# Safety Culture and Behavioral Safety
## Two Approaches & One Outcome
### SAFETY EXCELLENCE

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# Session Guidelines…

- Don't bother to take copious notes…
- Ask questions, and lots of them
- Feel free to stick around afterwards if you want further clarification or discussion
- This talk WILL challenge a number of commonly held beliefs about workplace safety
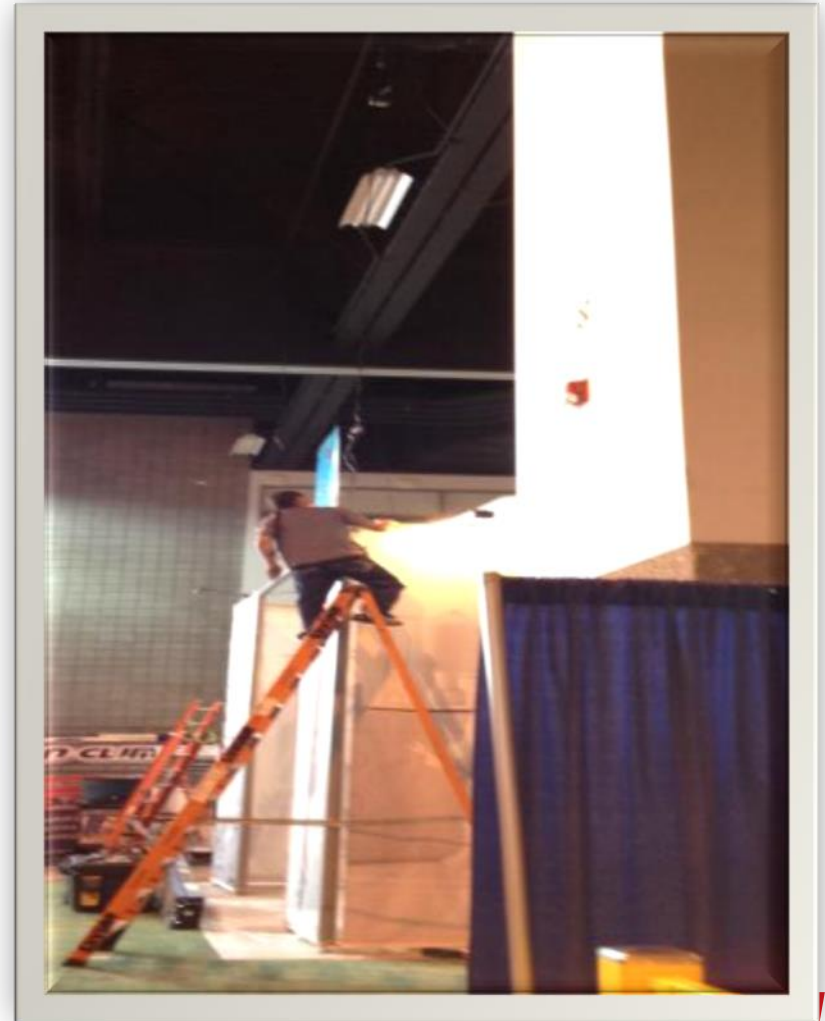- Be Skeptical!

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# Some Things You Should Know

- Science RULES
- You're Here to Learn Something
- Outside our Profession…. Safety People are sometimes considered boring…

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# Are We done with Behavior Based Safety?

ASSE Safety 2012
Denver, CO
Conference Set Up

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# If you REALLY want to
# IMPROVE SAFETY

**You first have to understand the fundamental motivation that is required for persons to work safely………………..**

**and then work to change it!!!!!!!!!!!!**

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# Safety Culture

- Shared assumptions of safety in the workplace that drive motivation and behaviors based on values, traditions, and history

- Clearly a leading indicator and the one most closely linked with outcome performance  (The relationship between employees' perceptions of safety and organizational culture Michael O'Toole)  (Journal of Safety Research 2002 #33 231-243) (Also, Petersen, 2001, Krause, 2004, Cooper, 2009, Geller et. Al 2011 Professional Safety)

- What employees do when no one is watching…(Schien)

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# Safety Culture

- Management Driven
- Set in motion by the founders of the organization
- Is very self sustaining and self reinforcing
- Not really separate from Organizational Culture (Constituent Component)
- Influenced by both local and industry cultural norms

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# How is Safety Culture Usually Evaluated?

# Safety Culture Surveys

- Result in immediate quantification of the Safety Culture
- Creates a Baseline
- Allows for the evaluation against other related organizations
- The Survey Itself immediately begins to engage employees (They Become Part of the Solution)

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# How to Administer Surveys

- Offer to all Employees
- Ensure Confidentiality
- Make Sure to have a Plan to Act on the Results

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# Safety Culture Interviews

- Validates the data from the survey
- Allows for the determination of primary and secondary causal factors
- Facilitates the gathering of more robust and worthwhile information…
- Can be done using focus groups
- Facilitated internally or externally…

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# What are some indicators of a Strong Safety Culture?

