

The influence of leadership on the prevention of safety incidents: on risk reduction, leadership, safety principles and practices

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STELLINGEN (Propositions)

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- 1 Leaders are able to enhance safety by promoting five risk-reducing features: recognition of safety risks, ability to intervene, motivation to intervene, courage to intervene and taking timely remedial action.
- Whereas traditional leadership theories tend to distinguish between three types of leadership (e.g. achievement, affiliation, and power), my research suggested it may be better to differentiate between four leadership orientations: Process-oriented, Relation-oriented, Production-oriented and Dominance-oriented.
- Process-oriented leaders motivate their followers to intervene in safety risks, forgive people when they do this when there was no real need, ensure that necessary improvements are made and convey the message that operational safety is their top priority. In doing so, these leaders (relative to the other mentioned orientations in Proposition 2) are the most capable of fostering operational safety.
- 4 Despite employees' awareness of safety risks and their willingness to intervene, organisations are facing a lack of ability or sense of urgency to take timely remedial action against safety risks.

Related to safety science

- Most incidents do not lead to injury or loss because of an effective but uncontrollable barrier: luck!
- 6 The sense of urgency to take remedial action is greatest when the distance is smallest between people who take the risks and the people who run the risks.
- 7 Risk and safety levels are constructs based on individual knowledge and experiences and are therefore reflections of what we feel. (Inspired by Paul Slovic)
- As it is impossible to generate empirical evidence to prove whether a failure probability is really one in 100,000 years or actually one in 10,000, statements of this magnitude are to be considered as speculations only. (Inspired by Andrew R. Hale)

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- 9 Not everything that counts can be counted. (Inspired by William B. Cameron)
- Safety is like love; you have to work on it every day, and then you hope it is there.