

This newsletter is to inform you of recent changes & trends regarding health and safety.

The Turning Point is a monthly newsletter covering topics from various industries and sectors. The Turning Point will respond to your inquiries and inform you of current services and updates regarding

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc.



RAISING THE STANDARD CONSULTING

CONSULTANT ARTICLE FEATURE

BEX BRACK (CHST)

R. "BEX" BRACK GREW UP IN A CLOSE-KNIT FARMING AND RANCHING COMMUNITY EAST OF HOUSTON, TEXAS. BEX HAS SPENT 40 YEARS IN CONSTRUCTION, WORKING AS A HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR, PIPE FITTER, AND IRONWORKER BEFORE DEDICATING THE LAST 20 YEARS TO THE FIELD OF SAFETY. IN 2017, BEX ACCEPTED AN OPPORTUNITY WITH RTS CONSULTING, INC. AND MOVED TO HAWAII, THEN QUICKLY FELL IN LOVE WITH THE ALOHA SPIRIT AND THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY IT OFFERS.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS WITH REINFORCEMENT, REPETITION, AND LEADERSHIP

Have you ever wondered why looking both ways before crossing the road is second nature? It's a habit instilled from an early age, reinforced by parents and caregivers to ensure safety. Much like using seat belts, not playing with matches, or expressing basic courtesies like "please" and "thank you," these habits become ingrained through repetition and reinforcement. As adults, we not only

benefit from these learned behaviors but also carry the responsibility of passing them on to the next generation.

In the workplace, safety professionals play a similar role. Our job isn't just to identify infractions and correct unsafe behaviors—it's to use every observation as a teaching moment.

One of the most effective strategies I've implemented is addressing safety concerns in the next morning huddle. This approach allows the entire crew to learn from real situations, reinforcing proper procedures, and preventing future incidents.

1. Establish the Foundation for Situational Awareness

Define Situational Awareness - Clarify what situational awareness means within your organization or team. Highlight why it's important for safety, efficiency, and decision-making.

Communicate Clear Expectations - Set clear guidelines and protocols for identifying and responding to situations. Encourage team members to stay alert, anticipate issues, and act proactively.

2. Reinforcement – Encourage and Support Awareness

Provide Immediate Feedback - Acknowledge and reinforce positive examples of situational awareness in action. Correct lapses constructively, focusing on learning rather than punishment.

Incorporate Real-Life Scenarios - Use case studies, simulations, and debriefs to highlight good and poor situational awareness. Encourage team members to share their experiences and insights.

Reward Positive Behavior - Implement recognition programs to reinforce and motivate continued awareness. Celebrate individuals or teams who demonstrate strong situational awareness.

3. Repetition – Build Muscle Memory Through Practice

Conduct Regular Training - Schedule ongoing training sessions focused on situational awareness. Include drills that require quick thinking and situational assessment.

Daily or Weekly Check-Ins - Start meetings or shifts with a quick situational awareness briefing. Encourage team members to report changes or risks they've noticed.

Consistent Messaging - Include situational awareness tips and reminders in communications. Make situational awareness part of the daily operational language.

4. Leadership – Model and Drive the Culture

Lead by Example - Leaders should consistently demonstrate strong situational awareness. When leaders remain calm and aware under pressure, the team will follow.

Empower Decision-Making - Encourage team members to speak up and act when they notice a problem. Create a culture where situational awareness is valued over hierarchy.

Mentor and Develop Skills - Provide coaching to strengthen situational awareness at all levels. Encourage leaders to mentor team members in recognizing and responding to situations.

5. Evaluate and Improve

Review and Analyze Incidents - After an incident, debrief with the team to identify situational gaps. Adjust

protocols and training based on lessons learned.

Adapt to Changing Environments – Situational awareness should evolve as new challenges and threats emerge. Encourage innovation and adaptability in response to changing conditions.

