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H&S NEWS
APRIL 2010

Six ways to improve your safe behaviour observations

By Jamie Ross, MausIMM, H&S Committee member

Although they go by a range of different names across the industry, safe behaviour observations are now one of the more important safety management tools available for managing on-the-job hazards. These tools benefit safety both by *addressing specific behaviours* of people on the job being observed, and by *supporting a safety culture* through increased dialogue and engagement.

A safe behaviour observation is essentially a process where one person observes another person performing a job, and then discusses with that person some of the safety positives they have witnessed, and any areas for improvement in the way they are working or the controls they have put in place to manage hazards.

Usually the observation process involves three stages:

1. Find, approach and observe the job
2. Discuss the observed behaviours with the person or team performing the job
3. Complete a form to record the safe and unsafe behaviours observed

Safe behaviour observations may be carried out by anyone on the mine site, and depending on the program, will be aimed at observing a person's *peers* or *team members*. Many sites have rolled out the observation programs from the top down, encouraging managers and then front line supervisors to carry out observations, and then once the process is understood, training all employees to perform observations on their peers.

Although the specifics of behavioural observation programs vary from business to business and site to site, there are some key elements that we as individuals can work on to make the overall system more valuable in improving safety culture. *Here are my six tips to improve your observations:*

1. It's the discussion that counts

The main value to be found in the safety observation process is actually in the *discussion* which takes place, not in the observing or the paperwork (although these are both vital to the overall process). By engaging in a discussion about safety, we are not only addressing any specific issues that were observed on the job and giving the person feedback, but we are also making a habit of *thinking* and *talking* about safety – one of the biggest keys to a great safety culture.

Make sure that you enter into a discussion with the person you are observing. Even if everything is being done correctly, you can still talk about why people did certain things and what was their thought process.

Article continues, PTO

Six ways to improve your safe behavior observations: continued

2. Ask lots of questions

You don't need to be the expert on the particular work area or task being observed. In fact, sometimes the best observers are those who are not familiar with the work being carried out. The best way to start your discussion with the person you are observing is with a question, something like: "*What is the job you are working on here?*" Follow this up with more questions to find out what is going on, why people are doing certain things, and what they have thought about in regards to hazards and safety. Questions such as these are quite useful:

- "What hazards have you identified on this job?"
- "How could someone get hurt doing this job?"
- "Is there a procedure for this job?"
- "How could someone get hurt later on after you've left the area?"

By probing with questions you will learn more about the job itself, the hazards involved, and can dig into the reasons behind people's behaviours or lack-thereof. *Safety observations should be less about telling, and more about asking and engaging.*

3. Focus on behaviours

Always focus only on what you can physically observe – hazards, environmental conditions, and behaviours. Stay away from discussing or assuming what people's *attitudes, thoughts, or intentions* are. The safety discussion we have as part of the observation should focus on the specific *behaviours* that you physically observed, and why you think those behaviours were safe or not. *If we focus only on facts and behaviours, and ask lots of questions instead of giving instructions, we will find the observee much more open to discussing their own behaviours and suggesting improvements.*

4. Do it in pairs

A great way to improve the effectiveness of your observations is to do them with someone else. To gain the benefit of a fresh set of eyes mentioned above, try performing an observation in your area with someone else who has no knowledge of your area. For example, grab someone from the processing plant and take them into the mine with you to do observations together. You gain the benefits of a fresh set of eyes looking at how your people are working, and you can also gather feedback from the other person on your own performance while doing the observation and having the subsequent discussions. As an added bonus, you are much more likely to go out and do the observations, and find valuable ones, if you've made a set time to do it with someone else.

5. Go to a variety of workplaces

The workshop just outside your office is probably an easy place to do safety observations – it's close by and there's always something going on. But it is important to get out to all the different parts of site and seek out people doing jobs that would not normally be observed, jobs that are one-offs, or jobs that you are unfamiliar with. Also try going to work areas that you do not normally visit, like the processing plant if you work in the mine or vice versa.

Article continues, PTO

Six ways to improve your safe behavior observations: continued

6. Give praise where it's due

There is an early perception at sites where safe behaviour observations are introduced that they are only aimed at catching people out doing the wrong thing. Make sure in your observations, that you are also looking to catch people doing the *right* thing. Give praise or positive feedback when you see things being done correctly, hazards being controlled, or instances where people have gone beyond the procedure with safety ideas they've thought of themselves. Certainly we always need to be addressing any areas of non-compliance or where improvements are needed, but with a little positive feedback included in each observation, people begin to look forward to being observed.

