



Fundamental Human Value: Safety



There are many justifiable reasons why we have a safety program. There are moral reasons (protecting people), legal reasons, business reasons (risk management, including insurance and liability cost), etc.

There is, however; one fundamental reason when we analyze everything that may be the most important. In fact, focusing on this will not only enable us to achieve operational and organizational excellence but will also enable us to satisfy all the other possible reasons for a safety program.

Safety is about caring.

This special reason for safety is simply that “We Care.”

We care about keeping ourselves and those who work with us, live with us or interact with us safe and free from harm. In today’s publication, we look at “Caring through Safety” as outlined by the President of a BHP Billiton coal plant. “Why do we work safely? Why do we spend so much time and effort on keeping ourselves and the people who work with us safe? These are questions I asked myself when I started working as President of BHP Billiton’s New Mexico Coal asset a couple of months ago and the answers have helped me find new ways to motivate myself and others to work safely.”

“I believe that we work safely not because it is the law or because of regulations, even though they require it. We work safely not just because it is good business practice, although it certainly is. The reason we work safely isn’t to meet any corporate targets, even though these are worthwhile in helping us direct our efforts.”



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“I believe that the real reason we work safely is because we truly care about people, their wellbeing and their ability to pursue their interests outside of work. As I see it, our obligation to work safely and to keep employees safe is a direct result of a fundamental human value of caring for people. Seen this way, “safety” – or working safely – is not an effort or a cost to our business, but rather a measure of how much we care about ourselves and each other. By keeping people safe and healthy, we allow them to go back to their families, friends, hobbies, and interests outside of work at the end of every shift.”



Clarifying the reason(s) we work safely changes our motivation for doing so from “compliance with the rules” to “a commitment to our wellbeing and our interests outside of work.” For me this is a very powerful reason to keep ourselves and others safe.” We know that there is no difference in our workplace and we share the same values embraced above.

