

- ✓ **STAY AT HOME** (UNTIL THE LOCKDOWN IS LIFTED)
- ✓ **STAY ALERT**
- ✓ **STAY SAFE**

Development of Positive Performance Indicators

The use of classical industrial safety techniques, including the accident prevention strategies formulated on the basis of accident investigation or of various accident sequence models (Heinrich, 1980), routine safety inspections etc. have reached the limit of their effectiveness. A variety of measures used in classical industrial safety to evaluate and measure the safety performance are reactive, being calculated on the basis of accident consequences of the accidents we have not been able to prevent.

Examples quoted previously include lost time injuries, first aid injuries or medical treatment injuries, as well as restricted duty injuries. The System Safety approach focuses on the preventive measures, without waiting for occupational accidents to happen and for occupational diseases to develop. This is connected with the effort to develop predictive measures of occupational safety and health performance and related safety management techniques. One of these techniques, and a very powerful one, is safety auditing, i.e. auditing of the critical range of the accident prevention processes.

This article describes and discusses the development of positive performance indicators and the warm acceptance of this novelty safety performance measure worldwide by industries in the United States of America, Europe and Australia. Special attention is paid to Australian, and particularly Western Australian experience, where mining and mineral processing industries derived numerous benefits in occupational safety and health from systematic applications of positive performance indicators. value to help understand or modify the contributory factors that produce unwanted outcomes -accidents and injuries.

Whilst the traditional reactive measures of safety, the accident and injury records, measure the number of such events, they do not provide any indication of the programme effectiveness. The effective occupational health strategy aimed at helping all those involved in the prevention of ill-health at work, should involve a partnership of those involved to work together towards common goals. This should involve the relevant government authorities and all industry, with the industry having to play the most important role. It is expected that the industry will put in place the systems, which will identify the widest range of occupational safety and health problems and establish priorities.

It is necessary to apply resources where they are most effective. The new systems must include the provisions for staff training to ensure that ill health at work would be targeted continuously and the workers would apply their skills to protect them-selves against known hazards. The effectiveness of actions taken must be monitored, and inputs and outputs must be clearly measured. Instead of relying on the numbers of tool-box meetings, we should measure improvements attributable to them. Using positive performance indicators is one of very effective strategies to achieve such goals.

Positive performance indicators

Positive performance indicators (PPIs) for occupational safety and health performance measurement should be seen as a method for assessing and measuring the organisational systems. This includes, for example, the accountability and responsibility of managers. Essentially, this means that we can establish a host of targets and measures aligned to what we want to measure as well as test strategic and operational targets.

PPIs must form an integral component of the organisation's program and they should be linked and supported by management systems. They are a proactive measure but be mindful that they are not the beginning or the end of the system.

It is important to remember that the use of PPIs is essentially a methodology and a tool to improve safety and health while providing outcomes that minimise risk for the organisation. PPIs must be linked to programs or strategies that have a high priority for the organisation, for example they should be:

- implementation oriented;
- results oriented, that is setting targets that are measurable and achievable;
- related top process, relevant to the workplace in question;
- measuring an increase or decrease of a particular factor, e.g. the ability to recognise achievements and identify opportunities for improvement and future planning; and
- assessing the effectiveness and application of a procedure.

It is recognised that in the first instance the collected data may be qualitative as against quantitative however, more importantly is the establishment of a framework for the systematic development of PPIs while at the same time providing an opportunity for the more effective use of the lag indicators such lost time injuries. PPIs and lag indicators can be used side by side to support the overall safety and health management of the organization.

PPIs are workplace based and specific to the organisation. They are as a rule of thumb unable to measure legislative requirements or be used as a comparative measure against similar organisations.

Examples of PPIs

The following 5 examples of PPIs are based on the key objectives of Policy, Planning, Implementation, Measurement and evaluation and Management Review. (Criteria of the Australian & New Zealand Standards AS 4801/4804, 2001).

Policy

Does the organisational Occupational Safety and Health Policy include accountability, responsibility and authority statements aimed at relevant levels of management? To have 100% of managers trained to Certificate IV in Safety within 12 months commencing?

Planning

Do managers pro-actively plan for occupational safety and health? Are the plans linked to the organisational strategic and operational plan?

Implementation

What percentage of Executive Managers have been trained and can demonstrate a working knowledge of OHS legislation, principles and practices? To have all requirements of the amended legislation implemented into current procedures within 12 months.

Measurement and Evaluation

At what organisational level are OH&S Performance Indicators reported? Are all lost time injuries investigated as per the requirements of the organisational Policy? (This could be for example that investigation and recommendations are made within the same working shift).

Management Review

How does the overall Occupational Safety & Health strategic plan or management plan operate? At what level of the organisation are managers held accountable for their actions or at what level of the organisation are plans and outcomes reported?

Advantages of PPIs

- Some of the advantages of PPIs are:
- They are relatively easy to establish;
- They can be easily understood;
- Able to be used to identify trends;
- They provide the opportunity to identify areas requiring additional resources; and
- They are proactive and positive in nature allowing the measurement of organisational process, safety systems or part safety systems and can also be used to measure resource based systems and strategic objectives.

Acceptance of Positive Performance Indicators Methodology

The warm acceptance of this novelty safety performance methodology has been widespread. In Australia it is being used by governmental bodies (e.g., Department of Employment and Industrial Relations 2005; NSW Government 2011), by private industries and by insurance companies (e.g., CCI Insurance 2014).

Positive Performance Indicators in Western Australian mining and mineral processing

In the Western Australian mining and mineral processing industries, the continuing reduction in the total number of lost time injuries over the last decades and the consequent improvement in the lost time injury frequency rate for most mining operations has eroded the importance of injury statistics as a measure of safety and health performance in the industry. The industry has long realised that injury statistics are at best only a rule of thumb indicator of injury trends and provide no meaningful direction for the implementation of innovative and progressive initiatives for the substantial reduction of workplace injuries (The Chamber of Minerals and Energy, 2004). The new initiatives have led to the development of the strategies for the identification of the major factors which, if addressed on a systematic basis, would facilitate a positive performance culture on mine sites. Major areas in which a positive performance culture has developed in the Western Australian mining industry are:

- Safety Policy
- Leadership and Management Commitment
- Culture
- Organisation for excellence in safety and health
- Line responsibility
- Incident management and follow up
- Supportive health and safety staff
- Safety activity effectiveness
- Safety audits
- Safety training
- Information management and communication
- Contractor management -major contractors
- Emergency prevention, preparedness, response and recovery

Conclusions

The reasons discussed above demonstrate beyond any doubt that the traditional reactive measures of safety, or out-comes, could not be used as reliable measures of occupational safety and health performance. Therefore, positive performance measures or proactive monitoring data should be fully utilised in the development of occupational safety and health management systems to assist industry in achieving further improvement in occupational safety and health.

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