

Workflow: Health and Safety

Toolkit 7.1

Embedding Safety Culture and Practice

target audience

All staff, contractors, service providers, and visitors.

what it is

"Safety is not an intellectual exercise to keep us in work. It is a matter of life and death. It is the sum of our contributions to safety management that determines whether the people we work with live or die." – Brian Appleton

A safety culture can be described as a status where everyone involved in the operations of a company (employees, contractors, service providers, agents, visitors, etc.) take ownership of their own safety and that of other employees, creating a safe and risk-free environment to work in. A safety culture not only requires everyone to think and talk health and safety, but to DO the right thing all the time. Everyone's behaviour should support the drive for a healthy and safe working environment.

Management must lead by example, creating the environment where safety and health becomes personal, and one of the key performance indicators of success. A health and safety culture can only be maintained if the values, attitudes, and behaviours of all participants are aligned.

why it is important

OSHA's General Duty Clause, Section 5(a)(1), requires each employer to furnish a place of employment free from recognized hazards that are causing or likely to cause death or serious physical harm to employees, and employers must comply with OSHA safety and health standards. The South African Occupational Health and Safety Act (OSHA) stipulates that all local companies with more than 20 employees must have health and safety measures in place and this regulation applies to packhouses as well.

Irrespective of legal requirements, it is the right thing to do. The most basic of ethical principles in business deals with avoiding doing harm to others (WHO Healthy Workplace Framework and Model).

Companies should never expect people to work in an unhealthy or unsafe environment. When the nature of the work to be done or the environment the work is to be done in can compromise individual health and safety, appropriate protective clothing (PPE) or equipment needs to be provided. There is a strong correlation between a good health and safety record and performance. A dangerous, unsafe workplace leads to lost time, low morale, and injured employees.

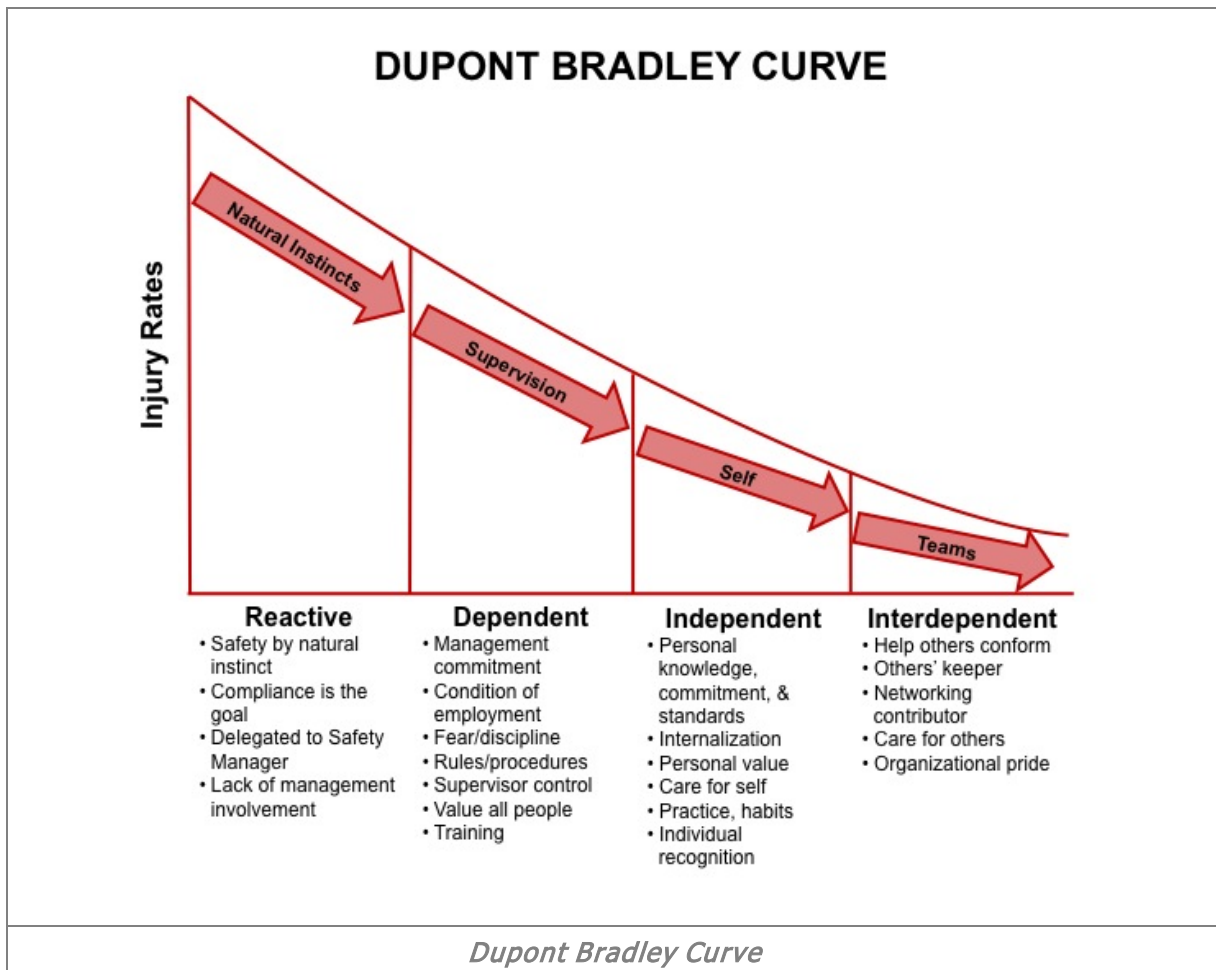
Customers are increasingly voicing their requirements to deal with reputable suppliers, one of which is ensuring a safe and healthy production environment.

