



INDUSTRIAL CONSTRUCTION

A GUIDE TO RISK TOLERANCE

KEY TOPICS

- ***EXAMINE THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAZARD RECOGNITION, RISK PERCEPTION AND RISK TOLERANCE***
- ***10 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE OUR DECISION TO ACCEPT RISK***
- ***LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES FOR SUPERVISION TO ADDRESS RISK***

HAZARD RECOGNITION:

How we look at our work environment defines our acceptance of risk (exposure to the probability of loss) – Can the hazard be identified:



RISK PERCEPTION:

Is the risk understood...can the individual recognize / appreciate the potential for harm / loss?



RISK TOLERANCE:

Is the level of risk accepted or rejected...what will drive the level of the acceptance for the individual?

- Perception of pressure to perform / take short cuts.
- Rewarding unsafe behaviours.
- Little or no accident memory.



As Supervisors, it falls to you to influence the choices others make to realize a positive change that reduces workplace risk.

10 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RISK TOLERANCE:

1) OVERESTIMATING CAPABILITY OR EXPERIENCE

- “I work out on the gym all the time, I have every confidence that I can lift this (material / equipment) without any assistance / issue.”
- “I’ve operated a forklift for years and a telehandler isn’t really that different.”

Leadership Strategies:

- Acknowledge that despite a person’s ability, the exposure to risk still remains.
- Note that Supervision’s role as a mentor for all personnel under their care and control.
- Advise that though the skill set of the worker may be adequate for the task, reinforce the “correct way” by providing reference to risk reduction by following established Safe Work Practices and Procedures.

2) FAMILIARITY WITH THE TASK (COMPLACENCY)

- “This task was completed thousands of times previously without incident”
- “We completed this work at the start of every shift, but on this day...”

Leadership Strategies:

- A constant state of “Situational Awareness”...treating every task like you’re doing it the very first time.
- Consider what “could” go wrong this time.
- How would one teach an inexperienced person to do the work safely?
- Is a step being skipped because the task is known that well (complacency sets in)?

3) SERIOUSNESS OF THE OUTCOME

- In describing the outcomes of behaviour, references are often used such as "Pinch Point" and "Trips and Slips".

Leadership Strategies:

- Engage worker concern over incident outcomes by using alternate references such as "Amputation Point", "Disk Herniation" or "ACL Tear".
- Ask yourself "How bad could it be?"



4) VOLUNTARY ACTIONS AND BEING IN CONTROL

- How well are the principles of “Stop & Think” being implemented off the job?
- If we aren’t following the guideline in everything that we do, we aren’t managing risk.

Leadership Strategies:

- Engage the “Stop-Think-Act” model both on and off the job.

5) PERSONAL EXPERIENCE WITH AN OUTCOME

- Those that have a negative personal experience will be less acceptant of risk inherent with a given task.
- As incident rates DECLINE, there is less memory of what CAN happen which leads to doubt that an incident will occur.

Leadership Strategies:

- Keeping the “Corporate Memory” alive through field “Experts” and “Hazard Alerts”.
- Ever-present reminders of what could go wrong and how bad the outcome could be.
- Supervisors hold the responsibility to actively identify risk taking behaviour and consistently remind workers of what COULD occur.

6) COST OF NON-COMPLIANCE

- The greater the cost of non-compliant behaviour, the lower the risk tolerance.
- Consider the Nuclear and Aviation industries and how failures in their systems can affect their personnel and the general public.

Leadership Strategies:

- Identify the current cost of non-compliance to established practices. Where required, increase the “cost” to force compliant behaviours.
- Remove barriers to compliance such as rewarding non-compliant behaviour.
- Reward behaviours that reinforce compliance.

7) CONFIDENCE IN THE EQUIPMENT

- I have studded snow tires on my car, so I don't need to slow down in snowy / icy conditions.
- I'm wearing fall protection equipment, if I fall the equipment will protect me from being injured.

Leadership Strategies:

- How could the equipment limitations still lead to a failure or some form of loss.
- Instruct personnel in "What-If" scenarios.



8) CONFIDENCE IN PROTECTION & RESCUE

- I'm wearing safety glasses and a face shield...I won't get anything in my eyes.
- There's a First Aid and Rescue team on site, they'll get to me before I have a problem.

Leadership Strategies:

- Understand the limits of rescue equipment, personnel and protective devices.
- Coach workers in understanding that PPE is a last line of defence.
- Don't rely on youth, fitness or strength of character to protect you.



9) POTENTIAL PROFIT & GAIN FROM ACTIONS

- Risk taking behaviour (varying from plan) will often result in saving time.
- How often have we rewarded risk takers by failing to recognize that a step was missed?

Leadership Strategies:

- Consider all the steps in the completion of a task. Never reward for actively accepting risk and implement corrective measures (discipline) where workers vary from plan.
- Lead by example and eliminate barriers that prevent workers from making the choice to do things the right way.

10) ROLE MODELS ACCEPTING OF RISK

- When Leaders (Role Models, Supervisors, Experienced Tradespeople) within a work group accept a certain level of risk, they influence the acceptance of risk by others within the group.

Leadership Strategies:

- Identify and address active risk taking behaviour (including your own) and actively engage in defining the behaviour and removing from our workplaces.
- Recognize that we set standards for everything that we do. Where those standards are being eroded by unsafe (risk taking) behaviour, STOP-THINK-ACT.



- **What could go wrong?**
- **How bad could it be?**
- **Has anything changed?**



- **Am I physically and mentally ready?**
- **Do I clearly understand my task?**
- **Do I have the right tools and equipment?**



- **Make it Safe.**
- **Employ the correct procedure.**
- **Use the correct tools.**
- **No shortcuts, period.**
- **Reduce risk.**