant to offer advice when it’s really most needed. They don’t want to hurt your feelings.

My advice is to ask for feedback often, and in such a way that it invites correction. Begin by asking for comments after you’ve done something well. Then show sincere appreciation for what you hear. This allows friends and co-workers to build up your "emotional bank account," making it easier for them to make "withdrawals" when you ask for feedback following a below-average performance.

But as I mentioned, be careful when you start out asking for comments about good performance, or you risk appearing insincere. One way around this is to use a ten-point rating scale. After you ask, "How did I do?" follow up with -"Please, give my performance a rating from one to ten, with one being completely inadequate and ten being perfect." This opens the door for specific feedback. People might give you an "8" or "9," even "9.5," but probably not a perfect "10." So now you ask, "What can I do to come closer to a 10?"

Since you’ve already received a fairly high rating, it’s easier for your friend or co-worker to follow up with some corrective feedback to help you reach your goal. And here’s another benefit of using this system: Perhaps you’ll convince your friend to be a more careful observer of your performance next time, in order to help you achieve that "perfect 10." Overall, this interpersonal communication cultivates the kind of interdependency that enables ongoing continuous improvement.

The extra edge
Feedback gives us the insight we need to take performance to a higher level. You see, some of our behavior is naturally followed by consequences we can use to better ourselves. When we hammer a nail, type a word, shoot a basketball, or organize our work area, we observe natural consequences that give us feedback about how we did. But even in these situations an observer could give us specific advice that helps us get from a "9" to a "10" on that
rating scale. We might put the basketball in the hoop or hit the nail on the head, but a careful and knowledgeable observer can tell us about our form in a way that improves our accuracy or reduces the probability of a cumulative trauma disorder like carpal tunnel syndrome. But again, we’ll only get this precise and invaluable feedback if we invite others to observe us, and then show genuine interest in hearing what they have to say.

So many everyday behaviors go unaccounted for; nothing is said about them, yet they add up. Ultimately, they contribute to safety records, or just how we perceive someone. Reflect for a moment on how simple behaviors- a limp "fish" or crushing "Superman” handshake -influence our positive or negative perception of people. Yet if we never learn what they really think, we go on repeating potentially detrimental behavior.

This can be particularly damaging when it comes to safety. Think about the numerous safety-related behaviors we perform everyday without any feedback. Usually the environment does not give us natural feedback in this regard. Careful observers could tell us how to make small adjustments to reduce the possibility of an injury. But just as you’re reluctant to give others personal advice about something like their handshake, people are apt to feel uncomfortable making specific suggestions about a co-worker’s risky behavior.

So take it upon yourself to open up the lines of communication. Ask others for specific feedback about your own safety performance. But don’t settle for generalities like, “You did fine.” Shoot for specifics. Show you’re really serious about safe work habits. It’s likely you’ll learn something yourself, and you’ll teach others the value of feedback -one step in improving overall workplace safety.