

# SafeSupervisor

YOUR FRONT-LINE MANAGER SAFETY RESOURCE SINCE 1929

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## Can You Have A "Bad" Safety Meeting?

There is probably no such thing as a bad safety meeting. Any time people get together to talk about how to work safely, something good has to come out of it.

But some meetings are certainly better than others. The less memorable meetings may have some of these characteristics:

- Latecomers keep everyone waiting for the start of the meeting or they disrupt a meeting already underway. Enforce a prompt start for the meeting.
- The meeting leader conveys a "let's get this over with" attitude. Enthusiasm and interest in the meeting would be a more useful approach.
- The meeting is exactly like the one before it, and the one before that one. Repetition of the material may be necessary for learning, but it should be presented in a variety of ways.
- The gimmick is so interesting it gets the attention instead of the safety message. Skits, role-playing, near miss re-enactments and other dramatic devices are great for creating

interest occasionally, but the basic safety information must be communicated.

- The meeting becomes a complaint session about everything from parking spaces to holiday staffing. Safety is too important to be shuffled aside by other concerns. Schedule another meeting if necessary to talk about non-safety issues.
- There are people in the back of the room making jokes about the presentation. Put them in the limelight by asking them to sit near the speaker and assigning them to conduct future meetings.
- The leader or a participant makes inappropriate remarks which could be taken as ethnic, sexist, religious or racial slurs. Put a stop to this kind of talk immediately, and always set a good example yourself.

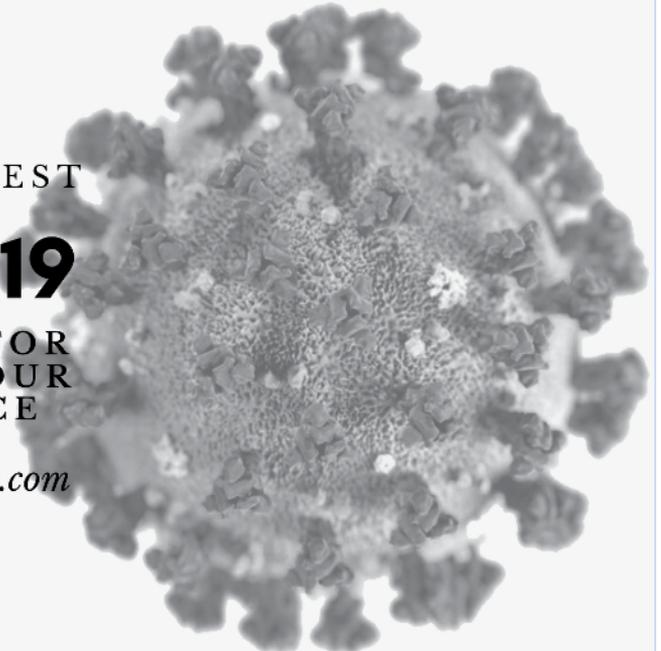
Over a period of time you will have some "okay" safety meetings, some better ones and probably some outstanding meetings. As long as you are trying to talk about how to prevent on-the-job injuries, you are doing a good thing.

ALL THE LATEST

# COVID-19

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# SPECIAL SUPERVISOR REPORT

## Building a Safety Culture by Measuring Results

This desire for measurement and feedback—for keeping score—is critical to how we live our lives. It is also the key to the success of our safety program. For one reason, it lets us know how well we're doing. For another, it can serve as a motivating force to the extent that people in the workplace will make the effort to earn a "good score." Let's discuss how to measure safety performance and use measurement and feedback as a motivating force to exert positive change on your organization's safety culture.

### The Power of Measurement

Each of us uses measurements every day, both consciously and sub-consciously. Sometimes the act of gathering and analyzing data is as simple as a glance at a clock or gas gauge, a look at a bank statement or a check of the stock market report or a baseball box score. Sometimes the data is more complex such as reports on cycle times and quality yields. Each of these things provides us with valuable information that affects our decision-making and behavior.

But we are also bombarded with data and not all of it is equally important. To process data effectively, we need to be able to sort the important from the less important and analyze it, sometimes in milliseconds, sometimes in minutes and sometimes in hours. We either store the data in our brain for future use or act on it right away.

### What We Keep Score Of

Keeping score is a way to process data. The term keeping "track" or "score" generally suggests something fun rather than weighty, an activity or measure that is important to us even though it seems trivial or minor to others. For example, we keep score in recreational activities and sporting events.

The "score" may not always be measured by numbers. Sometimes we measure our level of satisfaction, pleasure or feeling of accomplishment. We know if we had a good time whether we were fishing, playing golf, scrap-booking, exercising, playing chess or even playing tic-tac-toe. Even though these measures are more subjective, we could quantify them if we had to.

### How We Typically Measure Safety

Safety, or safety performance, by contrast, is something we generally deem too complicated to "keep score" of. Traditionally, we measure "safety" by analyzing what is not safety, that is, injury

statistics occurring at each plant site such as recordable injuries, lost time accidents, number of lost or restricted days, workers' compensation claims paid, etc.

But there are problems even with the data we use to measure "safety" in the traditional way. As safety professionals, we all agree that this injury data does not tell the whole story. For example, it does not indicate all that occurred; rather, it is a compilation only of what has been reported regarding undesirable events. It also doesn't indicate the quantity or quality of the effort we put forth to maintain or improve safety. The occurrence of an injury measures only failure and doesn't capture the positive things that were accomplished.

Moreover, all of these measures are "trailing" measures. They're after the fact. And they lead to after-the-fact solutions that are akin to closing the barn door after the horses have already left.

