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## Air Force Says 2009 Safest Year Ever for Crews

For Air Force aircrews, 2009 was the safest year ever, according to preliminary numbers from the Air Force Safety Center. In fiscal year 2009, which ended September 30, there were 16 Class A accidents, or 9 fewer than the year before. Class A accidents are those that lead to a death or a repair bill of \$1 million or more.

The Air Force says 5 airmen and a civilian test pilot died in the 2009 accidents, down from the 13 airmen killed in 2008, but still below the 10-year average of 10 deaths.

The mishap rate is also down. That's the number of accidents for every 100,000 hours of flying. The 2009 figure is 0.82, the lowest for the Air Force in 62 years of flying.

A reduction in aircrew mistakes is credited with the improvement. And that, according to the Air Force Safety Center, is a result of risk management initiatives like considering the hazards of a mission before launching.

## DOT Announces Preemployment Screening Program

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) will soon launch a new Driver Pre-Employment Screening Program. It will allow commercial motor-carrier companies to electronically access driver inspection and crash records as part of the hiring process. The program is expected to begin in December. FMCSA is an agency of the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT).

the Department of Transportation. This new initiative will help trucking companies ensure the safest drivers are behind the wheel of commercial trucks and buses."

Stated DOT Secretary Ray LaHood, "Safety is our number one priority at

Currently, commercial driver-safety records are available to federal and state law enforcement personnel. Once the preemployment program is in place, the records will be readily available to motor carriers regardless of state or jurisdiction.

## OSHA Cites, Heavily Fines GA Tortilla Maker

OSHA is proposing \$231,600 in penalties against Los Amigos Tortilla Manufacturing Co. of Atlanta for safety and health violations. The bulk of those penalties are for the company's failure to correct seven violations identified during an inspection in 2008. Among them was failure to establish an energy-control program to ensure that machinery would not start up while being maintained or serviced.

being pulled into moving parts.

Eight serious violations with proposed penalties of \$24,000 resulted from the 2009 inspection. Agency inspectors found that the employer exposed workers to various electrical hazards.

Also, employees did not use PPE and management failed to provide protection from hazardous machinery and chemicals.

"OSHA's previous inspections made Los Amigos fully aware of the needed changes to its safety and health program,"

Also, OSHA says Los Amigos did not correct prior electrical hazards and dangers created by machinery that lacked safeguards to prevent employees from

(continued on page 2)

(continued from page 1)

said Andre Richards, Atlanta-West area director. "All employees have a right to a safe workplace, and it is irresponsible of an employer to continue exposing its employees to work hazards."

## Safety on the Agenda For International Labor Ministers

U.S. Secretary of Labor Hilda L. Solis led a U.S. delegation to Buenos Aires for the 16th Inter-American Conference of Ministers of Labor.

At the gathering, Solis and other labor ministers discussed issues that included improving worker rights and working conditions, as well as creating employment opportunities for women.

The conference is held every 2 years with the support of the Organization of American States. This year's theme was "Facing the Crisis with Development, Decent Work, and Social Protection"

During the visit, Secretary Solis and her Argentine counterpart, Carlos Tomada, signed a letter of understanding. Its intent is to facilitate technical cooperation between their respective ministries focused on key issues, including:

- Employment generation,
- Skills development,
- Occupational safety and health,
- Workplace discrimination, *and*
- Social-insurance programs.

## Healthcare Costs to Remain Stable in 2010, Hewitt Projects

Despite economic instability and pressure to cut costs, healthcare rates are projected to remain stable for the third consecutive year, according to an analysis by Hewitt Associates.

The human resources and consulting firm estimates a 6.0 percent average premium increase for employers in 2010. In 2008 and 2009, average healthcare premiums increased 6.0 percent.

According to Hewitt, the average total premium per employee for large companies will rise from \$8,067 in 2009 to \$9,120 next year. The amount employees will be asked to contribute is \$2,085, or 23 percent of the total. That's up 10 percent from 2009, when employees contributed \$1,890, or 22 percent of the total.

