ABSTRACT

Most workplace health and safety models are based on worker behavior. These models conclude that if workers can be trained to change or modify their behavior then most accidents can be prevented. They base their entire health and safety program on a “last line of defense” approach—if the worker is a safe worker s/he won’t get hurt.

Most companies who use this model measure their success or failure by the number of lost time injuries—the lower the lost time injury rate the safer the workplace. They even offer positive and negative incentives such as jackets, watches, tools, (positive) or suspensions or discharges (negative) as inducements to lower injury rates.

PACE Offers Different Model

The Paper, Allied Industrial, Chemical, and Energy Workers International Union (PACE) has developed and is offering a different model for workplace health and safety—Triangle of Prevention (TOP). This model focuses on fixing the workplace not the worker.

While we recognize that workers have personal responsibilities, worker responsibility is only a small piece of the health and safety picture. The PACE TOP program focuses primarily on safety systems, such as design and engineering, mechanical integrity, mitigation devices, warning devices, training and procedures and human factors. Flaws in these systems are the root causes for most workplace incidents.

Secondly, the PACE/TOP program includes a new measuring and tracking system. OSHA injury rates do not provide a true measure of workplace safety. TOP proposes to expand the index to include fires and explosions, chemical releases, accidents and illnesses to employees, contractors, and community members. Near miss reporting would be investigated and communicated, but not included in the index.

Additionally the TOP program requires the complete involvement of every worker regardless of payroll or status. All employees receive training on 1) OSHA’s Process Safety Management Standard; 2) recognition of safety systems flaws and; 3) incident investigation and accident analysis. In addition, the joint health and safety committee receives training on how to conduct evaluations of health and safety programs.