### How Trailing Indicators Hurt the Safety Culture

Current safety measurement systems don't do justice to how we are performing relative to safety. Moreover, because of their lack of positive feedback and acknowledgement of positives achieved, they often serve to de-motivate employees and cause them to maintain negative attitudes toward safety.

The injury data that safety professionals have traditionally used to measure performance are trailing indicators. They identify problems and solutions only after incidents have occurred. The use of trailing indicators to measure safety generally produces a de-motivating effect. It leads to corrective actions that can be perceived by employees to be reactive. "The only time anything gets done around here is after someone gets hurt," employees think. This causes employees to develop a negative view of safety and fosters doubt about the sincerity and level of management's commitment to protecting them.

Once this approach to managing safety occurs a few times, it becomes the norm in the eyes of employees. This undermines the credibility of the safety program. Because employees feel that their safety interests are not in line with management's, when an incident occurs employees tend to take a defensive attitude stating "it wasn't my fault." Couple this with another common negative perception held by employees that investigations are exercises in blame and fault-finding. These negative perceptions encourage

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employees to dismiss the pursuit of new safety programs and label them as a “flavor of the month.” Instead of motivating, our good intentions regarding safety become de-motivating.

Unfortunately, once they develop, these attitudes tend to become embedded in the culture of the organization. That makes them difficult to change.

## **Towards a Solution: Measuring “Safety” Not Injury**

How do you solve this problem? The starting point is to consider our very definition of safety. Traditionally, safety has been thought of as the avoidance of incidents, accidents and injuries. But I submit that safety is actually the flip side of these things – it’s the state of being safe. It’s more of a behavior than an outcome.

Here’s an example. When we talk about a safe driver, we generally mean somebody who has not been in an accident, has not received a speeding ticket and has low insurance rates. Although these are good outcomes, they do not necessarily define the person as a “safe” driver. These outcomes could just as easily have been accomplished as a result of luck. Conversely, otherwise “good” drivers don’t necessarily become bad ones merely because they have the misfortune of getting into an accident that wasn’t their fault.

The truly “safe” driver is a person who engages in safe driving behavior – who uses turn signals, checks the blind spots when changing lanes, maintains the recommended distance behind the car in front, etc.

Another example: When we measure the performance of athletes, we look at the positive rather than the negative things they accomplish. A bowler is defined not by the number of gutter balls he throws but by how many pins he knocks down. A batter in baseball is evaluated not according to how often he strikes outs but by the number of times he reaches base.

Few safety professionals would argue with the logic of this. So why, then, is safety different? Why do so many of us use (or permit our management to use) a system of measuring safety that’s based on injury performance? As safety professionals, we must measure the right thing and use the right metrics. After all, if our decisions are based on faulty data, they’ll lead to faulty actions.

## **How Feedback Motivates Behavior**

Many supervisors, managers and safety professionals fail to grasp the importance of feedback on measurement. Human beings by nature look to others to evaluate their performance. Why? We want to win, to be recognized for doing a good job and adding value. And we want to receive feedback as soon as possible, especially if we know we’ve done well.

Consider the example of sports. Games like baseball involve a steady stream of feedback while the performance is occurring, batter by batter, inning by inning. Figure skaters receive their feedback right after they skate their routine. In clock games like basketball, football and hockey, feedback in the form of the score and time remaining serve to motivate the players and the fans. Excitement builds when your team is ahead and the clock shows only a few seconds to go.

## **Applying the Lesson to Safety**

Just think what we could do if we could build similar excitement and tension in safety. Sadly, we don’t use these feedback mechanisms to motivate safe behaviors. On the contrary, we only measure the negative behaviors like accidents and incidents. Sure, we provide feedback to our workers – but only to let them know that they have ‘screwed-up.’

Another big mistake managers make is waiting until the end of the month to provide feedback regarding safety performance. Feedback is best as a motivator when it’s delivered fresh, that is, during or right after the performance. It tends to get stale in a month and it can even be ineffective after only a week. Think about it. Have you ever done something you think deserves some form of recognition or acknowledgement and you don’t receive it until the following week? It isn’t the same as hearing back the next day, is it?

## **Changing Our Feedback Mechanisms**

What should we do differently in the realm of safety performance? First of all, we need to define the right criteria to indicate successful performance. What is the “goal,” the “homerun,” the “touchdown?” In safety, we don’t do a good job of identifying the activities that equate to success. What we need to do is ask the question: Are we measuring what we have to do to win?

All too often, measuring safety performance falls into just being a numbers game that overlooks the value of the underlying activity being measured. Examples:

We typically measure and track numbers of employees who attend safety meetings. We shoot for a goal of 100% attendance. Although getting employees to show up at safety meetings is certainly important, the paramount concern, at least initially, should be the effectiveness of the meeting measured against pre-defined objectives. There are at least

15 safety meeting objectives that can easily be identified to be part of a simple survey that would be completed by attendees.

We routinely measure the number of safety audits performed against the required number for the month. But shouldn’t we be measuring the percentage of audits performed that have met the agreed upon objectives? For example, was feedback provided to individuals when warranted; were deficiencies handled appropriately; and were results communicated back to the area that was audited? These as



well as other objectives could be easily answered by the audit team upon completion of the audit.

Safety suggestions are often measured by submittals per employee per year. Rather, shouldn't we be measuring the effectiveness of safety suggestions – that is, the percentage of suggestions that have been successfully implemented, suggestions responded to within a certain period of time and feedback provided to the person who suggested it?

