



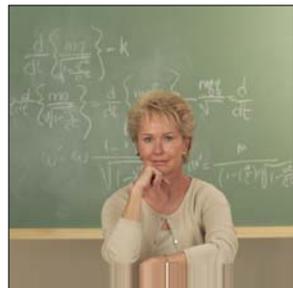
WORKPLACE SAFETY: Analyzing Incidents

We investigate causes of events all the time, from the routine to the extraordinary.

For example, you may be looking into how a filing system became disorganized, or your team may be examining why drivers routinely pass a particular stop sign without stopping. Effective investigations examine larger contexts and conditions by using “Systems Thinking”. Similarly, insight can be gained by tracing causes back to their roots with “Root Cause Analysis”. Reports submitted to Risk Management through the Worker and Student Injury Reporting System (WSIRS) should be submitted with these concepts in mind. Here is a brief overview.

Systems Thinking

“Systems thinking” is based on the belief that component parts of a system can best be understood in the context of relationships with each other and with other systems, rather than in isolation. The only way to fully understand why a problem or element occurs and persists is to understand the part in relation to the whole.

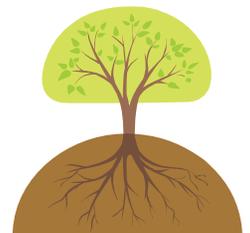


Rather than attributing a given incident to one individual’s behavior, or perhaps a fluke, consider all factors contributing to the incident.

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Digging for Better Solutions

“Root Cause Analysis” can be described by using the metaphor of a tree. The accident or unsafe incident happens at the leaf, but in order to look deeper at an incident, we examine the branch which connects to a larger branch with connects to an upper trunk which ties into the main trunk. We can go further, to the root ball, then individual roots, etc.



Asking “five why’s” helps us solve the puzzle in the following example:

1. Why did Sally Smith stub her toe?
She stumbled on a box on the floor.
2. Why was the box on the floor?
There was no other place to put it for now.
3. Why is there no holding area for boxes?
There’s no extra space in the lab.
4. Why is space limited in the lab? ***These old left over chemicals take up so much space.***
5. Why are the excess chemicals using so much space? ***We forgot the HazMat Tech’s number.***

(FYI, OHSU HazMat Tech’s number is 4-0425.)

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Topic of the Month:

SAFETY TRAINING FOR NEW EMPLOYEES

Accident statistics prove that the most likely employees to get injured are "new employees," including those newly hired, temporary employees, employees transferred to new work areas, contract employees, and recently promoted employees.



Why?

- New hires are usually unfamiliar with the specific work area.
- Sometimes "unseasoned" employees are assigned to train new employees. This can lead to gaps in training.
- New employees trying to prove themselves may take unnecessary risks.



Getting Off to a Good Start

Clear and specific safety expectations: Standard safety training at OHSU includes General Safety, Laboratory Safety and Environment of Care modules on Big Brain. Individual departments often have unique safety issues which are best addressed in department training. This training would identify objectives and expectations that help guide performance and safety culture in a specific area.

Experienced employees make excellent mentors:

Such one-on-one training conveys safety practices, procedures, and culture in a positive and correct manner while building a valuable resource relationship.



Training and performance reviews: Even when a new employee's training is complete and the training is incor-

porated, performance reviews and refreshers are valuable for instituting safe practices.

The value of communication: When employees have limited contact with fellow coworkers, cultivating a culture of safety can be challenging. Keeping the lines of communication open for questions, concerns, and information exchanges is important.

Participation in safety activities: Seeing "safety in action" has positive results. Knowing that there are checks and balances and that OHSU cares about workplace safety reinforces good practices.

No such thing as common sense: Repeatedly, the cause of accidents is an expectation that we all agree on what "common sense" is. Rather than assumptions regarding safe practices, good systems and well trained people are what prevent accidents. Leaving worker safety to "common sense" leads to accidents.

Lead by example. What others do in the everyday work routine may be the best training picture a new employee sees.

Supervisors and staff should be sure to understand the following issues:

- Proper safety practices to use and hazards within the department.
- What to do if there is an accident or injury.
- How to respond to emergencies.
- How to care for and use personal protective equipment (e.g.: gloves, eye protection).
- How to use tools, machinery, or work safely during hazardous processes.
- Housekeeping and personal cleanup rules.
- The location of emergency equipment and first-aid supplies.

Supervisors' participation in safe practices and safety programs helps keep morale high and reduce accidents!

See page 3 for Safety Training resources.

SAFETYTEAM MEMBERSHIP



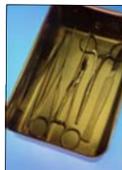
Do you know anyone who might like to volunteer 15 minutes each month for workplace safety?

If so, contact the SafetyTeam Coordinator at safeteam@ohsu.com or 4-7795.

Systems Thinking in Action

Even at safety- and health-conscious OHSU, incidents do occur from time to time. The following are some examples of either the lack of Systems Thinking or the presence of it. You'll see here which is which:

- **Lab:** An employee cuts his/her hand while holding and dissecting tissue over a sink. The employee's hand slips and the finger is cut through the glove. The employee washes the area and reports the incident. This employee's supervisor has assessed the situation and has made arrangements to set up suitable dissection station. Oversight of these kinds of procedures by expert staff was instituted.



- **Office Setting:** An employee's neck, back and leg are injured from a fall. The employee was standing on a chair with wheels and fell while reaching for an object in a high storage area. The supervisor's solution is to instruct the employee not to stand on a chair with wheels again.



Is it clear which solution will have a lasting effect on overall employee safety? In the first example, the manager's solution renders repetition of the incident very unlikely. Putting the right tools in the right place at the right time is enhanced by increased oversight. This promotes a culture of safe practices.

In the second example, the supervisor stops at the first "Why?," and an opportunity is missed to prevent repeated injury. The addition of a step stool or lower storage would result in a safer workplace for everyone in that area.



OHSU Training Resources

Integrity's Big Brain access page:

Here you'll find a list of Integrity's web based training as well as other training hosted on Big Brain.

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/training/bigbrain/index.cfm>

The Learning Center Portal:

Links to Big Brain and other, more specific areas of training can be found here.

<http://www.ohsu.edu/learning/>

Outside OHSU:

National OSHA webpage:

Occupational Safety & Health Administration offers safety information for various work environments.

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/index.html>

Oregon OSHA webpage:

Oregon's Occupational Safety & Health Administration specifically applies to Oregon workers.

<http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/index.html>

For a current issue of SafetyNews online, and for archives, visit:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safetynews.cfm>

The SafetyTeam page is available at:

<http://www.ohsu.edu/xd/about/services/integrity/ehrs/safety/gen/safeteam.cfm>

These pages are updated regularly. If there are OHSU resources you'd like to see linked, please send suggestions to the SafetyTeam Coordinator at:

safeteam@ohsu.edu

Questions? Ask Environmental Health & Radiation Safety:

503-494-7795

