



Charting New Directions in Health & Safety Excellence

COMPASS NEWSLETTER Winter 2012

It's been a while since our last newsletter. We have been very busy conducting audits and safety perception surveys leaving little time to get a Newsletter together.

Regardless, we are proud to report that the circulation of this Newsletter has exceeded 1,200 recipients.

COS Safest Employers

I'm sure most of you are aware that Canadian Occupational Safety (COS) carried out a search for the safest manufacturing employers last year. Awards were presented to five employers meeting the contest criteria of lowest injury rates and highest scores on a safety perception survey. Compass hosted the COS participant's surveys on our web-based survey application. After a statistical screening, twenty-five companies qualified to participate in the survey. Five winners were identified and received recognition at a gala event held last fall on September 27 in Toronto. Winner average survey scores were as high as 4.5 out of 5 in a survey consisting of 25 questions.

This year COS is expanding the contest to include more industries and, of course, more companies. Compass is proud to participate again both as a sponsor as well as a contest judge. This year judges will be examining and fine tuning the statistic and survey contest criteria in the hopes of improving the selection process. We are pleased to participate in a safety excellence program that does not reward participants solely on lagging indicators.

An Answer to Dan Petersen's Question on Safety Perception Surveys

On safety perception survey use Dan Petersen was quoted as saying "I have no idea why the concept is such a hard sell". Dan Petersen was one of the most respected health and safety professionals in the business. He was a big proponent of safety perception surveys and frequently expressed frustration with their lack of use. On numerous occasions Dan commented that surveys are a better predictor of safety performance than other methods of measurement currently in use. Safety perception

surveys are one of the most effective diagnostic tools available to health and safety professionals yet the approach continues to receive little recognition. We share Dan's frustration and have written a soon to be published article on the subject.

Read this article [here](#)

Improvement Needed to the Health and Safety Management System Auditing Process

I advocate the use of safety perception surveys but I am also an advocate of the health and safety management system audit process. As a result I'm willing to speak out on some badly needed improvements. Here are some key deficiencies that must be addressed to improve the current auditing measurement approach here in Alberta and some other provinces.

- Some of the individuals currently certified to audit have not been sufficiently trained to assess a company's health and safety management system. Currently a person off the street can hang up a safety auditor consulting shingle after taking one or two, two to five day courses. Health and safety pre-requisites for course participants are lacking. We recommend Government increase and standardize the certification requirements for all auditors. The audit process is supposed to provide guidance to the company on the status of their system and guidance on how they can continue to improve. Without sound health and safety management system expertise, it is impossible to conduct a meaningful assessment of a health and safety management system.
- A clear guide or explanation is needed on how to interpret the audit protocol questions. For example, if the audit question asks whether or not there is a contractor safety management process or system, instructions should outline what the process or system (as a minimum) should contain. Currently, it would be difficult, if not impossible, for two auditors auditing the same company to reproduce audit results as each has their own perspective on a good system or process. They have their own views of what constitutes a good policy, what appropriate responsibilities are, etc. I have proven this time and time again in my university auditing classes through a workshop. In the workshop University course participants (some are accredited auditors) are first broken up into groups. Each participant is given mock audit information related to one of the audit protocol elements. They are then given a standard government approved audit protocol. The resulting scores are typically all over the map. Clear, detailed instructions on every protocol question will improve consistency in scoring and take the guess work out of the protocol expectations.
- Allow auditors more flexibility. Current auditing approaches are leaning toward standardizing all auditor audit activities. Most experienced auditors will attest that these types of audits handcuff the auditor and can actually yield less useful information to the client than could otherwise be gathered if the auditor was afforded more flexibility in the process. For example, the electronic auditing

approach typically requires the auditor to determine if the interviewee is a worker, supervisor or manager. Once this selection is made questions appear on the computer screen geared to the type of employee selected. According to one Certifying Partner, auditors are to ask every type of employee the questions that come up on the screen. This directive fails to consider the incredible amount of detailed information some “targeted interviewees” can add to the audit process. If the interviewee is a safety person, trainer, committee chairperson, lawyer, CEO, etc. this audit process expects the auditor ask these interviewees the usual fare of questions regarding the policy, where it is posted, if they have read it, etc. A more flexible approach would allow experienced auditors to ask questions that focus more on obtaining more useful job specific information.