## Scorekeeping and Safety

Sports has got it right because it keeps score. This is why so many people care deeply about the outcome of games involving their favorite team. This applies to players as well as fans who, even though they do not physically participate, have a psychological attachment to the team.

There's real power in scorekeeping and that we as safety professionals can and must try to harness this power to improve safety performance. If we can identify the desired outputs, that is, the actual effectiveness of our safety-related activities, we will have a clearer understanding of what should be changed, continued and prioritized. We'll understand the value of different outcomes and establish a frame of reference complete with our own version of singles, doubles, triples and home runs.

We can also put managers, supervisors and employees in the position to keep score of their performance and empower them to win. At that point, when everyone in the organization is playing the same game, using the same rules, on the same playing field and under the same understanding of how to win, we will be in a better position to achieve our safety outcomes and thereby, our safety goals. The result will be a highly motivated workforce and improved safety performance.

## An Example of the Principles in Action

Let's use a concrete example to help you turn these abstract principles into a plan for action. Assume you want to use safety meetings to improve performance. The typical approach would be to measure the number of attendees for each meeting. But, as we discussed earlier, this is not the most appropriate measurement. The real starting point is to measure the effectiveness of the overall meeting itself. In other words, were the meeting objectives met and executed to a satisfactory level. After all, 100% attendance won't improve safety if the substance of the meeting is devoid of any real value or was executed poorly.

One way to measure the effectiveness of safety meetings is to give attendees a survey to fill out with yes, no or N/A answers. The survey would have all the important objectives listed. Survey results would provide a way to assess whether safety meetings are "winning" (or improving) or not, shift by shift, month to month, or even supervisor to supervisor, if desired. The survey results would also serve to motivate the person providing the meetings to make appropriate changes or, if the results are very good, keep it as it is. The result will automatically drive continuous improvement in safety meeting performance of future meetings.

## Measuring the Right Things

Get your measurement and feedback systems right and safety performance will improve due to the motivation to win. How do you do this? First, find the right things to measure. To do this, define the desired objectives for key activities and desired outcomes that will provide a positive safety culture at your organization. Elements you'll want to include in addition to activities are:

- Management leadership and commitment to safety;
- Employee attitudes and motivation to work safely;
- Employee ownership and involvement in the safety program;
- Communication and feedback effectiveness; and
- The effectiveness of your current safety programs and initiatives, including incentive and recognition programs, employee suggestion programs, incident investigations, audits and inspections, management of change, work order system, committees and safety meetings.

Be sure to measure employee behavior at all levels of the organization including supervisors and management.

## Establishing Goals and Delivering Feedback

Measurement doesn't just gauge performance; it affects it. Remember the old saying: What you measure is what you get. Also remember the principles of keeping score. Give your employees a chance to win. Establish performance targets and define the desired outcomes of the programs you have established so they know how to win. Some people are self-motivated whereas others may need to have their scores posted or reviewed by others.

Goals should be defined in terms of actual vs. expected behavior. Once the desired outputs are defined, measured and the results communicated back to the appropriate individuals, everyone will be engaged in the process of continuous improvement. This method of measurement and feedback has been instrumental in providing safety managers in many industries with insight and the capacity to allocate their resources more effectively.

## Conclusion

Feedback and measurement can motivate or de-motivate. It all depends on the system we use. Unfortunately, the world of safety has things upside down. We measure failure (the occurrence of injuries and accidents) and deliver negative feedback (letting employees know how they screwed up). What we get for these efforts is a workforce disenchanted with the safety program and unmotivated to behave safely.

Turn safety measurement into a motivating force to your advantage. Define your desired outputs and measure the extent the objectives are being met. Provide immediate feedback if possible, and positive encouragement to all employees, (don't forget those on graveyards). Give employees a chance to win and establish a method of keeping score so they know what it takes to be a winner. Doing these things will put you on the road to improving safety performance and building a leading safety culture.

## Manage Your Stress to Protect Your Health

### What's At Stake

If you're alive, you have stress. Stress is what motivates us to do the things we need to do to survive. In small doses, it can be very powerful. The problem is that repeated exposure to situations that cause our bodies to produce stress hormones may have negative effects on our mental and physical health.

### What's the Danger?

Chronic stress is linked to heart disease, high blood pressure, high cholesterol, adult onset diabetes and depression. Chronic stress may also trigger these health problems in anyone who has a family history of these conditions.

Example:

Some of the symptoms of too much stress include:

- Sleeping difficulties.
- Feelings of anxiety and of being overwhelmed.
- Being short-tempered and uptight.
- Physical sensations such as tense muscles, headache or upset stomach.
- Abuse of substances such as food, cigarettes, alcohol or drugs.

### How to Protect Yourself

Managing stress starts with recognizing the signs that you are responding to a stressor: a pounding heart, sweating, feeling flushed and experiencing anger or feeling on edge. Once you notice these symptoms, you can reduce the release of stress hormones by fooling your stress response system. This involves thinking about something positive.

For example, if you get a terse message to be in the boss's office in 10 minutes and feel your heart starting to pound, calm yourself by imagining the look on your child's face when she saw her first birthday cake, or mentally place yourself at a favorite fishing hole. Take some deep breaths as you let the pleasant image wash over you.

Here are some other suggestions to help you better cope with stress:

- Maintain general good health. Eat nutritious meals regularly each day and get adequate sleep and rest. Exercising daily or at least several times a week will also help you to stay strong enough to cope.
- Find someone to talk to. Problems become more manageable when you discuss them with a friend, a member of your family, a clergy person or a counselor. Your company might have an employee assistance officer who can point you in the right direction.
- Learn to relax on your time off from work and other responsibilities, even if it is very short. Every day, do something you enjoy.