"Employers were able to successfully mitigate rising healthcare costs through one of the worst economic climates in history and they did so by taking some very simple steps," said Hewitt Health Management Consulting practice leader Jim Winker. Those included:

- Cost shifting,
- Tougher negotiations with health plans, *and*
- An increased focus on preventive care.

## Healthy Eats Coming to Chicago Workplaces

Healthy @ Work is the name of a new initiative to bring more nutritious fare to Chicagoans on the job. The service, provided by a company called Alter EatGo, will provide healthy breakfast, lunch, and snacks during the workweek, plus access to an online weight-management program.

The company said the new offering is a response to the fact that U.S. employers spend some \$13 billion per year in medical costs and lost productivity due to obesity.

"Many urban downtown areas are inundated with fast food restaurants, which tend to provide meals that are expensive, over-sized, fat laden, high in calories, and nutrient deficient,"

said Alter EatGo chef Eric Paul. His menu includes many favorite foods that have been nutritionally remade.

Participants will have the opportunity to participate in an Internet-based application that helps them log food intake and physical activity, track body composition and weight loss goals, and compete in weight-loss competitions.

## Home Health Workers At Increased Risk, Study Finds

Patients receiving home healthcare services are sicker than in the past, which is increasing the risk of needlestick injuries among home care nurses.

A recent study led by researchers at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health found that the rate of needlestick-type injuries was 7.6 per 100 nurses. At this rate, the scientists estimate nearly 10,000 such injuries among home-care nurses.

The study, *The Prevalence and Risk Factors for Percutaneous Injuries in Registered Nurses in the Home Health Care Sector*, was published in the September 2009 issue of the *American Journal of Infection Control*.

A critical finding in the research was a statistical link between needlesticks and exposure to stressful conditions in the patient's household.

Nurses who reported stressors like cigarette smoke, unsanitary conditions, air pollution, and vermin were twice as likely to report needlestick injuries.

And home health nurses exposed to violence at the patient's residence were three-and-a-half times more likely to also report needlestick-type injuries.

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Robert L. Brady, J.D., *Publisher*; Peggy Carter-Ward, *Editor in Chief*; Judith A. Ruddy, *Managing Editor*; Carolyn Leese, *Editor*; Evelyn Sacks, *Associate Editor*; Corinne Weber, Sandra Fisher, *Proofreaders*; Agnes D. Franks, *Marketing Manager*; Rebecca MacLachlan, *Graphic Designer*; Sherry Newcomb, *Layout Production*. Contact Customer Service for reprints at 800-727-5257, ext. 2301. OSHA Compliance Advisor is issued by BUSINESS & LEGAL REPORTS, INC. Editorial and business offices are located at 141 Mill Rock Road East, P.O. Box 6001, Old Saybrook, CT 06475-6001. ©2009 Business & Legal Reports, Inc.

Issued 24 times per year. Subscription price: \$349.95 annually. Periodicals postage paid at Old Saybrook, CT 06475-9998.

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# Compliance Report

## What's Behavior Got to Do with Safety?

*A Great Deal, Says Someone Who Ought to Know*

If you use behavior-based safety (BBS), you likely know what the observation and feedback method of incident reduction is all about.

Proponents say it's a scientific way to identify at-risk behaviors and change them. Opponents say it smacks of big brother and promotes blame.

This *Compliance Report* looks at BBS from the perspective of Dr. Judy Agnew, a consultant and author who's written a book on the topic. She's used and taught a distinctive BBS process to clients in diverse industries.

Agnew shares her experiences and insight in an effort to answer our question, "Why do people continue to get injured on the job?"

### Brief Look Back

The idea that behavior change can lead to a safer workplace is nothing new. A behavioral approach has been around for most of a century, and its origins are attributed to Herbert William Heinrich. In the 1930s, he was engaged in what today would be called risk management for the Traveler's Insurance Company. Through his review of thousands of accident reports, Heinrich concluded that most workplace incidents could be attributed to "man-failures," or unsafe actions by workers.