One can argue that there is nothing stopping auditors from asking the redundant audit questions of these targeted interviewees as well as questions unique to their occupation. Proponents of this argument clearly have never had to work under the time constraints placed on auditors under a competitive consulting audit process.

A great deal of focus has been placed on improving auditing through a tighter quality assurance process as well as greater auditor oversight. More focus needs to be placed on improving the audit protocols, auditor training and certification. Until the Government addresses the above issues, there will continue to be allegations that the COR program is tiered. There will continue to be inconsistencies in interpretation and auditor scoring.

Proven, Practical Principles to Achieving Health and Safety Excellence

We continue to offer this one day course for managers and supervisors. The purpose of this course is to provide perspective leaders with more knowledge and tools to lead the program. If they don't believe they should be leading the effort now, they will after taking the course.

The information that is offered in this course does not repeat what these employees may have learned in safety basics courses. The focus of the course is to:

- Understand the importance of getting value out of the documents that are typically completed in safety programs. Learn how to scrutinize investigation reports for root cause. What does a properly prepared hazard assessments look like? What should management be doing with the inspection reports, etc.
- Understand the importance of organizational culture to the success of the safety program and what leaders need do to help improve the culture.
- Learn to assess safety performance problems. Too often supervisors identify training as a means to solve employee performance problems when in fact there may be far better solutions.

- Learn how to get your new employees started on the right foot. New employee orientations and on-the-job training often fall short of providing the information new employees really need.

These are just a few examples of what the course covers. Check our website for our new video next month for more details (www.compasshealthandsafety.com) or call us at 780-478-3623.

Health and Safety Coordinator Convicted and Fined

A Health and Safety Manager (Mr. Della Valle) working in Nova Scotia for the Cape Breton Housing Authority was recently convicted in court and fined. It came to Mr. Valle's attention of some tests conducted on insulation materials used in the housing units. The report indicated the insulation contained asbestos. It also contained recommendations for maintenance worker as well as occupant precautions. Mr. Valle notified two maintenance supervisors of the issue and assumed the matter would be addressed. He did not report the matter to his boss the Director of the Housing Authority. Six months later it was determined that action had not been taken by the maintenance supervisors.

The judge ruled that Mr. Valle should have reported the matter to the Director or at the very least other managers. His position on the organization chart was prominently positions directly under the Director of the housing authority. There was clearly an expectation by the Director that he would be informed of such a significant event. Mr. Valle was fined \$1,000 and the Authority was fined \$10,000.

This is the second conviction of a health and safety professional.

Perception Survey Application Pricing

We have just completed our new survey application price list. Prices have been reduced. Clients may use our survey application and pay anywhere from \$10.00 per survey respondent to \$3.00 depending on the size of survey and total number of respondents.

Other options such as purchasing a three year application license our outright purchase of the application, may ultimately result in paying less than a \$1.00 per survey respondent. Please call us if you would like to explore any of these options.

Health & Safety Training

We've recently partnered with a trainer that is offering a number of courses that Compass has not previously offered. The individual has some excellent experience developing and delivering training courses in his capacity as a college instructor and

Safety Manager for an international company in the oil and gas industry. Here are some examples of the courses offered:

Fall Protection
Emergency Response Planning
Effective HSE Orientations Programs
HSE Action Plan Development
Contractor Safety Management
Ergonomics
Working Alone Program
Confined Space Awareness
COR Audit Preparation
Violence Prevention
Distracted Driving

These courses are offered at the client's site. Give us a call if you would like to obtain more information on the above courses.

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