- Learn to set realistic goals. If you are working toward specific goals, day-to-day difficulties are easier to handle.
- Laughing is another great way to beat stress. Try to see the funny side of things on the job, on your commute and at home.
- Get outdoors every day. It's easy for many of us to go from home to work and never leave the shelter of a building or vehicle. Get in touch with the real world by stepping outside and experiencing the weather. It's a good way to change your daily perspective.

### Final Word

A reasonable amount of stress can motivate us to work better and faster. But excessive stress can cause many problems, including health difficulties. It can also keep us from concentrating on working safely. Learn how to reduce the stress in your life, and how to manage the stress that can't be eliminated.

## Quiz

1. Stress, as long as it is not excessive or prolonged, can be a good personal motivator.  
 True  False
2. Chronic stress has been linked to several dangerous health conditions.  
 True  False
3. It is possible to fool your stress response system by thinking of something positive.  
 True  False
4. Everyone has stress so you should deal with it yourself instead of talking about your worries to others.  
 True  False
5. Learning to set realistic goals can help you get a handle on stress.  
 True  False

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Your co-worker is under stress at work, coupled with trying to do everything for everyone but herself. She tells you that she isn't sleeping well, and you notice that she seems short-tempered and is smoking more than usual. When you try to talk to her, she tells you that she is handling it. What now?

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## What You Need to Know About the Coronavirus (COVID-19)

### What's At Stake

According to the WHO, coronaviruses are a large family of viruses that range from the common cold to much more serious diseases. These diseases can infect both humans and animals. The strain that began spreading in Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei province, is related to two other coronaviruses that have caused major outbreaks in recent years: severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS).

### What's the Danger?

Symptoms of a coronavirus infection range in severity from respiratory problems to cases of pneumonia, kidney failure and a buildup of fluid in the lungs.

Epidemiologists are still trying to determine exactly how deadly COVID-19 is.

About 2% of reported cases have been fatal, but many experts say the death rate could be lower. That's because early in an outbreak, mild illnesses may not be reported. If only people with severe illness — who are more likely to die — seek care, the virus will appear much more deadly than it really is because of all the uncounted people with milder symptoms.

Early in the outbreak, one expert estimated that although 2,000 cases had been reported, 100,000 people probably were sick. Under counting cases can artificially increase the infection's mortality rate.

COVID-19 spreads more easily than SARS and is similar to other coronaviruses that cause cold-like symptoms, experts have said. It appears to be highly transmissible, and since cases are mild, the disease may be more widespread than current testing numbers suggest. There have been reports of people transmitting the virus before they show symptoms, but most experts think this is probably not a major driver of new infections. What is concerning, however, is that symptoms can be mild, and the disease can clearly spread before people realize they're sick. SARS spread when people had full-blown illness, which is one reason it was possible to contain it — it was easier to tell who had the virus.

A report in the New England Journal of Medicine suggested COVID-19 reaches peak infectiousness shortly after people start to feel sick, spreading in the manner of the flu. A study published in JAMA chronicled the case of a 20-year-old Wuhan woman who appeared to infect five relatives, even though she never showed signs of illness.

### How to Protect Yourself

#### Recognize the Symptoms

According to the WHO, signs of infection include fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, it can lead to pneumonia, multiple organ failure and even death.

Current estimates of the incubation period — the amount of time between infection and the onset of symptoms — range from one to 14 days. Most infected people show symptoms within five to six days. However, infected patients can also be asymptomatic, meaning they do not display any symptoms despite having the virus in their systems.

### Who Is At Risk?

- Those with weakened immune systems, the elderly, and very young children are at greater risk.
- Healthcare providers and other professions with greater risk of exposure are more at risk.
- Those traveling to areas deemed of greater exposure risk.

### How to Protect Yourself

Epidemiology experts said the most important aspect of preparedness costs nothing at all — calm.

There are some basic precautions you can take, which are the same as what you should be doing every day to stave off other respiratory diseases. You've seen the guidance before: Wash your hands regularly. Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze. And when you're sick, stay home from work or school and drink lots of fluids.

The CDC recommends washing with soap and water for at least 20 seconds after using the bathroom, before eating and after blowing your nose or sneezing. It also advises not to touch your eyes, nose and mouth and to clean objects and surfaces you touch often.

### Final Word

Infectious diseases, although not typically as widespread as COVID-19, are frightening things. Knowing what it is, how to protect yourself and how to stop the spread is important to keep you, your co-workers and your family safe and healthy.

## What Would You Do?

You haven't been feeling well lately but there have been no cases of any major illness in your area. You have just returned from a vacation and have a lot of work to catch up on.

What would you do?

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## Housekeeping at Work? Don't Sweep It Under the Rug

### What's At Stake

Housekeeping at work is about much more than cleaning windows and sweeping up dust bunnies. Poor housekeeping can cause injuries, slow down production, dampen morale, start fires and cause catastrophic explosions of combustible dusts.

### What's the Danger?

A messy workplace not only affects workers' safety and morale, it makes a bad impression on potential and current customers and regulatory officers. How much harder do you think an inspector will look at your work area if it's unorganized and messy? The answer is; a LOT harder.