WRAP-UP:

Strong leadership means keeping teams engaged and actively involved in workplace safety. By fostering open communication and consistently reinforcing best practices, we create an environment where situational awareness becomes second nature—just like looking both ways before crossing the road. A culture of safety not only protects workers but also contributes to project success by reducing incidents, improving efficiency, and ensuring everyone goes home safe at the end of the day. Developing strong situational awareness among crew members requires consistent reinforcement of key standards and practices. By regularly repeating and reinforcing expectations as observations arise, team members become more adept at recognizing potential hazards, adjusting their actions accordingly, and maintaining a proactive approach to safety and efficiency. Leaders should use realtime examples during operations to highlight best practices, ensuring that situational awareness becomes second nature rather than an afterthought.

It is very effective to provide immediate feedback whenever a crew member encounters a situation requiring heightened awareness. By consistently addressing observations—such as equipment placement, environmental changes, or procedural adherence—leaders can reinforce a culture

of attentiveness. Repetition not only ingrains these behaviors into daily routines but also encourages team members to remain vigilant and actively communicate potential concerns. The results of this practice go beyond just safety, it has a direct impact on the company's success. Finishing a project with no injuries or accidents improves the company's bottom line by reducing insurance costs and strengthening its reputation, leading to new contracts and business opportunities. Additionally, employees take pride in their work when they complete a project safely and efficiently, fostering a sense of accomplishment and reinforcing a positive workplace culture.

R. Bex Brack, CHST. 12 March 2025

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EXCAVATOR THAT BACKED ONTO WORKER HAD NO MIRRORS, SAYS OPERATOR

The excavator involved in the fatal incident in New Brunswick two years ago was operating with missing mirrors, a key safety issue that may have contributed to the tragedy, according to its operator.

On Aug. 21, 2023, Jamie Harris, 42, died at a worksite located on Ulysse Drive, part of the Dover Estates mobile home park in Dieppe, when an excavator backed onto him.

Ghyslain Bouchard, co-owner of Perfection Contracting – Harris's employer – testified during the inquest proceedings at the Moncton courthouse that a pre-work inspection by the operator was supposed to identify maintenance issues that could wait, as well as those that required an immediate fix.

Mirrors and backup beeper were among items Bouchard said needed immediate repair...

What happened on the day of the incident

On the day of the incident, workers of the company dug a hole to find a leaking water pipe at the site. However, it was unsuccessful.

Near the end of the day, Harris and the excavator operator were the only workers left at the job site as the hole was being filled back in.

Harris was raking around the front of the excavator before he went behind the machine to continue raking. It was at this point that communication between the two workers broke down, said Crown prosecutor Guillaume Rigucci, according to a previous CBC report.

The excavator operator backed up and then saw Harris's boot in front of the machine.

"He somehow got under the track, and I couldn't feel him under the track," Shayne Henry, the excavator operator, testified, according to a [CBC](#) report. "If he would've screamed or anything I would've heard him."

Harris was "crushed to death," according to a previous CBC report.

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STUDY IDENTIFIES PERSISTENT PPE CHALLENGES

Health and safety professionals across industries continue to struggle with a critical challenge—getting workers to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) consistently and correctly. According to the newly released *2025 PPE Pain Points Study: Top Trends and Challenges*, conducted by J. J. Keller & Associates, Inc. and the International Safety Equipment Association (ISEA), compliance remains one of the biggest hurdles in workplace safety, even as PPE program management shows signs of improvement.

Nicole Randall, senior director of marketing and communications at ISEA, emphasizes the importance of worker protection. “One thing that we found that’s a positive is that PPE management is strong,” she says. “We’re happy to see that folks have the time and resources they need to assess their PPE needs. That’s wonderful. Of course, there’s always room for improvement until we see 100% compliance.”

Persistent compliance struggle

Despite progress in PPE management, more than 75% of survey respondents report having difficulty getting employees to wear PPE at least some of the time. Workers cite

discomfort, inconvenience, or even aesthetic concerns as reasons for not wearing required gear.

“Safety professionals struggle with this regularly,” Randall explains. “Some workers just don’t think they need it, they don’t like how it feels, they don’t like how it fits, or even how it looks. In some cases, there are cultural issues—workers don’t want to feel like a rookie on the job, so they avoid trying a new type of PPE that might be more protective.”

