

Course Description

Frustrated with your Environmental Health and Safety Department? Do you feel like all they do is slow you down and prevent you from "just getting the job done"? I have a Bachelor of Science Degree in Environmental Health from Colorado State University and have worked in the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) field for 10 years. Please join me as we explore popular myths regarding EHS personnel and governing regulations. Let's discuss why the EHS department can seem like such a "pain in your neck" and learn some tips on how to build a stronger and more positive relationship with a department that really cares, but gets a bad rap anyway.



Learning Objectives

- Understand some of the myths that surround the EHS department and regulations in general
- Understand where your EHS staff may be coming from when providing workplace guidance and regulatory oversight at your facility
- Learn how to better utilize the EHS department
- Build a stronger and more positive relationship with EHS personnel



ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

Busting Myths and Working Better Together



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Credit(s) earned on completion of this course will be reported to American Institute of Architects (AIA) Continuing Education Session (CES) for AIA members.

Certificates of Completion for both AIA members and non-AIA members are available upon request.

Questions related to specific materials, methods, and services will be addressed at the conclusion of this presentation.



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More personally:
Avid nature enthusiast
Gardener (urban farmer)
Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
Animal lover
cats
dog
chickens
turtle
Conservationist with preservationist tendencies



Whooooo arree yoooouuuu?

POPULAR MYTHS

Comments that I have heard or heard of surrounding EHS over the course of my career

Regulations are written/created
whenever some bureaucrat
needs to keep their job.

FALSE

HSN1

Not only false, but exact opposite- a number of deaths and/or public outcry is required first, and regulations may still be delayed, loosened, etc based on industry input and lobbyists

Estimated that at least 14,000 deaths occurred per year before OSH Act 1971



3.39

Safety is Common Sense –
regulations need not apply

FALSE



Safety slows down the project

FALSE

Managed by/when safety is
incorporated from the beginning

EHS staff don't care about/pay attention
to the needs of the whole project

FALSE

Involvement often depends on other factors

EHS department may be excluded from some or all of the management planning meetings for a number of potential reasons:

- EHS department not able to handle the time load (size, responsibilities, etc)
 - Frequency of meetings - both before and during the project
 - often have specific safety topics addressed in a few of the meetings
- Project managers in place to manage hazardous materials
 - EHS utilized more as a resource
- Contractor Project Management in place-
 - They need to have their own EHS department who can tell them how to be safe and follow regulations-if they do not have this, DO NOT HIRE THEM!

*** Not saying this is wrong, it just may be the structure of the workplace***

EHS's main job is to ensure company compliance with OSHA/regulations

FALSE

It's written in the Act itself

The OSH Act's purpose is *"to assure so far as possible every working man and woman in the Nation **safe and healthful working conditions and to preserve our human resources.**"* General Duty Clause 5(a)(1).



EHS simply copies and pastes the Regulations into the company policy

Can be TRUE
should be
FALSE

My Safety is MY responsibility.
It shouldn't matter to EHS staff-
it will mean nothing to them if something
does happen



"Don't tell me how to work 'safer'!!
I've been at this job for five years!"

FALSE

IT DOES MATTER TO US.....

- We are mostly decent human beings- the health, wellbeing, injury or death of a coworker, friend, colleague matters to us
- We are trained for it to matter
- We could be held personally accountable and even potentially "criminally" or more likely civilly liable (depends on incident, and local/federal laws)

OSHA compliance generates safety

FALSE



4.50

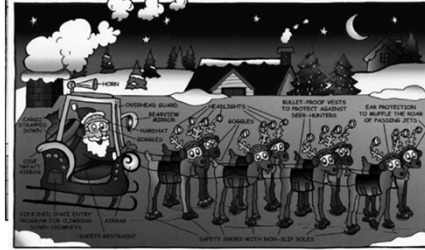
EHS is boring and staff have no humor



FALSE



UP ON THE ROOFTOP... IT'S SAFETY SANTA!



Without EHS - the world will end

Three of the worst workplace Disasters in History

1. 2 ship Collision and Explosion; Halifax, Canada Dec 6 1917
2000 dead 9000 injured
SS IMO in a rush to get out of Harbor ignored proper right of way to SS Mont Blanc
Many factors but understood that if safety stds had not been relaxed due to WWI, could have been avoided
2. Union Carbide India Limited pesticide plant Gas Leak, Bhopal, India Dec 2 1984
16000 dead (considered world's worst industrial disaster)
Tank containing Methyl isocyanate ruptured releasing 30 metric tonnes of toxic gas into atmosphere
Gov't and activists determined criminally negligent poor maintenance and poor mgmt of plant and equipment mainly to blame-safety systems offline, gas scrubbers offline, safety systems offline, valves and lines in poor condition
3. Rana Plaza Collapse; Dhaka, Bangladesh April 24 2013
1130 dead, 2500 injured
8 story bldg built on an old pond, built 4 stories higher than approved, made of sub-std materials, being used for industrial use instead of its commercial designation
Almost been avoided as many businesses had closed immediately after cracks started to appear on the lower floors.
Bldg owners ignored the concerns and ordered workers back into the bldg, on the day they returned the bldg, collapsed
Swift response by govt-42 people charged with murder

