

Members' Corner



David Hughes,
Honorary BHSEA Member

HOW TO DO IT! Some Suggestions to Think About

David Hughes has been a member of BHSEA for some 30 years and has also been on the Council and Management Committee. He has many years' experience as a health and safety consultant and trainer. These are just some of his suggestions on how to approach the health and safety manager's role.

Over the years David has found that it is sometimes easy to fall into the trap of spending a lot of time on risk assessments and legislation but to lose sight of the fact that safety is a management function.

Safety Manager's Function

- **Plan** – Safety Improvements
- **Lead** – Safety Implementation
- **Co-ordinate** – Safety Activities
- **Develop** – A Safety Culture

These are David's Tops Tips

Step 1 - Plan Your Personal Approach to Safety

- avoid getting bogged down by routine paperwork (such as reports and statistics)
- avoid being at everyone's beck and call (plan your time and actions)
- avoid fire-fighting (agree a plan of action and stick to it)
- involve everyone (don't preach to them)

Step 2 Develop your Safety Action Plan

When looking at a site, work from the outside in.

- ❖ Identify the hazards, both external (neighbourhood) and also internal. As an example, David recalled a petrol station which had been adjacent to a construction site. It was 30 feet away but 15 feet lower and so out of sight of the site. It presented a potential fire hazard.

Another example was a builders' yard next to a junior school. The frequent reversing of HGV's posed a hazard to mothers and children, especially at the beginning and end of the school day and during the lunchtime. The action plan was to clearly identify the times when the HGVs should ideally not be on site or when extra precautions should be in place.

- ❖ Consider the external conditions, such as surface condition of the site, weather conditions, pedestrians, vehicles manoeuvring on site.
- ❖ Consider company created hazards which might affect neighbours or pedestrians, such as smoke, fumes, odours; dust, noise, emissions from cooling towers.
- ❖ In consultation with all employees, identify departmental, environmental and operational/process hazards on site then define and agree the appropriate solutions and controls.

Step 3 – Working Method

- ❖ Explain what you are going to do – ensure employees understand the difference between hazards and risks.
- ❖ Identify and discuss hazards/risks with operators - this will improve employee understanding and co-operation.
- ❖ Discuss and agree methods of hazard/risk elimination/reduction and any necessary operational changes.
- ❖ Discuss and agree guarding/protection methods.
- ❖ Then write up and implement all the agreed operational/work methods and other changes. You should announce your safety policy publicly and then maintain continuous awareness.

Bear in mind that it is instinctive for people to:

- **Resist imposed change (even when it benefits them)**
- **Accept and adopt change (that they have helped to develop)**

And David's last piece of advice:

“Always be enthusiastic; it's infectious!”

George thanked David for his insightful and concise presentation and commented that he too had found that people resist imposed rules but they are always more receptive to change where they are able to participate in the process.