Good luck with your future safety observations, and remember that ***we can only change safety cultures one observation, one discussion, and one leader at a time.***

- Jamie Ross, MAusIMM, BE(Mining), MBA

Jamie is a mining engineer and member of The AusIMM H&S Committee. In his spare time, Jamie is the author of a mining safety and leadership blog at www.miningman.com. Each week on the site he provides a safety topic which you can use for your safety observations at work, including what to look for and sample dialogue to use.

If you'd like to comment on the article above, please head to the website and leave a comment.

Subscribe to the new health and safety forum: customise to your interests!

The AusIMM has launched a new online health and safety discussion forum, to allow members to share technical information and experiences in the health and safety area. The forum allows subscribers to customise settings to meet their interests. To subscribe to the health and safety forum simply follow these five easy steps:

1. Click on : <http://www.ausimm.com.au/forum/default.aspx>
2. Login as a member
3. Click on 'Health and Safety Discussion Forum'
4. Click on 'Set my email preferences' button on the right
5. Check the box 'Alert to all new threads in this forum'

Not a member? Join today, so that you can participate in the health and safety forum and receive a range of other AusIMM member benefits! Find out more, including how to join, at:

<http://www.ausimm.com.au/Membership/Default.aspx>



Oresome Opportunities

GHD is one of the world's leading engineering, architecture and environmental consulting firms. Established in 1928, GHD employs more than 6000 people across five continents.

We are looking for experienced Coal Geologists and Mining Engineers to join our Newcastle/Singleton and Brisbane teams.

GEOLOGISTS

- JORC competent preferred
- 10+ years experience in black coal
- Competent in using geological and quality functions within industry recognised software
- Sound experience in QA/QC Geological logging and field data collection

MINING ENGINEERS

- 5+ years experience within open cut and underground coal mining environment
- Proven experience working with concept designs
- Management of design process for above and underground mining infrastructure and equipment
- Production of mine designs for open cut and underground operations using industry recognised software

You must be willing to undertake field work duties regionally, nationally and internationally in line with project requirements.

Bilingual Mandarin and English speaking candidates are encouraged to apply.

HOW TO APPLY

Please view our website www.ghd.com and browse our careers section to discover our current opportunities. For further information please contact **Tania Smeë** - Recruitment Coordinator on **+61 2 49799920**.

APPLY NOW!!

Associated non-technical skills fact sheets released - Mine Safety Advisory Council

The *Associated non-technical skills (ANTS)* fact sheets have been released by the Mine Safety Advisory Council.

The Council has released a suite of fact sheets that will assist the mining and extractives industry to foster ANTS. Competence in ANTS will enable all who work in the industry to interact effectively.

ANTS are the cognitive, social and personal resource skills that complement technical skills and contribute to safe and efficient task performance.

For further information and to download the fact sheets, please visit:

<http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/minerals/safety/world-leading-ohs/ants>



Industry &
Investment

AusIMM publications

The AusIMM Bulletin update

The **April 2010 edition** of the Bulletin is out now! Keep a look out in your mailboxes. Features include:

- WA/Pilbara
- Professional development
- New technologies
- Investment opportunities
- Flotation

The **June 2010 edition** is currently being planned, and will be released at the beginning of June 2010. Features include:

- South Australia
- Uranium
- Geosequestration
- Environmental and land management
- Open pit mining

We are currently still looking for items for the environmental and land management feature. If you are interested in submitting an article, or have an idea of a contact to approach, please email the Editor, Stephanie Omizzolo, via: somizzolo@ausimm.com.au

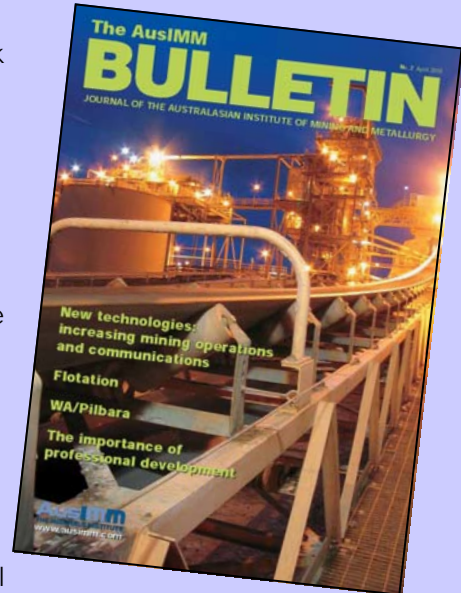
The AusIMM Bulletin is also available online! Members Only section:

<http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/default.aspx?ID=43>

(please ensure you are logged in).