- Management that Consistently Sets the Example
- An Organization that is Willing to Ask and Answer Hard Questions
- An Empowered Workforce that is able to Make Meaningful Contributions to the Safety Process
- Well Written Safety Mission and Values Statements
- A Professional Safety Department
- Plan for Mergers and Acquisitions

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# Weak Cultural Characteristics

- Using only lagging indicators to measure performance
  - These measure failure rates
  - They encourage injury hiding
  - Recordability or Severity is influenced by many factors AFTER the event
  - If you want to make positive change be like a coach, they don't watch the scoreboard, they watch the action on the field

# Weak Characteristics cont...

- Use of Punishment
  - Punishment does not reinforce anything
  - Punishment becomes part of a repeating cycle
  - Has the use of punishment ever inspired anyone?
  - Stopping unsafe behaviors does not mean the desired behavior will immediately begin
  - Punishment differs from accountability
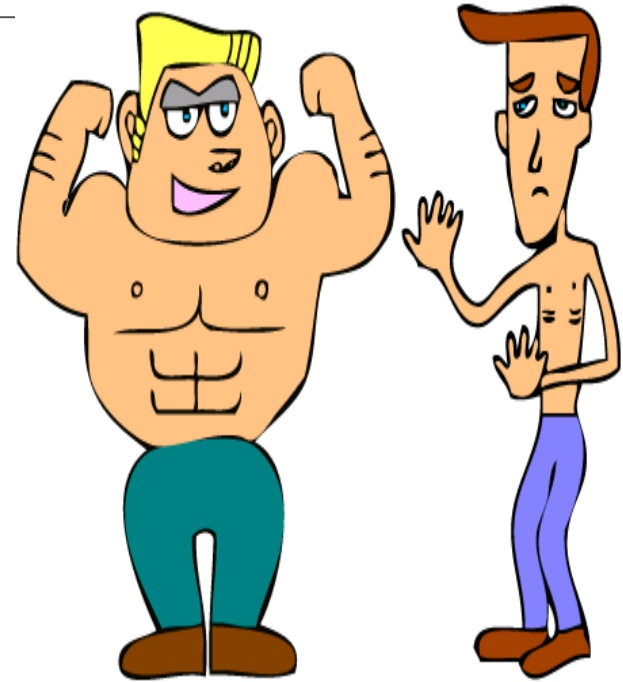
**OSHA Letter of Interpretation March 21, 2012 and FAA Policy Change March 04, 2012**

- Many Organizations Struggle with Culture's of Blame
- Production vs. Safety is one of the Lowest Cultural Characteristics for most Organizations
- Employee Engagement is Usually High
- Leadership May/or May Not, have gaps in perceptions
- Areas where GAPS are omnipresent are where new business  units have been acquired in the last 5 years and where differences in management styles of local leaders are dramatic

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# Is Safety Culture the Same thing as Behavior?

- A Behavioral Safety Process can enhance numerous aspects of the culture

- A Behavioral Safety Process is more likely to be successful if the Safety Cultural opportunities/strengths are known

**Safety Culture = Cognitive Psychology
Behavior Based Safety = Behavioral Psychology**

**Culture** ● **Behavior**

16

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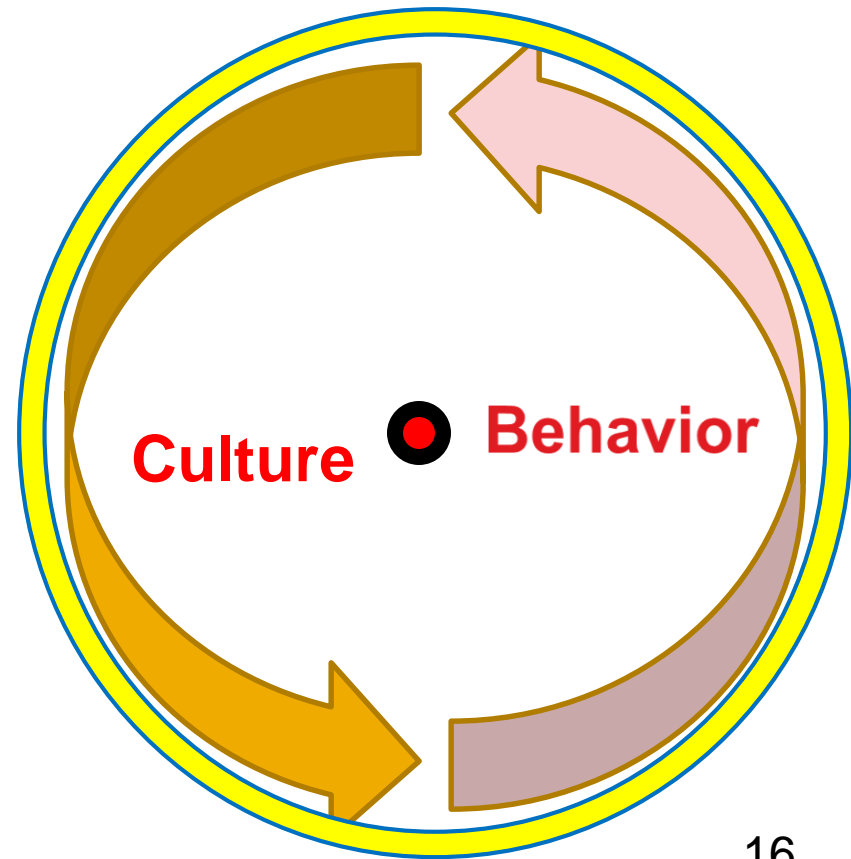
# Behavioral Safety

