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The Training Has Been Completed But...

You have conducted the required training, but your associates are not following the processes covered in the training. Are they deliberately breaking the rules? Don't they understand? Don't they care? Ideally the answers would be no, yes and yes however, there is one more item to consider, human behavior.

Behavior-based safety (BBS) is a topic that has been around for a long time. BBS originated with the work of Herbert William Heinrich. In the 1930s, Heinrich, who worked for Traveler's Insurance Company, reviewed thousands of accident reports completed by supervisors and from these drew the conclusion that most accidents, illnesses and injuries in the workplace were directly attributable to "man-failures", or the unsafe actions of workers. Of the reports Heinrich reviewed, 73% classified the accidents as "man-failures;" Heinrich himself reclassified another 15% into that category, arriving at the still-cited finding that 88% of all accidents, injuries and illnesses were caused by worker errors. Just what does "worker error" mean? In some cases this translated into "blaming the worker", but let's look more closely at this concept.

Have you ever stood on a chair? Was that voice in your head or that "little person on your shoulder" saying "don't stand on this chair, get a stool or ladder?" Most likely you thought about it but reasoned no ladder or stool was easily accessible and the chair was strong, did not have wheels and you would be extra careful. We have all done this using rationalization to justify doing something that we know is not the correct or proper way to do things. Helping your associates understand this behavior and encouraging them to take the extra time to consider the proper way to complete a task will give them "permission" to work safely.

This is not the only answer. In order to ensure training is effective, you, the employer must "give permission" by providing the tools, time and an environment that promotes a safe workplace. Having the right tools means providing the right tools in the right quantity and location that is conducive to their regular use. Providing the time translates into ensuring the work or tasks are not rushed, which is sometimes easier said than done. Proper planning can help prevent a "rushed" or "hurried" atmosphere that encourages your associate to feel compelled to complete the task or job quickly and that enables them to feel justified in taking shortcuts in order to get the job done in a timely manner.

One more item to consider is promoting the safety of your associate when they are away from work. Safety should be an attitude that is a consideration in all phases of our life, not just at work. Consider discussing this in order for your associates to understand modeling safe behavior for their children, grandchildren and others in their life. Provide personal protective equipment such as hearing or eye protection for use at home or play. Also consider seasonal issues such as reminding associates of the dangers of allowing children to ride on lawn tractors while cutting grass. Too many serious accidents still occur because of this unsafe behavior.

Finally, consider another human behavior, the need to feel included. In a group setting this translates into associates wanting to "fit in" and not being seen as being a "company person." Understand that most are supportive and appreciate the need for working safety, but do not wish to be subject to bullying which unfortunately still can occur in the workplace. This issue varies in the workplace and is important to be mindful of.

For additional compliance assistance, contact RiskControl360° by email at info@riskcontrol360.com or by phone at 1-877-360-3608.