THE TURNING Point

Raising The Standard RTS CONSULTING INC.

April 2025

This newsletter is to inform you of recent changes & trends regarding health and safety.

The Turning Point is a monthly newsletter covering topics from various industries and sectors. The Turning Point will respond to your inquiries and inform you of current services and updates regarding

Raising the Standard Consulting Inc.

RAISING THE STANDARD CONSULTING

CONSULTANT ARTICLE FEATURE

BEX BRACK (CHST)

R. "BEX" BRACK GREW UP IN A CLOSE-KNIT FARMING AND RANCHING COMMUNITY EAST OF HOUSTON, TEXAS. BEX HAS SPENT 40 YEARS IN CONSTRUCTION, WORKING AS A HEAVY EQUIPMENT OPERATOR, PIPE FITTER, AND IRONWORKER BEFORE DEDICATING THE LAST 20 YEARS TO THE FIELD OF SAFETY. IN 2017, BEX ACCEPTED AN OPPORTUNITY WITH RTS CONSULTING, INC. AND MOVED TO HAWAII, THEN QUICKLY FELL IN LOVE WITH THE ALOHA SPIRIT AND THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY IT OFFERS.

DEVELOPING A CULTURE OF SITUATIONAL AWARENESS WITH REINFORCEMENT, REPETITION, AND LEADERSHIP

Have you ever wondered why looking both ways before crossing the road is second nature? It's a habit instilled from an early age, reinforced by parents and caregivers to ensure safety. Much like using seat belts, not playing with matches, or expressing basic courtesies like "please" and "thank you," these habits become ingrained through repetition and reinforcement. As adults, we not only benefit from these learned behaviors but also carry the responsibility of passing them on to the next generation.

In the workplace, safety professionals play a similar role. Our job isn't just to identify infractions and correct unsafe behaviors—it's to use every observation as a teaching moment.

One of the most effective strategies I've implemented is addressing safety concerns in the next morning huddle. This approach allows the entire crew to learn from real situations, reinforcing proper procedures, and preventing future incidents.

1. Establish the Foundation for Situational Awareness

Define Situational Awareness - Clarify what situational awareness means within your organization or team. Highlight why it's important for safety, efficiency, and decision-making.
Communicate Clear Expectations - Set clear guidelines and protocols for identifying and responding to situations. Encourage team members to stay alert, anticipate issues, and act proactively.

2. Reinforcement – Encourage and Support Awareness

Provide Immediate Feedback - Acknowledge and reinforce positive examples of situational awareness in action. Correct lapses constructively, focusing on learning rather than punishment.
Incorporate Real-Life Scenarios - Use case studies, simulations, and debriefs to highlight good and poor situational awareness. Encourage team members to share their experiences and insights.
Reward Positive Behavior - Implement recognition programs to reinforce and motivate continued awareness. Celebrate individuals or teams who demonstrate strong situational awareness.

3. Repetition – Build Muscle Memory Through Practice

Conduct Regular Training - Schedule ongoing training sessions focused on situational awareness. Include drills that require quick thinking and situational assessment.
Daily or Weekly Check-Ins - Start meetings or shifts with a quick situational awareness briefing. Encourage team members to report changes or risks they've noticed.
Consistent Messaging - Include situational awareness tips and reminders in communications. Make situational awareness part of the daily operational language.

4. Leadership – Model and Drive the Culture

Lead by Example - Leaders should consistently demonstrate strong situational awareness. When leaders remain calm and aware under pressure, the team will follow.
Empower Decision-Making - Encourage team members to speak up and act when they notice a problem. Create a culture where situational awareness is valued over hierarchy.
Mentor and Develop Skills - Provide coaching to strengthen situational awareness at all levels. Encourage leaders to mentor team members in recognizing and responding to situations.

5. Evaluate and Improve

Review and Analyze Incidents - After an incident, debrief with the team to identify situational gaps. Adjust

protocols and training based on lessons learned.
Adapt to Changing Environments - Situational awareness should evolve as new challenges and threats emerge. Encourage innovation and adaptability in response to changing conditions.