- Founded on the principles of Operant Conditioning.
- It is known that Reinforcement is the best way to manage behavior.
- Positive Reinforcement has been shown to be most effective for "Discretionary Behavior".
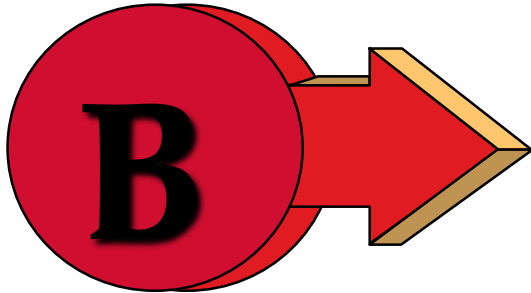
- What is it that causes employees to exhibit certain behaviors?
- What is it within the systems of the workplace that lead to employee behaviors?
- Can we understand the systems of the workplace better?
- Unsafe behavior by employees is a symptom of poorly defined and understood workplace systems, not the fault of the individual.
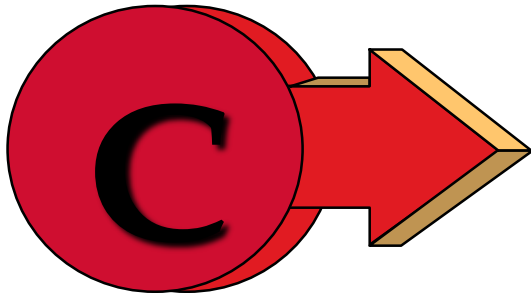
# The ABCs of Human Behavior
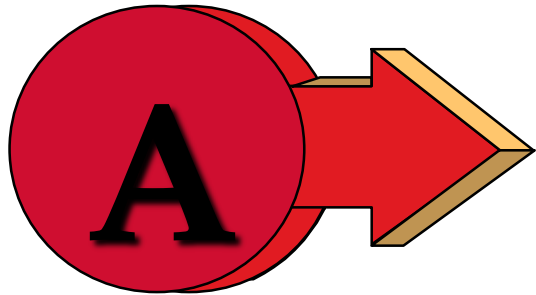
**A** → Antecedent

**B** → Behavior

**C** → Consequence

# ANTECEDENTS

- **Occur before behavior**
- **Communicate expectations**
- **Provide instructions**
- **Cue behavior**

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# Two types of Antecedents

# Natural (STRONGER)

– Beyond an external locus of control

– Occur as a result of environmental events

– Adaptive and governed by our systems

# Deliberate (WEAKER)

– Artificial

– Intended to control or influence behavior

– Often unsolicited

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# Some examples of antecedents

# UNIQUE

JUST BECAUSE YOU ARE UNIQUE DOES NOT MEAN YOU ARE USEFUL

# You Can Say That Again

# Are You Thinkin' What I'm Thinkin'?

# Good Advice is hard to find!

# WHAT???????

# BEHAVIOR

- **Desirable Behavior**
- **Undesirable Behavior**

# Consequences

# The Role of Consequences

# Analyze this Event Based on Consequences

# What Comes First…
# Culture or Behavior

- Organizational (Safety) Culture drives behavior ….
- Behaviors, over time, can influence culture and become normative
- The relationship is organic and formative in both directions

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# In a Behavioral Safety Culture

- Focuses on accomplishment
- Success oriented
- People work safely because they want to
- Becomes self sustaining and continuously improving
- Is truly doing something different
- It WILL happen to someone

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# Conclusion

- Safety Culture and Behavioral Safety are not the same thing
- They are closely related and drive one another
- When combined in a seamless and harmonized manner, the safety process is solidified with INTEGRITY!

## WHEN SAFETY LACKS INTEGRITY, EVERYONE LOSES!!!

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