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Closer to home

Date of Incident	City	Select State	Incident Description
02/02/2014	Healing	CO	Worker fatally crushed between two counterweights
01/08/2014	Woodland Park	CO	Worker fatally crushed between hoist and pulley
01/03/2014	Denver	CO	Worker died after being struck by moving vehicle
11/24/2013	Wile	CO	Worker died after being pulled into roller
10/09/2013	Grand Junction	CO	Worker fatally struck by falling metal pipe
07/14/2013	Jefferson	CO	Worker fatally struck by piece of wood ejected by conveyor
06/11/2013	Colorado Springs	CO	Worker fatally crushed under collapsed roof
05/13/2013	Denver	CO	Worker died after falling from storage rack
07/24/2012	Castle Rock	CO	Worker fatally crushed between beams
03/22/2012	Mountain	CO	Worker fatally struck by chain saw



The Associated Press recently released a list of mines/mine complexes across the country that are releasing polluted water daily.

Three Colorado mines on it (Superfund sites)

- Nelson Tunnel/Commodore mining complex in Creede, Colorado, 388,800 gallons daily.
- Captain Jack Mill in Ward, Colorado 28,800 gallons daily
- Standard Mine in Gunnison National Forest 14,400 gallons daily

EHS will solve all of your safety problems

FALSE



Any other myths to share?

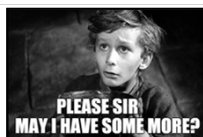
HOW DO WE WORK BETTER TOGETHER

Get to know your EHS staff



- They want to know you
 - Again.... decent people
 - And it helps in the "battle" for safety
 - What motivates, incentives, etc
- Make them human in your mind if you have negative feelings towards to "profession/office"
 - They ARE NOT the enemy
 - Remember that they are always still learning
 - May need to review/investigate information, regulations (they change), and best mgmt practices to answer questions/concerns and provide quality guidance
- Try to avoid seeing them as "management"
 - While the position of EHS is inherently managing by design, EHS is really there to make your work safer-in essence they "work for you"
- Understand the myths and learn to control any preconceived bias

Ask for what you need- Help EHS Help you



- See a safety issue? let EHS know (follow your internal process)
 - Ask for Job hazard analysis when needed
 - Provide a better plan/process when bringing up an area of concern if possible
 - Safety committee
- Don't be afraid to gently, respectfully challenge them or ask for additional information if you don't understand/agree with guidance provided or believe that they may be incorrect
- If procedures and guidelines for specific work are not easily useable/understandable, politely ask them to make it simpler or provide a secondary "memo" to use for quick reference
- Ability to submit anonymous safety concerns
 - Don't abuse as an excuse to get out of work
 - Be serious
- Training
 - In-house vs 3rd party vs videos vs Online
 - What is available? what is feasible and affordable? What WORKS BEST?

Include EHS in as much of the pre-planning and active planning as possible

- Be sure to include them and update them by whatever means are possible/best
 - Written! If it is not in writing it doesn't exist
- Give EHS enough time to conduct sampling, testing and to review results and develop a plan to address hazards
 - And include any abatement time in the project time scope (abatement typically have to be complete prior to other work starting)
 - Sample analysis may take longer during peak seasons (late spring and early summer for schools)
- Work with reputable companies that have worked with/around the hazards found in your facility-
 - Check with EHS-may have regulatory resources of "who not to choose"
 - Check their credentials through discussions before hiring
 - Are their staff properly trained (may need awareness when working AROUND hazardous building materials)

Be the model for the behavior you want to see

- For everything
 - Try to put yourself in the other persons shoes (esp during a disagreement)
 - Give others the benefit of the doubt (believe that they are trying their best)
- REFOCUSING and retraining when needed
- As an EHS professional, I hold myself to the highest level of safety that I ask of my workforce
 - The behavior hierarchy



REMEMBER..... Safety is ultimately **YOUR** responsibility

You can lead a human to knowledge but you can't make him think.



- EHS is a RESOURCE
- You have the choice to be safe
 - We can provide the information but can't make you do the work safely
- Follow your knowledge and your training

THANK YOU

I hope you enjoyed this presentation
BE SAFE

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-GnM9J6h0c>

THIS CONCLUDES THE
AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF
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