



Unsafe, at-risk, safe behaviors: Know the difference

The term "behavior" often has a negative connotation because of how it is used in discussions focused on performance and results. Imagine your significant other stating, "I want to talk to you about your behavior last night." You wouldn't anticipate a positive conversation. Behavior simply means an observable act. It is demonstrated in the words you use and how you use them, your body language (such as facial and hand expressions) and work product.

When it comes to incident- and injury-prevention efforts and the role behaviors play, there are two desirable types of behaviors: those that are mandatory and those that are discretionary. Rules, policies and procedures are tools designed to address and control mandatory behaviors. Other tools like behavior-based safety are put in place to address and influence discretionary injury-prevention behaviors. Controlling and influencing tools should not overlap, as the value they contribute is different and mixing them creates compliance and cultural problems.

Further, there are observable behaviors that prompt others to express concern,

intervene or provide positive feedback. These behaviors fall into three categories: unsafe behaviors, at-risk behaviors and safe behaviors.

Unsafe behaviors — These are dangerous acts that often result in injuries and can be identified with common sense and experience. When actions are highly probable to result in a negative outcome (i.e., injury) with high severity potential, we view these as unsafe. Think of driving at a high rate of speed while taking your eyes off the road for 30 seconds. It would be hard to argue the likelihood is extremely high this behavior will result in an injury. This behavior should be stopped.

At-risk behaviors — These are behaviors with a low probability of injury that most often do not result in injury but occasionally do or at least have the potential to. These behaviors are a problem for individuals and organizations because they are difficult to detect with common sense and experience without more data and sophisticated tools to analyze the data. Think of driving at a low rate of speed while thinking of something else and changing the radio

station in your vehicle. While this risk is taken every day by countless drivers, few are involved in collisions. This behavior should be coached.

Safe behaviors — These are acts with little or no danger, almost never resulting in injury. The known risks are controlled, and everyone observing the action would agree. Think of driving with your hands kept on the steering wheel, eyes focused on the road and constantly scanning for changes in the environment, with your attention focused exclusively on the task at hand. This behavior should be positively reinforced.

The higher the probability of a negative consequence, the more easily people recognize the risks. When risk potential reduces, we tend to overlook or fail to recognize the risk associated with the task and continue to behave in an unsafe or risky way. Sometimes we don't realize we are not performing a task in the safest manner until someone points it out to us.

Rules should be established and consistently enforced with a balance of consequences to prevent or stop unsafe behaviors. At-risk behaviors should be

addressed by coaching, changing perceptions, overcoming the influences that encourage risky behavior and creating new habits. Safe behaviors should be positively reinforced immediately and as many times as possible to perpetuate new or existing safe habits. Terms and tools used to improve safety performance either create alignment and buy-in or create confusion and resistance to change. How do you use the term "behavior," and what tools do you use to improve them?

Shawn M. Galloway is the president of ProAct Safety and co-author of several books including the bestseller, "STEPS to Safety Culture ExcellenceSM," and his new release, "Forecasting Tomorrow: The Future of Safety Excellence." He has helped hundreds of organizations within every major industry internationally achieve and sustain excellence in performance and culture. He is also the host of the highly acclaimed weekly podcast series Safety Culture ExcellenceSM.

For more information, contact Galloway at (936) 273-8700 or info@ProActSafety.com. ●

Gold Standard Service

The Gold Standard

- Safety First
- First-Time Quality
- Schedule & Cost Certainty
- Innovation
- Ease of Doing Business
- Continuous Improvement

Specialty Welding & Machining

- Automatic/Semi-Automatic Weld Overlay
- Orbital Welding
- Boiler Tube Butt Welding
- Vessel & Piping Modifications
- Coke Drum Repairs
- Specialty Welding

Professional & Technical Support

- Engineering (all disciplines)
- Construction & Project Management
- Project Controls
- Technicians & Machinists
- Safety Specialists
- Estimators & Schedulers
- Administrative & Business Support

BHI WeldTech → **BHI Specialty Services**

Different name, same services you've come to expect.
www.bhienergy.com

Optimal 3D profiling, No downtime

Manage your tank online

Accurate and Cost Effective

Allow yourself better asset management by having optimal insight in your tank's performance. Our integrated approach provides you with a complete range of specialized Storage Tank Services. Accurate tank profiling gives you certainty whether or not to invest further in desludging, cleaning or inspection. Our 3D sludge profiler gives you easy access to the amount and distribution of sludge in your tank. The ATEX certification makes it suitable for all types of product.



Multiple services, singular solutions
for the Oil, Gas & Petrochemical Industry

9702 Galveston Rd.,
Houston, Texas 77034
281 484 2000
www.a-hak-is.com