Employers also grapple with PPE training. Nearly half of respondents struggle to train workers on when PPE is necessary, how to wear it correctly, and its limitations. “There’s no sense in wearing it if you’re not going to wear it correctly,” Randall warns. “If it’s too big, it could fall off. If it’s too small, it won’t provide the protection it’s meant to. Training workers to use PPE properly is still a major challenge.”

Sizing and weather considerations

The study highlights that while PPE sizing issues persist, the industry is making progress



—especially for women’s PPE. Nearly one-third of safety professionals still struggle to find properly fitting options, but Randall notes a growing awareness.

“It’s not as much of a challenge as it used to be,” she says. “We’re seeing more education, more reporting, and more industry focus on making sure all body types have PPE that fits—whether someone is shorter, taller, thinner, or has religious or cultural considerations.”

Weather conditions are another evolving factor in PPE selection. While 84% of safety professionals consider weather when purchasing PPE, Randall sees an opportunity for further education. “With record-setting temperatures becoming more common, it’s crucial to ensure PPE is optimized for extreme heat and cold,” she says.

Moving from reactive to proactive safety

One of the most concerning findings in the study is that many companies still rely on injury data to evaluate their PPE programs. Randall urges safety professionals to take a

more proactive approach.

The data shows that analysis often doesn’t occur until after injuries happen,” she explains. “That’s very reactive, and we need safety professionals to be proactive. They need to monitor workers to ensure they’re wearing PPE correctly and educate them on why it’s so important.”

The bottom line, Randall stresses, is that education and awareness must remain a top priority. “We must continue to express to workers how critical PPE is. There are real-life examples of injuries and fatalities due to non-compliance, and we need to ensure workers understand that PPE is there to keep them safe and get them home at the end of the day.”

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WORKER DEAD IN FALL AT BARRHAVEN CONSTRUCTION SITE

Ontario's ministry of labour is investigating a possible workplace fatality after one person fell from a building under construction in the city's south end Monday afternoon.

Paramedics said they were called to a construction site near the intersection of Longfields and Chapman Mills drives in Barrhaven at 1:10 p.m.

The person was pronounced dead at the scene, paramedics said. The cause of the fall was not immediately specified.

The location is the site of a Minto Communities townhouse development project called Anthem.

Several police vehicles remained on scene late Monday afternoon.

Paramedics said the deceased was an "adult worker" but did not provide additional information about their identity as next of kin is still being notified.

Minto Canada confirmed that the incident involved a trade contractor.

Brent Strachan, Minto Canada's chief operating officer, said in a statement that the company is cooperating with the ministry in its investigation, and is providing counselling and support to their staff. Strachan's statement added that the company is "committed to the safety and wellbeing of everyone on our sites."

In its own statement, the Ontario Ministry of Labour said it was notified of a possible workplace fatality and that a ministry inspector has been assigned to look into it. The ministry was unable to provide further information at this time.

The ministry is required to investigate cases that involve the death or injury of a worker.

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Raising The Standard



RTS Working at Heights Training

RTS, in partnership with BEST Safety Training, offers CPO Approved Working at Heights Training. This 8 hour course will provide workers who are exposed to the hazard of falling with adequate knowledge about fall hazards and general safety practices to work safely at heights, and provide workers who use personal fall protection equipment with sufficient knowledge about its purpose and use.

RTS Due Diligence Training

Due Diligence means taking every reasonable precaution to protect the Health and Safety of workers. Demystify the process of establishing and maintaining a successful Health & Safety System and ensure your organization's compliance with the Due Diligence Legislative Obligations. We have assisted numerous companies in Workwell audits in the last few years. We have a 100% pass rate. You will be in good hands under our direction.

For more information please contact Hailey Mesner at hmesner@rtsconsulting.com

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Raising the Standard Consulting will raise the standard of EH&S in your organization through the development of new and innovative strategies and programs driven by your own individual needs.

We want to build relationships with our clients to help create lasting change in their organizations. Contact us today to build a safer tomorrow.

With Aloha,

Stanford Brown, B.Sc., CSP, CSHP, CRSP, CHSC, Senior Consultant, President & CEO