WRAP-UP:

Strong leadership means keeping teams engaged and actively involved in workplace safety. By fostering open communication and consistently reinforcing best practices, we create an environment where situational awareness becomes second nature—just like looking both ways before crossing the road. A culture of safety not only protects workers but also contributes to project success by reducing incidents, improving efficiency, and ensuring everyone goes home safe at the end of the day. Developing strong situational awareness among crew members requires consistent reinforcement of key standards and practices. By regularly repeating and reinforcing expectations as observations arise, team members become more adept at recognizing potential hazards, adjusting their actions accordingly, and maintaining a proactive approach to safety and efficiency. Leaders should use realtime examples during operations to highlight best practices, ensuring that situational awareness becomes second nature rather than an afterthought.

It is very effective to provide immediate feedback whenever a crew member encounters a situation requiring heightened awareness. By consistently addressing observations—such as equipment placement, environmental changes, or procedural adherence—leaders can reinforce a culture of attentiveness. Repetition not only ingrains these behaviors into daily routines but also encourages team members to remain vigilant and actively communicate potential concerns. The results of this practice go beyond just safety, it has a direct impact on the company's success. Finishing a project with no injuries or accidents improves the company's bottom line by reducing insurance costs and strengthening its reputation, leading to new contracts and business opportunities. Additionally, employees take pride in their work when they complete a project safely and efficiently, fostering a sense of accomplishment and reinforcing a positive workplace culture.

R. Bex Brack, CHST. 12 March 2025

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PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

What is personal protective equipment?

Personal protective equipment, commonly referred to as "PPE", is equipment worn to minimize exposure to hazards that cause serious workplace injuries and illnesses. These injuries and illnesses may result from contact with chemical, radiological, physical, electrical, mechanical, or other workplace hazards. Personal protective equipment may include items such as gloves, safety glasses and shoes, earplugs or muffs, hard hats, respirators, or coveralls, vests and full body suits.

What can be done to ensure proper use of personal protective equipment?

All personal protective equipment should be safely designed and constructed, and should be maintained in a clean and reliable fashion. It should fit comfortably, encouraging worker use. If the personal protective equipment does not fit properly, it can make the difference between being safely covered or dangerously exposed.

When engineering, work practice, and administrative controls are not feasible or do not provide sufficient protection, employers must provide personal protective equipment to their workers and ensure its proper use. Employers are also required to train each worker required to use personal protective equipment to know:

- When it is necessary
- What kind is necessary
- How to properly put it on, adjust, wear and take it off
- The limitations of the equipment
- Proper care, maintenance, useful life, and disposal of the equipment

If PPE is to be used, a PPE program should be implemented. This program should address the hazards present; the selection, maintenance, and use of PPE; the training of employees; and monitoring of the program to ensure its ongoing effectiveness.

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CONSTRUCTION COMPANY CITED $157,500 FOLLOWING A FATAL TRENCH ACCIDENT

San Diego– The California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) has issued $157,500 in citations to W. A. Rasic Construction for multiple violations of workplace safety regulations following a fatal trench collapse. The incident resulted in the tragic death of an employee working in an unprotected excavation.

What Happened: On August 28, 2024, at around 3:00 a.m., a worker was inside a 17-foot-deep trench when a portion of it collapsed. The collapse caused a concrete pipe to be displaced, pinning and killing the employee. Cal/OSHA's investigation identified serious violations of workplace safety regulations related to excavation and trench safety.

What Cal/OSHA Chief Debra Lee said: "No worker should lose their life due to preventable safety failures. We will continue to enforce trench safety regulations, hold employers accountable and work to ensure that safety standards are upheld to protect workers."

Violations Identified by Cal/OSHA:

- Failure to implement an effective injury and illness prevention program W. A. Rasic Construction did not implement an effective injury and illness prevention program to identify, evaluate, and correct workplace hazards, and provide training, a requirement that has been in place for more than 30 years. This failure exposed employees to the hazards associated with working in an unshored trench.
- Failure to conduct a proper inspection of the excavation site
- The employer's inspection failed to identify conditions that could lead to dangerous cave-in hazards or the lack of necessary protective systems, such as trench boxes or shoring, which could have prevented the collapse.
- Failure to Provide Adequate Cave-In Protection
- The employer did not provide the necessary cave-in protection for employees working in an excavation approximately 17 feet deep. This critical safety failure exposed workers to the risk of fatal injury, as evidenced by the incident.

