

## **Managing Safety Behaviours at All Levels Within an Organisation**

When attempting to improve safety culture, organisations oftentimes only focus on frontline staff behaviour. After all, that is where the accidents happen - somebody did something they shouldn't have done, or they didn't do something they should have done. The result is that we have an accident investigation which seeks to find the special cause of the accident. This cause is identified, the person is typically disciplined (because it is their fault) and then the special cause and the result are publicised.

However, there is never a single cause for an accident, nor is there a single cause for people behaving safely on a daily basis. An analysis will show there are direct common causes, that is, factors that directly influence frontline staff behaviour. An analysis will also show there are many indirect factors that influence frontline staff behaviour on a daily basis. Supervisors, managers and executives provide these by what they communicate, what they expect, and what they pay attention to and make important.

If sustainable safety performance is to be achieved, then it is critical to not only identify and support the direct safe behaviours of front line staff, but also to identify and support the indirect safe behaviours of supervisors, managers and executives. Management will make or break a safety system.

### **General Categories of Behaviours at Each Level Within an Organisation**

#### Executive and Senior Managers

- Ask "how will this impact safety?" when making decisions.
- Make safety important to direct reports.
- Encourage safe behaviour at all levels (executive through to site staff).
- Remove barriers to safety.
- Assess the impact of existing systems on safety.
- Provide resources for safety.

#### Managers

- Ask "how will this impact safety?" when making decisions.
- Make safety important to direct reports.
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#### Supervisors

- Ask "how will this impact safety?" when making decisions.
- Prompt and encourage safe behaviour.
- Provide feedback on at-risk behaviours.
- Remove barriers to safety.