



# Thank You for Working Safely



If you think about safety, it seems that we all have a safety filter.

This filter exists in the minds of the people as they work. It is this filter which stops us from doing things which could certainly hurt us.

However, the barriers to taking shortcuts are often nullified by the imperative to finish the task or the pressure to behave in a certain way. This pressure can be exerted by our peers as well as our immediate supervisors. It easily overrides our sense of self preservation.

*Positive reinforcement is one of the most important tools that we can use to improve our safety culture.*

How safely will you work? Do you have a choice? Are you in charge of your own behavior? If not, who is? Do you make a deliberate choice to take an unsafe shortcut in your work? What goes through your mind when you know that you are working unsafely? Are you anxious to complete that dangerous part of the task so that you can go onto something which is less risky? Or do you think that the risk you are taking is an acceptable part of your job?

It is felt that the secret is in creating an environment which encourages you to be proud of your safe working habits. In addition, we should recognize your safe working habits as part of good performance management techniques. This positive re-enforcement will ensure that your safe working habits will be repeated. To do this, we must be present in your workplace on a regular basis so that we can recognize your good example.



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Positive re-enforcement is one of the most important tools that we can use to improve our safety culture. Positive re-enforcement takes place in the mind of the other person. Although our intentions may be to positively reinforce someone, it may not be received that way. When you positively reinforce somebody you comment on their behavior in a positive fashion. As a result they know that we've recognized that their behavior meets our approval and that we appreciate it.

Unfortunately, it's not a natural behavior on our part; it's something that we have to work at. If we fail to recognize your safe behavior, we should have no expectation that it will continue. We can fail to recognize your safe behavior by, never visiting your workplace, or, by only catching you doing the job incorrectly. Recognizing safe behavior, can take the form of a nod, a thank you, a comment regarding the good example, a note, or any other way.

**There are three factors which must be considered with positive recognition.**

- Firstly, if recognition is given too often, its worth will be devalued.
- Secondly, if it is given too rarely, it will have little impact.
- Thirdly, if the recognition is given whilst the person is doing the job it will have the greatest effect.

*"People are proud only if they have something to be proud of, otherwise, it is just false pride and destructive."*

*Peter F. Drucker*

**The leader's job is to ensure that factors one and two are avoided.** There must also be consistency in reinforcing positive behavior. There is a whole range of behavior that we can positively reinforce. When we give positive reinforcement we are encouraging that person to repeat that behavior. A lot of people ask, "How long do I have to give positive reinforcement?" The answer is in the question, "How long do you want that behavior to last?"

Without positive re-enforcement, behavior will undergo a process called extinction and eventually ceases altogether. This is true of the most self-motivated people you know. Self-motivated people provide their own positive re-enforcement, but if they get to the stage where they can't, their motivation will cease. The task of the leader is to work out how he or she is going to be present in the work place on a regular basis. They are going to have to plan their daily visits to the work area and be ready to identify anyone who deserves recognition, as well as planning how they are going to deliver positive reinforcement.

We will start by saying, “Thank you for working safely today!!”