Poor housekeeping contributes to accidents by:

- Covering up hazards, such as frayed wires or damaged cords.
- Creating slip and trip hazards, including boxes, pallets and cords cluttering walkways, and spills and leaks on workroom and breakroom floors.
- Providing fuel for a fire, in the form of cardboard, trash, and flammable vapors; and
- Encouraging a sloppy mindset. If clutter, spills, and disorganization are the norm, it's not long before more serious safety hazards are overlooked because they, too, have become the norm.

### How to Protect Yourself

The first thing to remember about housekeeping is that it is ongoing. Get into the habit of cleaning up as you go through your day.

Remember these tips for housekeeping in industrial and construction settings:

- Clean up spills immediately, or report them if you aren't trained to clean them up.
- Put lids and caps back on containers and bottles after every use.
- Put tools, equipment and boxes back where they belong.
- Take out trash and recycling on a regular basis so it doesn't have a chance to pile up.
- Follow maintenance procedures for machines and equipment to help contain leaks and overspray from machines; and
- Control dust accumulation. Dust accumulation is a significant fire and explosion hazard.

Offices, retail spaces, restaurants and healthcare settings should be kept clean, organized and free from fire hazards too.

- Close cabinet drawers to prevent others from tripping on them or causing the cabinet to tip over.
- Push unoccupied chairs in against desks or workstations and keep items out of aisles and walkways.
- Clean up spills and put out caution signs when floors are wet;

and finally

- Report water, ice, and snow on sidewalks and around doors. Clean it up if you can.

General housekeeping tips for all workplaces:

- Don't block sprinkler heads, fire extinguishers and other emergency equipment. Keep material and equipment at least 18 inches (46 centimetres) away from sprinkler heads.
- Prevent objects from falling by paying attention to how high material is stacked and stored.
- Keep walkways clear of clutter.
- Practice proper storage. Whether it is chemicals, garbage, boxes, bins, or bags—store it correctly to prevent spills, vapor accumulation, unstable piles, and damage to tools and equipment.

### Final Word

Good housekeeping helps keep your safety record clean by preventing injuries, chemical hazards, fires and explosions. It also improves morale and productivity by making it easier for you to find what you need to do your job.

## Quiz

1. Poor housekeeping can hide safety hazards.  
 True  
 False
2. Housekeeping isn't a concern at offices and retail spaces.  
 True  
 False
3. Material should be stored at least how far from sprinkler heads?  
a. 12 inches/30.5 centimetres  
b. 14 inches/36 centimetres  
c. 16 inches/41 centimetres  
d. 18 inches/46 centimetres
4. To be effective, housekeeping only needs to be once a month.  
 True  
 False

### WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

Your new co-worker seems to think the floor is a giant trash bin. You've tried to be subtle and remind her where things go and that there's a garbage can right next to her workstation, but she doesn't seem to get the hint. What would you do?

## Ergonomics and the Mature Worker

### What's At Stake

Older workers are dying on the job at a higher rate than workers overall, even though the overall rate of workplace fatalities has been decreasing.

### What's the Danger?

While many people are quite capable of working well into their 60s or longer, they are at greater risk for injury and job-related illnesses because of reduced strength, balance, hearing, vision, and slower reaction time.

### How to Protect Yourself

Following these seven ergonomic based tips can help mature workers stay safe and be more comfortable on the job.

1. Arrange your workstation to minimize the distance you need to reach for equipment or materials.
  - The items you need to use most frequently should be centrally located.
  - Ensure your chair is at the correct height and properly adjusted to your workstation's height.
2. Shed some light on the situation.
  - Low lighting can lead to trips, slips and falls.
  - A middle-aged worker needs up to six times as much light to see, compared to someone in his or her 20's.
  - Bump up the type size at your computer to make reading documents easier. And ensure there is adequate lighting.
3. Reduce lifting demands on your body.
  - Use lifting devices such as carts whenever possible.
  - Lift with your legs instead of your back.
  - If you are repeatedly reaching into boxes, try to place them on benches or tables to reduce the need for bending.
4. Listen up.
  - If you have difficulty hearing what others are saying, have your hearing checked.
  - It's a good idea to let your supervisor know if you have hearing loss or wear a hearing aid. This helps keep everyone safe and can also affect the type of hearing protection you wear.
5. Make a move.
  - If your job involves long periods of sitting, get up and stand and stretch or take a short walk at least hourly.
  - You'll be less stiff and you'll improve your body's blood flow.
6. Watch out!
  - Take extra care when walking on slippery surfaces, particularly elevated slippery surfaces.
7. Work it out.
  - Try to get regular exercise to keep your body limber and heart strong.
  - If you haven't been exercising much and want to start, check with your doctor first to ensure you don't overdo it.

### Final Word

Mature workers bring invaluable knowledge and experience to their jobs. Following a few ergonomic work practices can keep these workers safe and productive so they can continue to share that knowledge and experience.

## Quiz

1. A middle-aged worker needs up to six times as much light to see, compared to someone in his or her 20's.  
 True  
 False
2. Getting up and walking or stretching can help improve blood flow.  
 True  
 False
3. A hearing aid doesn't affect hearing protection selection.  
 True  
 False
4. The items at your workstation you need to use most frequently should be spread out so you must stretch and move to reach them.  
 True  
 False

## What Would You Do?

The setup of your workstation is causing you a lot of discomfort. You've tried adjusting your seat height and moved a few things around, but you're still not comfortable. What would you do?

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# Housekeeping Counts!

Housekeeping in the workplace helps keep you safe from falls, fires and many other hazards. And it isn't always just up to the cleaning and maintenance crew either. How does your workplace stack up against the following housekeeping standards?

Are floors clean and free of water, mud, ice, grease, oil, waste and clutter?