If you are interested in submitting to future editions of the Bulletin, a list of upcoming features for 2010 editions can be found in The AusIMM Bulletin media kit at:

<http://www.ausimm.com.au/content/default.aspx?ID=99>. Please send an outline of your proposed article to: somizzolo@ausimm.com.au



Express your interest in upcoming publications!

The AusIMM Publications Department is working on a number of exciting projects due for release in 2010. Go to the Expression of Interest page of the AusIMM website:

<http://www.ausimm.com.au/expinterest.aspx> to register your interest and receive early notification of new release publications.

AusIMM events

Register Now!

[Sampling 2010](#)

11 – 12 May 2010, Perth, Western Australia

Register online via the [Sampling 2010 Conference Website](#)

[The AusIMM International Uranium Conference 2010](#)

16 – 17 June 2010, Adelaide, South Australia

Register online via [The AusIMM International Uranium Conference 2010 Website](#)

[IMPC 2010 – International Mineral Processing Congress 2010](#)

6 – 10 September 2010, Brisbane, Queensland

Register online via the [IMPC 2010 Conference Website](#)

Calling for Papers

[NZ Branch 2010 Annual Conference](#)

24 – 26 November 2010, Auckland, New Zealand

[Calling for papers, click here](#)

[The AusIMM Underground Operators' Conference 2011](#)

21 – 23 March 2011, Canberra, ACT

Calling for papers, deadline 14 June 2010,

submissions via [The 11th AusIMM Underground Operators' Conference Speakers' Portal](#)

[14th Australasian Tunnelling Conference 2011](#)

8 – 9 March 2011, Sky City, Auckland, New Zealand

Calling for papers, deadline 17 May 2010,

submissions via the [14th Australasian Tunnelling Conference 2011 Speakers' Portal](#)



Model Health and Safety Laws - Important considerations for business

By Paul Cutrone, workplace safety partner, Sparke Helmore

Model workplace health and safety (WHS) laws are one step closer to becoming a reality following the endorsement of Model Work Health and Safety provisions (**Model Act**) by the Workplace Relations Ministers' Council (WRMC) on 11 December 2009.

For industries that operate across multiple jurisdictions, including in the mining industry, this endorsement represents a positive step. Currently, organisations are required to comply with multiple legislative requirements across up to eight jurisdictions. For business, this can represent inconsistency in compliance requirements, inconsistency in enforcement and duplication and increased compliance cost.

This endorsement followed a six week public consultation process in September 2009 where parties were invited to comment on a draft Model Act. During this process 480 submissions were received, which resulted in a number of amendments to the draft Model Act. The key amendments related to:

- the inclusion of a definition of 'due diligence';
- the adoption of the definition of 'officer' outlined in the Corporations Act 2001 (Cth); and
- the inclusion of a requirement for duty holders to consult with each other.

It is expected that the introduction of harmonised legislation, supported by a uniform compliance and enforcement framework, represents an opportunity for organisations that operate across multiple jurisdictions to achieve consistency, efficiency, and as a result better WHS outcomes.

The endorsement of the Model Act is the first step. Industry specific regulations, codes of practice and other guidance material are to be developed. Safe Work Australia has indicated that the exposure draft of the Model WHS Regulations, Codes of Practice and Issues Paper will be released for a public

comment period from **November 2010 – February 2011**. This will be the opportunity for organisations (and individuals) involved in relevant industries, including mining, to provide feedback and comment on what is proposed.

Safe Work Australia has indicated that the Model WHS Regulations package will be provided to the WRMC for approval in June 2011, with the Model Act and Regulations to commence on 1 January 2012.

While organisations and individuals should begin to consider the provisions of the Model Act and how it may impact on their business and obligations, it is also important to keep in mind that relevant current State/Territory health and safety laws will continue to apply and must be complied with until the Model laws comes into effect on 1 January 2012.

In the interim, actions that can be put in place to respond to those changes, include reviewing WHS due diligence and governance processes, Contractor management arrangements; WHS management systems, WHS consultation arrangements, WHS training processes and WHS audit/assurance processes to identify what changes may be necessary to comply with the new obligations.

Paul Cutrone is a workplace safety partner in the Sydney office of national law firm Sparke Helmore. He acknowledges the assistance of Lawyer Trinity Higgs in preparing this article.
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Contact us

If you have any feedback, would like to make a suggestion or contribute to the H&S Newsletter, please email the Editor of the H&S Newsletter Stephanie Omizzolo, via: somizzolo@ausimm.com.au, or contact one of the H&S Committee members:

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You can also find out more about the H&S Committee by visiting our webpage! : <http://www.ausimm.com.au/Content/default.aspx?ID=205>

We hope you enjoyed this edition of the "Health and Safety Newsletter." Stay tuned...next newsletter due for release in July 2010!