



Behaviour-Based Safety Programs

ADDENDUM

WHAT IS BEHAVIOUR-BASED SAFETY (BBS) OR BEHAVIOURAL SAFETY (BS)?

Behavioural Safety is an approach to workplace safety and health that focuses on workers' behaviour as the cause of most work-related injuries and illnesses shifting the focus away from identifying and controlling workplace hazards.

Behaviour-Based Safety (BBS) is based on the premise that it is the worker's behaviour and "unsafe acts" that are responsible for injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. If the behaviour of workers can be changed, and workers work more "carefully" then, according to BBS, occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities will be prevented and workplaces will be safer.

The first step in a BBS program is usually listing "critical" or "unsafe" worker behaviours. Inspectors or observers – in many cases hourly workers – are selected to observe and monitor these behaviours. The observations are followed by positive or negative reinforcements.

BS theory is summarized as follows:

WORKERS ARE THE PROBLEM, NOT THE SOLUTION. CHANGE THE WORKER, NOT THE HAZARD.

WHY ARE BBS PROGRAMS DANGEROUS?

- BBS systems shift the responsibility of maintaining a safe and healthy workplace from employers onto employees.
- BBS programs undermine union-based health and safety committees and workplace solidarity based on collective bargaining by turning workers against workers.
- BBS can also incentivize underreporting of injuries, illnesses and hazards.
- BBS programs shift the focus away from identifying the hazards in workplaces, and results in hazards not being addressed and remaining uncorrected; and
- Hazards that remain uncorrected or are not eliminated will continue to harm workers.

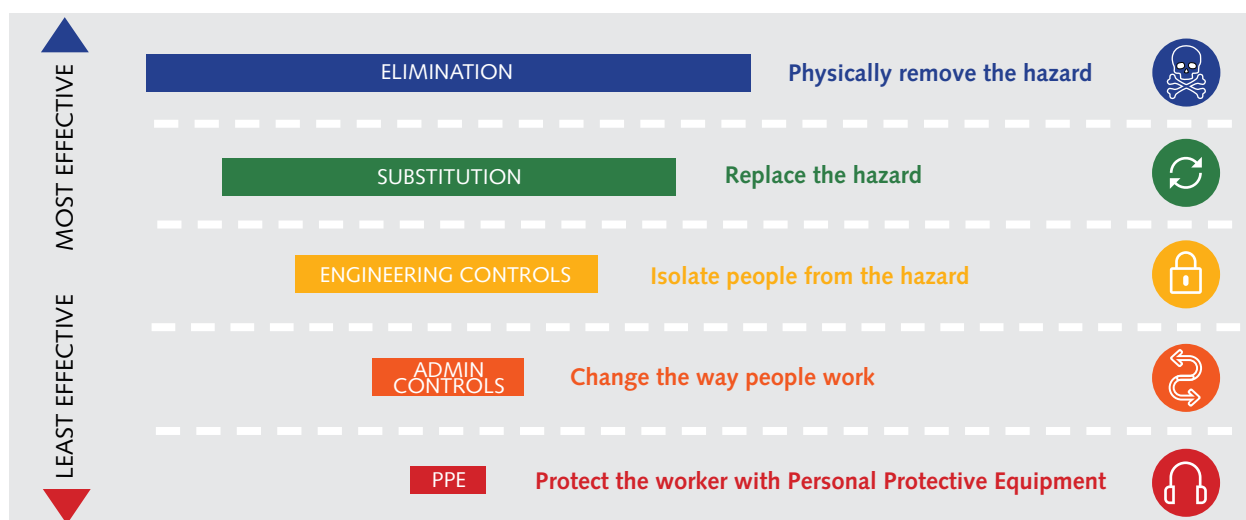
WHAT DO NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL WORKPLACE LAWS AND CONVENTIONS SAY?

National laws and standards, ILO conventions and the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises place the responsibility for providing safe and healthy working environments on the employer, often requiring employers to identify hazards through risk assessment and to take reasonable steps to remove or reduce hazards.

WHAT ARE THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO CONTROL SAFETY AND HEALTH HAZARDS?

Workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities are the result of exposure to uncontrolled hazards in the workplace. Hazards in food processing include inadequate or lack of machine guarding; lockout/tag out issues related to maintaining and cleaning equipment and machinery; hazards associated with automation and robotics; chemical hazards, and combustible dust; and ergonomics and repetitive motion injuries. In addition, effects of automation, downsizing, speed-up, turnover of workforce and lack of training/investment in the workforce contribute to an unsafe and unhealthy workplace. Nanomaterials are increasingly a threat in food processing industries, as new products containing nanomaterials are rapidly being introduced. Workers face exposure to unregulated and even unidentified hazards.

To prevent accidents, and reduce the risk of injuries and illnesses, **the emphasis should be on eliminating and minimizing hazardous conditions**. The hierarchy of hazard controls is the recognized approach to effectively eliminating and controlling workplace hazards.



POSITION OF THE IUF

IUF opposes employer programs and policies that shift responsibility for workers' safety and health from the employer to the worker, by focusing on worker behaviour instead of hazards.

IUF opposes programs that require or encourage workers to observe and report on the behaviours of co-workers thereby pitting them against one another in the workplace.

IUF opposes safety incentive programs or injury discipline programs which suppress reporting of hazards and injuries or illnesses. Injury discipline programs may include assessing points against a person who suffers or reports an injury, which could lead to firing that person.

IUF supports and encourages employer programs that rely on the accepted principles of hazard identification and the use of hierarchy of controls to protect workers from workplace hazards and to prevent injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

IUF supports occupational safety and health management systems which rely on principles and objectives that:

- Comply with relevant OSH international and national laws and regulations, voluntary programmes, collective agreements and other requirements to which the organization subscribes;
- Provide for the election, support, and training of workplace health and safety representatives;
- Ensure that workers, their representatives and workplace health and safety representatives are consulted and encouraged to participate actively in all elements of the OSH management system.