Are leaks and spills cleaned up promptly?

Are traffic areas clear and free of obstacles such as cords, air hoses or boxes?

Are exits and stairs clearly marked?

Are garbage cans utilized and emptied regularly?

Are unused materials disposed of or stored safely, rather than being allowed to accumulate in out-of-the-way places?

Are stored materials safely stacked, correctly labelled and in proper order?

Are stairways and doorways kept clear and well-lighted?

Are oily rags stowed in approved covered metal cans?

Are hazardous materials kept in clearly and correctly labelled authorized containers, away from sources of ignition and other hazards?

Are flammable materials stored away from sources of ignition?

Are machines and tools kept clean, free of oil and dust and properly maintained to prevent fires and accidents?

Are tools cleaned and put away right after use?

Are work stations left clean at the end of each shift?

Are equipment and other surfaces checked regularly for jagged edges, rough surfaces, dangerous nails and hooks; all of which could cause cuts, puncture wounds or eye injuries?

Are chairs and stools correctly placed to prevent tripping accidents? Are they in good repair, and when damaged are they removed so they will not be used accidentally?

Are drawers and cabinet doors kept closed to prevent both tipping and tripping accidents?

Is smoking done only in designated areas, and ashtrays used?

Are lunch areas kept clean by putting lunch scraps where they belong?

Are washrooms kept clean and dry?

Is a procedure in place to report and monitor any safety hazards or other problems as soon as they arise?

## 7 THINGS TO KNOW

### About Respirator Use

Respirators are a must for work in environments with low oxygen levels or harmful debris, fumes, gases, or vapors. Share these seven tips with your workers.



#### Shave It.

Beards are fly but facial hair, especially a full beard, gets in the way of a tight-fitting face-to-facepiece seal.



#### Toss It.

Disposable respirators aren't designed for repeated use. Dispose of them after every use and get a new one the next time.



#### Remove It.

Remove protective covers on cartridges before putting them the respirator. They won't filter with the cover still on.



#### End of Life.

Filters on half-mask and full-mask respirators must be changed frequently. How often depends on the concentration of the hazardous substance, age of the filter, and how they are stored.



#### Test It.

Fit testing is a must to ensure proper fit and the highest level of protection.



#### Choose Wisely.

Choosing the right equipment involves:

- Determining what the hazard is and its extent.
- Considering user factors that affect respirator performance and reliability.
- Selecting an appropriate NIOSH-certified respirator.



#### Don and Doff It.

Train workers how to put on and take off their respirator.

# PICTURE THIS *RESPIRATORS*

## Beards Don't Filter the Coronavirus

No matter what style of facial hair you sport, it's our humble opinion that all beards are beautiful. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), however, disagrees.

Not all facial hair is created equal, according to a CDC infographic on the best facial hair styles suited to N95 respirator masks, which are intended to help shield you from airborne particles.

According to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), an N95 respirator blocks at least 95 percent of very small airborne particles down to 0.3 microns (one micron = one millionth of a meter). Gases, vapors, and other particles in the air that respirator masks are meant to prevent the wearer from breathing in will take the path of least resistance to bypass the respirators filter.

**So, what's the problem with your beard? Can't that just act like another barrier?**

Not exactly. While human hair "appears to be very thin to the naked eye," according to the CDC, it's actually much larger in size than the particles you want to avoid inhaling. N95 masks protect you from airborne particles down to 0.3 microns, but hair thickness ranges from 1/1500 to 1/500 of an inch in diameter. So if we assume each of your beard hairs are .002 inches thick in diameter, that translates to 50.8 microns. That's going to create a COVID-19 size entryway.

Overall, the CDC reports that any presence of facial hair that gets in the way of a respirator mask's seal can cause 20 to 1,000 times more leakage as compared to a clean-shaven mask-wearer.

