



Making safety part of THE WAY YOU DO BUSINESS

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(FARSHA has been renamed to AgSafe)

Making safety part of your culture, part of the way you do business, is what makes safety valuable. There is no value in a "big ol binder" crammed full of papers and stacked up on a shelf gathering dust with all that great safety information firmly tucked "safely" inside of it. Making safety part of your business makes safety realistic, viable and doable. It is not that safety is not important to each and every one of us. No one, well at least very few folks, are out there saying "who cares, if you get hurt you get hurt". The agreeable common denominator in any discussion about safety with any reasonable person tends to be the stated goal of "having each and every worker or family member come home safe at the end of each and every work day". So how do we make the regulated requirements of safety in a workplace also those things that complement or are a valuable part of what we do. When you have to take on another task, add another "ya gotta" or, "one more thing to do" it is tough to get it done. In life, however, there is the reality that at times we must do things, perhaps things that have not been part of our norm, and more likely not even part of what we would like to do; but we do have to do them. In some of those situations we are bound by a

dictated need or a legislated demand and they just need to get done no matter what we think. Some aspects of a health and safety program will be like that. Interestingly enough the "unlikeable" or "useless" often varies from producer to producer. One rancher identifies



Photo by Erika Strande-Stewart

something that he or she feels is very valuable and incorporate such an activity or process eagerly. The same process can be seen by another as useless or a waste of time. We simply need to understand we live in a province with a regulated industry and compliance is not an option. We need to be alert to this and understand what it looks like when we fail to comply and something awful happens. A recent case in Ontario saw a supervisor get sentenced to 3.5 years in jail for not ensuring the safety of a worker, allowing him to work at elevation without fall protection being properly used. Two British Columbia men stand criminally charged for failing to do a new worker orientation after the

death of a new worker. This stuff won't go away so the parts we have to just do, we have to just do. There are many parts that are good business and easy to include in the way you do that business. For example, the inspection of livestock handling facilities. The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations which govern us require that you do "regular" inspections of your site, buildings, shop, work areas etc. To do such an inspection on a quarterly basis may mean that next week you are shovelling out your gate swing to see if it is all good. We can all see how that is ridiculous, you are not about to do that and in fact that very thought shades your impression of safety and makes you think that other, valid, even profitable parts of safety and a safety program are useless and stupid.

If, however, the task just described is part of the way you do business, a walk through inspection of the facility prior to use, then to do so makes total sense. The only issue then becomes how do you document that. Some time ago I wrote that while engaged in a very valuable discussion with some WorkSafeBC officers I posed the question, "when you go to a site, what are you looking for?" OSO David Torrie provided a succinct and valuable answer.

- A. What is the problem?
- B. What have you done about it?
- C. How can you prove it?

Well we are actually pretty good at A & B, it is C we struggle with. Back up

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to our livestock facility inspection. It is simply good business practise to do a walkthrough and check of the facility before using it. Do the gates work easily? Does the squeeze work? Any hazards, protruding nails or board, missing boards?

So, how do we handle C and thus comply with the regulations and the ABC outlined.

I call it the public washroom janitor model. You know how the public washrooms at any big box store have that clip board there, just hanging by the mirror waiting for the next keen cleaner to initial that it was cleaned, by whom and when. Apply that to our situations.

A policy document in your safety program stating the established practise, including things like; the livestock handling facilities are to be inspected each time prior to any use, and the inspection will identify any issues or shortcomings which will be repaired or reported according to urgency. Now the walk through, which is prudent and should be done prior to use, is enhanced by an inspection format that reminds the worker of things to look for and what to do if something is remiss becomes part of the way you do business. The inspection is not an added task but a helpful tool to doing the job well, ensuring repair in a timely fashion, is initialed and hangs near the facility, janitor style, for use in accordance with the policy that states it will be inspected prior to each and every use.

We have things that we need to do, must do. No way around them. So when we can make them make sense, when the task is enhanced by the process and the operation runs better because of it, everybody wins... and you never know, you may develop a culture of safety with habits of compliance that actually work for you and get done without thinking as part of the way you do business.

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