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SCAFFOLDING COLLAPSE AT CHEVRON PLANT IN PASADENA INJURES THREE WORKERS

Reports indicate there was an industrial accident at a Chevron facility in Pasadena, Texas, resulting in three workers being injured on Wednesday, March 12, 2025 after a scaffolding collapse. Emergency crews from the Pasadena Fire Department responded quickly to the scene after receiving reports of the incident, which occurred at the plant located on Red Bluff near Highway 225.

Scaffolding collapses are among the most dangerous types of industrial accidents, often leading to severe injuries or fatalities. These incidents highlight the importance of workplace safety, proper equipment maintenance, and compliance with federal safety regulations. The circumstances surrounding this incident are currently under investigation.

The accident occurred when scaffolding inside the plant reportedly gave way, causing three contractors working on a platform to fall approximately 25 feet to the ground. The impact resulted in serious injuries to all three workers, prompting an immediate emergency response.

One of the workers suffered severe injuries and was transported to a nearby hospital via Life Flight for urgent medical care. The other two workers were taken to the hospital by ambulance. At this time, authorities have not determined what caused the scaffolding failure. However, workplace accidents of this nature often involve multiple factors, including poor structural integrity, overloading, or lack of proper safety equipment. Investigators will be looking into these possibilities as they work to determine the cause of the collapse.

The Dangers of Scaffolding Collapses in Industrial Settings

Scaffolding is commonly used in industrial plants, refineries, and construction sites to allow workers to perform maintenance, inspections, and repairs at elevated heights. When installed correctly and properly maintained, scaffolding provides a safe platform for employees. However, when safety precautions are ignored, scaffolding can become a serious hazard.

Scaffolding collapses can be caused by several factors, including:

- Weak or damaged structural supports
- Overloading beyond the scaffold's weight capacity
- Improper assembly or failure to secure anchor points
- Poor housekeeping
- Harsh environmental conditions such as strong winds or vibrations from heavy machinery
- Lack of routine inspections and maintenance checks

When a scaffold fails, workers can suffer severe injuries, including broken bones, spinal cord injuries, concussions, internal bleeding, and even fatalities. Falls from heights are one of the leading causes of workplace deaths in industrial settings, making scaffolding safety a top priority for employers and plant operators.

Workplace Safety Responsibilities and OSHA Regulations

Employers have a legal obligation to ensure workplace safety, particularly in high-risk environments such as industrial plants.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has strict regulations in place regarding scaffolding safety, which require:

- Scaffolding to be erected and dismantled under the supervision of a qualified professional
- Regular inspections to ensure the structure remains stable and secure
- Proper guardrails, harnesses, and other fall protection equipment for workers
- Clearly defined weight limits to prevent excessive loading
- Immediate repair or replacement of damaged scaffolding components

Failure to adhere to these safety regulations can lead to tragic accidents, putting workers at unnecessary risk. When companies prioritize production and cost-cutting over safety, workers are the ones who suffer the consequences.

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Raising The Standard

RTS CONSULTING INC.

RTS Competent Person PPE (8-hour)

This 8-hour Competent Person course will teach attendees the relationship between PPE, administration controls and engineering controls, how to conduct a PPE hazard Assessment and Certification Statement and how to identify and use various types of PPE. It will also teach attendants OSHA response to questions about implementation and give them simple, practical methods that will ensure compliance with the OSHA and EM385-1-1 Section 5 standards to protect your employees.

RTS Competent Person Excavation & Trenching (8-hour)

This is a 8-hour "competent person" course. The Trenching and Excavating Safety Course helps employers and employees comply with the requirements of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Hawaii Occupational Safety and Health (HIOSH) and EM 385-1-1, by determining what type of working hazards exist, how to correct them and the responsibilities of the competent person. It also conveys the importance of using the right protective system during excavation work.

For more information please contact Hailey Mesner at hmesner@rtsconsulting.com

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Raising the Standard Consulting will raise the standard of EH&S in your organization through the development of new and innovative strategies and programs driven by your own individual needs.

We want to build relationships with our clients to help create lasting change in their organizations. Contact us today to build a safer tomorrow.

With Aloha,

Stanford Brown, B.Sc., CSP, CSHP, CRSP, CHSC, Senior Consultant, President & CEO