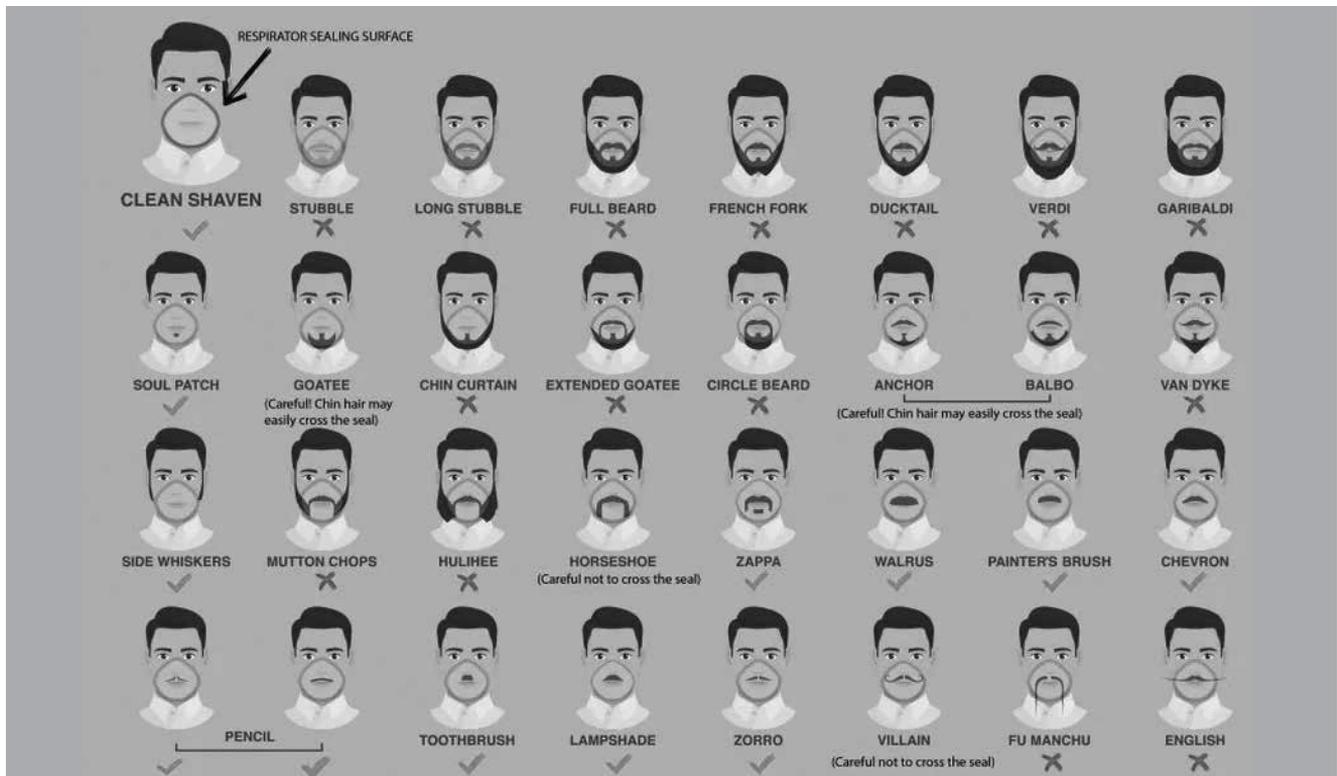
## Fit Testing

If you've ever performed QNFT (quantitative) respirator fit testing, you know that the process can sometimes be challenging and interspersed with occasional failed results which require you to retest.

The reason we perform respirator fit testing is to verify that the user can obtain an effective seal and level of comfort with their chosen respirator. We also want to make sure that the respiratory protection being worn provides the user with the best possible protection when required. The fit test is an opportunity for the user to demonstrate their level of competence with donning, doffing, and user seal check training. CSA Z94.4 requires that we repeat the test every other year or when there is a change to the respirator, physical condition of the user, or PPE being worn.

Here are some tips, tricks, and basic troubleshooting suggestions that we have learned over the years to help with your QNFT fit testing program.

- **A 3M disposable respirator with valve.** So many masks to choose from, so many faces to fit. There is no such thing as one size fits all. A common reason that N95 respirators don't fit (besides being too big or too small) is that the metal nose piece isn't properly fitted. Once a respirator is chosen, proper donning procedures will instruct users to use two hands (two fingers on each hand) to form the metal band evenly over their nose. Using



one hand (thumb and index finger) can create an uneven bend resulting in a respirator leak.

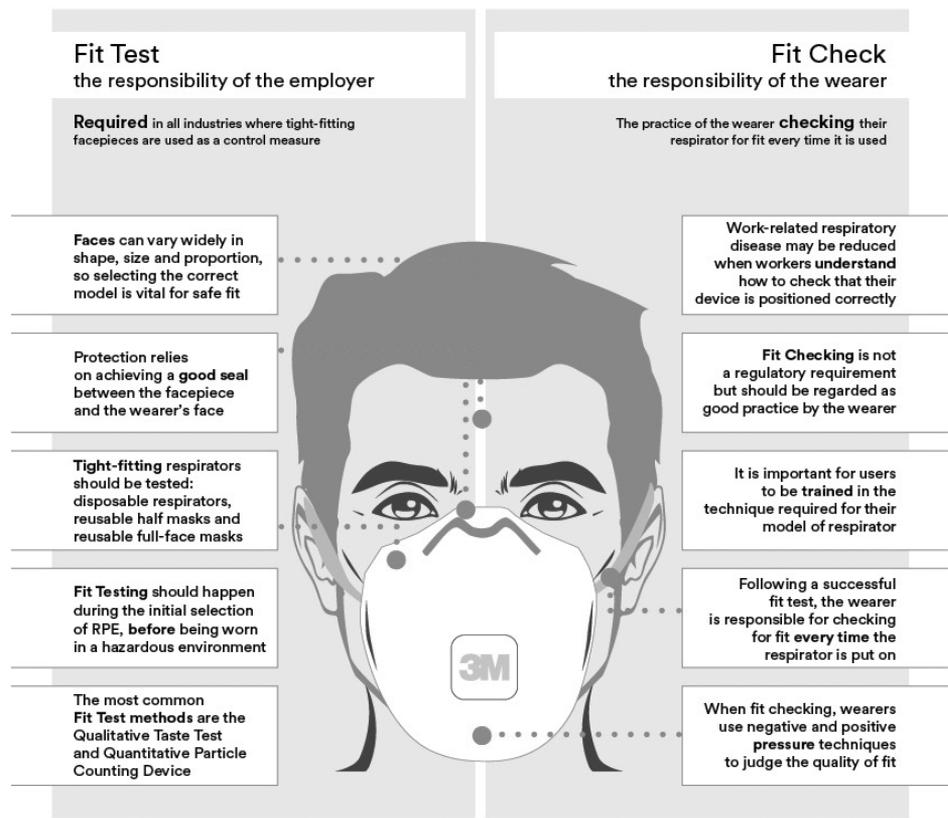
- **Filtering Facepiece (N95) Probe Placement.** A fit testing probe needs to be installed in order to conduct a fit test on a filtering facepiece respirator. Respirator leaks can be created when installing this probe. It is important that the probe be installed to the left or right of exhalation valves and away from seams in respirator material. Start by inserting the probe to the midway point on the inside of the facepiece. Then, continue while applying pressure on the sealing push nut/rivet. When done correctly, respirator material should be seen around the joint of the 2 components.
- **Beards.** First off, CSA Z94.4 stipulates that no facial hair may come into contact with the seal area of the respirator. Annex M in the Standard provides guidance on what is acceptable. Basically, if facial hair is – or could be – in the mask sealing area, you can't conduct a fit test.