In the late 1970s the term "behavior-based safety" was first used by psychologist Dr. E. Scott Geller. His company, today known as Safety Performance Solutions, has brought behavior- and "people-based" principles widely to industry.

Since the 1960s, Dr. Aubrey Daniels has also been active in the field. Like Geller, Daniels is a psychologist.

His study of the work of B.F. Skinner and other behavioral scientists led Daniels to ask the question, "If positive consequences are the best way

to change and improve behavior and elicit discretionary effort, why don't businesses use this knowledge systematically?"

He quit the practice of psychology to create Aubrey Daniels International (ADI). The Atlanta-based consulting firm helps businesses apply knowledge about changing behavior in safety and other areas.

ADI uses a "systematic, data-driven approach to managing people by arranging conditions for positive reinforcement in individual and group performance."

Judy Agnew is an ADI vice president and leads the firm's safety practice. She is also the author of the book *Removing Obstacles to Safety*. We talked with her about the ADI formula and how it differs from other behavioral approaches.

### What's the Purpose?

In the book she authored with Gail Snyder, Agnew explains the objectives of behavior-based safety.

- To increase the number of safety behaviors and to create safe habits, which are described as "a safe behavior that you do consistently." A safe habit is also something one does without having to stop and consider it. Buckling up is an example. If you're like many people, strapping yourself in is second nature because it has become automatic—a habit.
- To reduce and ideally eliminate workplace injuries. The goal is to keep workers safe and allow them to perform the behaviors that ensure their safety.
- To make sure supervisors, managers, and executives support BBS and contribute to a safer workplace. This includes constantly looking out for obstacles (such as policies and equipment) that keep people from working their safest.

- Anonymous observations provide feedback and positive reinforcement, which is where the real behavior change comes in.

Agnew makes an important distinction between *direct* behaviors that influence safety—what you do to keep yourself and your peers safe—and *indirect* behaviors.

Examples of indirect actions are management decisions about acquiring new equipment, the choice to make or delay repairs, providing training opportunities, or emphasizing productivity over safety.

### Stage One: Pinpoint Behaviors

The first stage in ADI's behavioral process is to identify, at every level of the organization, the critical behaviors that will prevent injuries and incidents. These are determined by analyzing accident reports and other data. After the list of target behaviors is narrowed down to a few for focused attention, these are printed onto a simple scorecard used by observers. Individual work groups have their own targeted behaviors.

The pinpointing effort should clearly describe the behavior so that it can be properly observed and measured. According to Agnew, "If you can't take a picture of it or record it with a tape recorder, it probably isn't a behavior." The focus is on relatively small tasks or behaviors that can be observed in a few minutes or less.

Examples of safe behaviors to be targeted:

- Lift with knees bent and back straight.
- Honk forklift horn at intersections.
- Put on gloves when mixing chemicals.
- Put on face shield before grinding.

### Digging Deeper

A pinpointed behavior is sometimes one that's been targeted in the past, but has not become a habit.

*(continued on page 4)*

That was the case at a cheese plant where Agnew was helping to implement BBS.

Lifting pallets safely had been identified as a target behavior; employees had been trained and observations and feedback conducted. Although the number of lifting accidents dropped, improvement plateaued before it reached “habit” status. Agnew and her team got involved and discovered that workers were performing lifts safely.

The problem was that by the end of the shift, employees became fatigued and abandoned the safe practices.

In order to combat this, the factory purchased mechanical devices to help safely lift pallets.

Agnew explains that in many observation processes, the at-risk behavior (not lifting correctly) would have been noted, but the fact that it was linked to fatigue might not have been discovered.

The ADI process aims for safe habits 100 percent of the time. So, partial achievement of the goal led to further inquiry. Drilling down revealed the real culprit, which was not *how* the employees were performing, but the fact that they were tired at the end of the shift.

