



[COMPLIANCE TIPS]

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Keys to sustainable performance: Part II

Learning from all process safety sources of experience is vital for sustainable process safety performance and continuous improvement. Many should expand their sources of learning to those available outside the plant, company and even industry because they cannot “afford” to learn only from mistakes. We cannot learn enough — nor quickly enough.

In 2007 the Center for Chemical Process Safety published its next generation process safety management (PSM) system called “Risk Based Process Safety” (RBPS). The RBPS framework has 20 elements grouped into four accident prevention pillars, including committing to process safety; understanding hazards and risk, managing risk and learning from experience.

To learn from experience, companies and facilities should focus on the following items:

- Investigating incidents that occur at facilities to identify and address the root causes.
- Applying lessons from incidents that occur at other facilities within the company and within the industry.
- Measuring performance and striving to continuously improve in areas that have been

determined to be risk significant.

- Auditing PSM systems as well as the performance of work activities that make up the management system.
- Holding periodic management reviews to determine if the management systems are working as intended and if the work activities are helping the facility effectively manage risk.

How does one maximize learning from all sources and dovetail it with developing a learning environment in a company via culture change? To do so requires that a company focus on three main issues:

1. Creating and nurturing a process safety culture that embraces essential features related to sustained learning and institutional memory.
2. Learning well from all process safety signals sent by your PSM system and its performance — both good and bad.
3. Acting upon those signals in a disciplined fashion.

Provide strong process safety leadership

Visionary and inspiring managers support learning activities like incident investigation team staffing/training and participation in

industry networks to bring in lessons from other companies and industries.

Maintain a sense of vulnerability

The organization maintains a high awareness of process hazards and its potential consequences. There is a constant vigilance for indications of system weaknesses that might foreshadow more significant safety events.

Empower individuals

The organization provides employees with the requisite authority and resources to allow success in their assigned roles e.g., providing the time and tools for people involved with investigations, populating and using process safety metrics, performing audits and management reviews, and analysis of all of these results to discern performance trends.

Establish a questioning/learning environment

There is an organizational imperative for enhancing risk awareness and understanding as a means to continuous improvement in safety performance via appropriate and timely hazard/risk assessments, prompt and thorough incident investigations, looking beyond the

site or company for applicable learnings, and sharing and applying learnings throughout the organization, as appropriate.

Provide continuous monitoring of performance

The organization maintains a healthy curiosity, perhaps anxiety, with respect to “How are we doing?” Relevant, clear metrics address both leading and lagging indicators and are tracked, trended and responded to.

A particularly important organizational skill is to be able to look at seemingly non-relevant incidents or events and find out what lessons are relevant — even if the incident was not specific to one’s industry or appears on the surface to not be safety related.

Is process safety learning important to you? Each day workers make decisions that affect your operation. Are they making the same mistakes as their predecessors 10 years ago? Are you? Set up learning and remembering processes in companies to avoid repeating the sins of the past that have already paid the price for and should not have to experience again.

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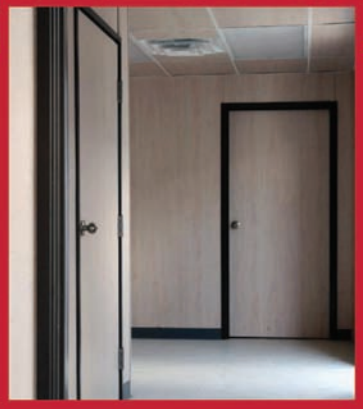
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