success factors

- **A Health and Safety policy** - Establish and communicate a H&S policy, including core workplace health and safety principles. A key aspect of a desirable health and safety culture is to align all employees on a core set of principles (rules) that govern all decisions regarding safety, e.g., safety always takes top priority, i.e., if you had to decide whether to pack or palletise faster but risk injury or pack slower but safely, the latter wins). The role of leadership is to regularly communicate and reinforce these principles through their day-to-day attitudes and behaviours.
- **Establish safety rituals and routines** - Many businesses accomplish this task by embedding safety-focused discussions into the established rituals and routines of the plant or by creating new rituals and routines around health and safety. Examples include:
 - Beginning all routine meetings (e.g., shift starters, daily performance reviews, etc.) with a focused safety moment designed to either raise awareness of safety risks on the farm (e.g., non-routine work, weather conditions, etc.) or reinforce a safe work procedure.
 - Holding monthly safety meetings at all levels, including operators, supervisors/ team leaders, specialists, and leadership.
 - Conducting regular audits to ensure the farm complies with all internal and external workplace safety standards.
 - Routinely retraining/recertifying all employees in appropriate workplace safety standards and practices.

It is important to consider how to talk about safety consistently without losing the attention of employees. Think of creative ways to teach or reinforce a safe work practice, such as using pictures, short videos, or an interactive exercise. Also, real life examples tend to grab people's attention, so be aware of safety incidents that occur outside the packhouse that you can highlight as examples of what can happen if safety is not the number one priority.

The journey to an interdependent safety culture is visualised through what DuPont calls the "Bradley Curve." The Bradley Curve was developed by DuPont Sustainable Solutions based on evidence showing a direct correlation between an organisation's safety culture and injury frequency rate and sustainable safety performance.



Plants operate most safely when employees take responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of others. Management by fear of consequences (i.e., loss of job or status, disciplinary action, etc.) will not create the desired safety culture. Behaviours that foster an interdependent safety culture include:

- Gathering and accepting informal feedback from employees on how to make the workplace safer.
- Formally involving operators in safety improvement activities, such as incident investigations or safety audits.
- Encouraging participation on formal Safety Committees that are empowered to make improvement recommendations.

execution steps

1. Accept the principle of a companywide health and safety culture and formalise this in a Health and Safety policy document.
2. Start all meetings with a health and safety brief. Discuss all incidents or near misses at daily meetings (Refer to [Toolkit 3.4 – Daily Performance Review](#)).
3. Do a health and safety assessment to identify key gaps versus the policy and develop a plan to cover the gaps. This should involve workers at all levels in the organisation.

4. Set health and safety standards (e.g., PPE), procedures (e.g., emergency preparedness) and targets and start to monitor health and safety compliance.
5. Start a safety campaign and communicate the policy and plan widely and visually.
6. Establish clear responsibilities at all levels and confirm understanding.
7. Implement a health and safety management system (Refer to [Toolkit 7.2 – Safety Management](#)).
8. Share safety learnings and celebrate successes.

assessment questions

Please Note: There is no minimum / maximum number of questions you can add.

1.	Have you formalised and communicated the principles of a companywide health and safety culture to all stakeholders?
2.	Is a health and safety commitment (vision and policy) visually displayed.
3.	Is a health and safety campaign launched and sustained?
4.	Have all actions from the initial health and safety audit been closed out?
5.	Is your health and safety performance improving and are your successes publicly celebrated?

resources

1. [Zero Accidents: 10 Steps in the Right Direction](#) by Chris Kilbourne (29 June 2010)