### The Role of Management

Agnew says that one of the misconceptions about BBS is that it focuses uniquely on hourly employees’ behaviors, such as correct use of PPE, safe lifting, etc.

The ADI method also seeks change in management behavior.

Line employees are asked to reflect not just on their own behavior, but also on what management can do to ensure a safer workplace.

So, for example, in a manufacturing environment where protective eye-wear is required, employees would be encouraged to report management problems like inadequate numbers of goggles or trouble finding and storing them.

Supervisors, managers, and executives have scorecards, too, although their behaviors are not observed in the same way as those of hourly workers.

Some managers conduct their own observations (self-observation is commonly used in BBS for employees who work in isolation).

Managers’ scorecards become the focus of regular discussions with their own bosses.

Examples of pinpointed behaviors for management employees:

- Ensure timely removal of barriers to safe behaviors.
- Provide time and resources for employees to implement BBS.
- Assess the impact of company systems on safety.
- Reinforce behaviors related to BBS at all levels.
- Discuss safety at every meeting.

Other tasks required of supervisory staff include sharing with their team’s ongoing progress toward the desired behavioral change. Supervisors are expected to take time out to provide positive reinforcement for working safely, celebrate accomplishments, and look for administrative obstacles, including production pressure.

They’re also responsible for initiating conversations about safe behaviors and are held accountable for the behavioral efforts of their direct reports.

### Stage Two: Observation and Measurement

The ADI process differs from other systems in that a small number of behaviors, maybe three, are targeted with frequent observations over a several-week period. Employees may be observed more than a dozen times a day by volunteer observers. The goal is to quickly establish new habits. Observers note their findings—whether the person used safe or at-risk behaviors and any obstacles—on the scorecard.

Agnew says the small number is a key to success. Changing behavior is challenging in any context. Trying to adopt many new habits at once and managing all the feedback is daunting.

## Time-Wasting Management Practices Revealed

Dr. Aubrey Daniels is a business consultant with specialties in safety and health and other practice areas. In a new book, *OOPS! 13 Management Practices that Waste Time and Money (and what to do instead)*, he upends conventional wisdom.

Daniels makes the case that typical management systems reward bad behavior and lead to significant problems, including financial ones.

Although his conclusions are not strictly related to safety, they are aimed at anyone with managerial responsibility.

According to Daniels:

- Annual bonuses not tied to a specific achievement do nothing to promote loyalty and top performance. Companies need to break the bonus habit.
- Downsizing achieves little in the long run. While layoffs may offer a short-term solution, they can harm morale and reduce productivity. It’s better to ask all employees to participate in the process of making the organization efficient and effective.
- Automatic pay raises reward employees for simply showing up. Raises should be performance-based, not automatic.

Daniels applies principles of behavioral science, the same ones he and Agnew use to improve workplace safety, to general business management.

In the ADI model, those being observed know exactly what behavior is being observed, but they don’t know the exact moment the observation will take place.

Agnew explains that, “If you warn someone that you are going to observe them for the next few minutes, they are highly likely to do everything safely and your numbers will be artificially inflated.”

Other characteristics of the ADI observation process:

- The observation is anonymous and never results in punishment.
- Frequent observations result in a large representative sample, which is used to track progress.
- The findings are collected by and summarized into percentages by co-workers. Management does not see the scorecards; they only see the percentage of time the group performs the behavior safely.

Agnew points out that, for a long time in safety circles, the focus has been on measuring incidents, not on measuring positive behaviors. It's an important shift that takes the emphasis away from accident rates and onto what's being done to prevent accidents.

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### Stage Three: Feedback

Agnew disagrees with those who believe that observation is the heart of a BBS process and is responsible for behavioral change.

In fact, it is only a vehicle for feedback and reinforcement, the two factors which ultimately alter behavior. This is the part of the process where learning takes place.