Start at the very beginning. As soon as a new employee walks in the door and before they can even set foot in the plant, give them a thorough safety orientation. This is the best and earliest opportunity to plant the seed of the "safety attitude." A safety orientation establishes the importance of safety to the company by laying it out as a responsibility that goes along with being a good employee.

## Maintenance & Hygiene

Everyone is aware of the potential transmission of germs and bacteria via our hands. If you're fit testing, here are some useful tips to for the safety of the fit tester and respirator user.

- Wear disposable non-latex gloves when handling someone else's respirator.
- If a shared "test" respirator needs to be wiped out between uses, have the person being tested do the wiping. If they bring their own respirator for the test, offer a wipe so it can be cleaned. This promotes respirator hygiene and provides a clean respirator for the test.
- Always verify that all components of the respirator are in place prior to the fit test.
- When putting a mask adapter on a respirator, use new, clean tubing to go from the mask adapter to inside the mask. The fit test adapter kits come with replacement tubing and additional



can be ordered as needed.

- Occasionally, moisture can condense in the twin tubes between the respirator fit tester and the mask adapter. This occurs because exhaled breath is humid and can condense in the hose during testing. The easy solution is to carry a spare, 'clean' twin tube that you can swap out on demand. They can also be cleaned and dried as necessary.

## Smoking

Smokers inhale a lot of particulate, but it can take at least 30 minutes for all those small particulates to migrate out of the lungs. If you test too soon after smoking, the instrument will count those particles and won't be able to tell if it's a leak or cigarette smoke that is resulting in particles showing up in the test.

## Equipment Failure

Sometimes the equipment doesn't work. Not often, but not never. Remember, it's drawing air in when it's turned on, so never let the hose fall to the floor without a filter on it. Dust bunnies are bad for the optics. So is bouncing and bumping – sometimes this causes an optics misalignment to occur, so the instrument stops counting particles.

Source: <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2018/01/04/respirators-public-use/> <https://www.populamechanics.com/science/health/3119260/cdc-coronavirus-facial-hair-chart/> <https://blogs.cdc.gov/niosh-science-blog/2017/11/02/niosh-3m/> [https://safetynetwork.3m.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/402922\\_SG\\_PSD\\_18\\_Respirator-poster-amend\\_2017\\_PRINT\\_POSTER-FI.jpg](https://safetynetwork.3m.com/blog/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/402922_SG_PSD_18_Respirator-poster-amend_2017_PRINT_POSTER-FI.jpg) <https://www.levitt-safety.com/blog/respirator-fit-testing-basic-troubleshooting/>

# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

## The Time for Tact, Not Attack

How do you handle conflict? Do you get angry and say things you wish you hadn't? Or do you back down and regret you did not stand up for yourself?

Conflict is a normal part of human relationships, even in the workplace. How you handle conflict helps determine your success and even your safety on the job. As a supervisor, it's especially important to know how to deal with your own and your workers' conflict when it arises.

You aren't going to agree with or like everyone you meet at work. You might disagree seriously with a co-worker about the right way to do something. You might feel he or she is trying to undermine your position. Or there could be somebody who makes you feel annoyed all the time. Situations such as these can lead to anger, accidents and even violence if you don't handle them properly.

**In trying to develop positive responses to conflict, it helps to identify some of the responses that can make the situation worse:**

- Seething with resentment instead of dealing with the issue.
- Being pleasant face-to-face but speaking critically about another person behind his or her back.
- Lapsing into feelings of helplessness and depression over conflicts.
- Getting mad and over-reacting to the situation.

**Consider some of these strategies for handling conflict:**

- **Think clearly about the issue**, separating the facts of the matter from the feelings. Try to understand the root of the problem. For example, if a worker is picking on you about your performance, he may be unhappy about criticism he is getting from the boss.

- **Accept your own responsibility** in the conflict and acknowledge the other person's role. If you have made a mistake, admit it.
- **State your case clearly and calmly.** Say what you want and need others to do. "Please don't interrupt me when I am talking to a customer," is a reasonable thing to say, for instance.
- **Be diplomatic.** While you need to be honest and forthright, you also must respect the other person's feelings. There is no need to humiliate another worker.
- **Look for mutually acceptable solutions**, keeping in mind your responsibilities for working safely, ensuring others are working safely or serving your company's customers well. Many conflicts arise over shift assignments and vacation schedules. Work with your everyone to accommodate fellow workers.
- **Keep your cool.** If you are too emotional to speak calmly, postpone the conversation until you are back in control. "I'd really like to talk about this some more. Can I see you at the end of the shift?"
- **Be assertive.** Speak up for your rights and your beliefs. "Driving the lift truck that fast is dangerous for everyone. I am going to have to report this."
- **Leave your work worries behind when you go home.** Don't brood about them in your spare time.

You are not going to get along with everyone. Your co-workers have their own agendas and motivations which aren't necessarily to make things easy for you.

As a supervisor, you need to be even more aware of situations around you so you can deal with them before they become something more. Learn to handle conflict calmly and confidently.