Feedback changes during the process. At the beginning of a several-week behavior-change initiative, feedback would usually be longer and more conversational. Observer Ann might say to her co-worker John, "I noticed you weren't wearing goggles. Is there a fogging issue or some other problem?"

Some days into the exercise, the feedback might be as simple as Ann's thumbs-up gesture upon observing John wearing goggles. Or, if he is not wearing them, Ann might just point to her eyes to convey the message.

Because observations are conducted so frequently, it's not practical to provide feedback at each occasion. Rather, Agnew suggests that it be offered:

- If a worker is in imminent danger,
- When the worker performs the safe behavior for the first time,
- When a worker has made recent improvements,
- When a worker has been struggling to change a habit,
- When the safe behavior is performed in a difficult situation, *and*
- If the observer notices barriers to the safe behavior.

Agnew recommends positive feedback, but "constructive" feedback is sometimes necessary. She reminds observers that the more positive they are, the more likely an observee will be open when constructive feedback is required.

Beyond individual verbal feedback, the ADI method emphasizes "group, graphical feedback." This sounds fancy, but it refers to simple, hand-made charts that keep a team aware of progress toward the larger goal.

This is not typical of other BBS systems but, to ADI founder Aubrey Daniels, it's essential. "It puzzles us when we see this missing in other processes," he explains. "You don't have to know too much about behavior to know that the more immediate the feedback, the more powerful." That's why the graphs focus on small-group progress.

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### Stage Four: Reinforcement

Consequences, both positive and negative, drive behavior. According to Agnew, "positive reinforcement is a desirable consequence that follows a behavior and increases its frequency in the future." In a workplace context it exists in various forms.

- **Self-reinforcement.** This is the internal recognition experienced by an individual who is using safe behaviors and making them a habit.
- **Natural reinforcement.** These are natural occurrences that result from the changed behavior. For example, working with better body mechanics feels better than working in a cramped, awkward position.

Or a safe behavior might get the job done faster, another natural reinforcer.

In the ADI process, these are known as positive, immediate, certain consequences, or PICs.

Sometimes safe behaviors do not have naturally positive results.

For example, wearing PPE can be hot and uncomfortable. ADI refers to these as negative immediate certain consequences (NICs) and seeks to eliminate them. Providing workers with more comfortable gear is one way to counter the NIC associated with wearing PPE.

- **Social or tangible reinforcers.** They are used when it isn't possible to "undo" the negative natural reinforcement. A social reinforcer can be a simple comment like, "We really appreciate what you're doing to stay safe." But managers need to be careful, says Agnew, as some

people don't like to be singled out in public even for praise.

Other social reinforcers are gestures like a smile, nod, or pat on the back; handwritten or e-mail notes; and asking for input with a question like, "How would you handle this?"

- **Humor.** Appropriate humor during the workday is welcome by most people and conveys a positive message.

ADI's behavior-based system encourages celebrating success. Celebrations should be modest but frequent, for example, a pizza or taco lunch each time the team achieves a behavioral change goal.

A social celebration can also be a visit from the boss. Large, costly events or gifts are not recommended. "The more money you spend on tangibles, the more the celebration is focused on the thing rather than on the conversation," says Daniels.

The purpose of a celebration should be to relive an accomplishment and be acknowledged for it.

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### Stage Five: Evaluation

Ultimately, behavior-based safety is a data-driven process, explains Agnew. "We teach employees at the hourly level and above to look at the data and see what they tell you."

If a group sees variability in its behavior graph, they are encouraged to identify patterns and causes.

Part of the preparation for participating in BBS is training in how to read graphs, a skill some employees might not otherwise get on the job.

### Behavior Is Powerful

"Doing things safely is the core of BBS," according to consultant and author Judy Agnew.

The process is not about accusation, punishment, or absolving management of responsibility. It is designed to create positive change at all levels of an organization.

To learn more about the ADI approach, visit the firm's website, <http://www.aubreydaniels.com>.