

Mini-Review

Safety Neutrality - Towards Improving Safety Landscape

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Abstract

Neutrality is a term used in many places including internet, information technology, and carbon or greenhouse gas emissions. In occupational safety and health, Safety neutrality consists of commitment, counting, action and offsetting. Safety neutrality is best achieved when risk is at lowest, and other parameters are high such as commitment, communication, safety culture, counting and analyze, action and system are at the highest. It should be noted that lowest and highest are qualitative words and will vary depending on the workplace maturity levels. Once the elements of neutrality are addressed, the next step will to improve on existing performances. Safety neutrality is not just risk but involves culture, commitment, analyze and improve. All these helps in improving the safety and health outcomes.

Keywords: Commitment; Management; Neutrality; Risk; Safety and Health.

Introduction

Neutrality is the state of not supporting or helping either side in a conflict, disagreement, etc.; impartiality [1]. In other words, Neutrality is absence of decided views, expression, or strong feeling [2]. Neutrality exists in all spheres, such as Government neutrality which refers to government stance of neutrality religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances. Accounting neutrality refers to financial statements are not prepared in a way to favor groups or users over other groups.

Net neutrality [3] is the principle that Internet service providers and governments regulating the Internet should treat all data on the Internet the same, not discriminating or charging differentially by user, content, website, platform, application, type of attached equipment, or mode of communication. Some countries have enables legislation towards net neutrality [4]. Net neutrality [5] is a term generally used to refer to Internet service or network providers treating all sources of Internet content equally, and the right of a consumer to access content and services on the Internet on a nondiscriminatory basis.

The key objective of this paper is to identify and evaluate the model that constitute as Safety Neutrality.

What is safety neutral or safety neutrality

Safety neutrality is coined by the author and may be used for the first time in the world. The best practice for organizations and individuals seeking safety neutral status entails reducing and/or avoiding incidents first so that only favorable culture exists.

How to achieve safety neutrality

Workplace Safety and health or Occupational Safety and health (WSH) neutrality is usually achieved by combining the following steps (although these may vary depending whether the strategy is implemented by individuals, companies, organizations, cities, regions, or countries).

Commitment and Communicate

Being WSH neutral is increasingly seen as good corporate or state social responsibility and a growing list of corporations, organizations are announcing WSH performances and showing continual improvements. In the case of companies and small organizations, decision-making is likely to be straightforward, but for more complex set-ups, it usually requires political leadership at the highest level and wide

popular agreement that the effort is worth making. Top management leads by example and takes ultimate accountability in WSH outcomes. Commitment and communicate commitment has

four steps as effectively advocated in Managers Resource handbook [6] which is shown in Fig - 1

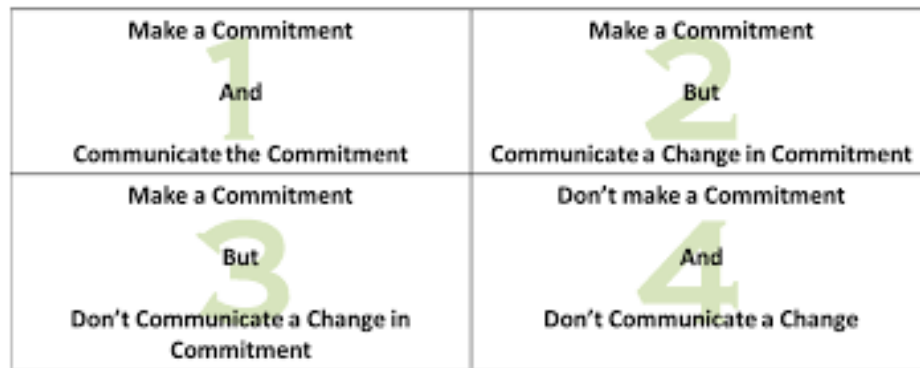


Fig. 1. Four steps of Commitment and Communication [6]

Counting and analyzing

Computing and analyzing the hazards and risks that need to be eliminated, and the options for doing so, is the most crucial step in the cycle as it enables setting the priorities for action – from the processes used to people operating the processes – and to start monitoring progress.

This can be achieved through a WSH Hazards and Risks inventory that aims at answering questions such as:

- a) Which operations, activities, units should be included?
- b) Which sources should be included (Routine and non-routine works, foreseeable or discrete)?
- c) Who is responsible for which risks?

For companies, risks calculators simplify by compiling an inventory. Typically they measure number of risk activities, the amount and type of risk generated, and how many programs, procedures and policies an individual operate. Individuals may also set various limits of the system they are concerned with, e.g. personal protection equipment, or the culture of the company they work for. There are plenty of risks calculators available online, which vary significantly in their usefulness and the parameters they measure. In some circumstances, actually going beyond WSH neutral (usually after a certain length of time taken to reach WSH breakeven) is an objective.

Action and system

In starting to work towards Workplace Safety and Health (WSH) neutrality, businesses

and local administrations can make use of a safety and health (or sustainability) management system or Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) established by the international standard OHSAS 18001 (developed by the International Organization for Standardization). Another WSHMS framework is SS 506 [7] standards, the Occupational safety and health management system standards, used by numerous companies throughout the Singapore. Many local authorities apply the management system to certain sectors to certify workplace's operations.

Reduction and Offset

One of the strongest arguments for reducing WSH programs is that it will often save money. Safety and health incident costs across the world are rising, making it harder to afford to ignore risks. So it is both common sense and legal for the companies to reduce risk as low as reasonably possible [8].

Examples of possible actions to reduce risks are:

- Lead by leadership through management by walkabout [9],
- Obtaining stakeholder commitment and agreement on various issues such as those affecting employee, and
- By using low-risk alternative methods and practices and sustainable programs

Offsetting

The use of risk offsets aims to neutralize a certain volume of WSH risks by funding programs/controls which should cause an equivalent reduction of WSH risks somewhere

else, such as in other departments. Under the premise “First reduce what you can, then offset the remainder”. Offsetting can be done by supporting a responsible WSH project (Programs) or by buying insurance. WSH offsetting can be used as a tool for organizations however, it is sometimes viewed as a contentious issue. Fig 2 shows the importance of weighing between risk reduction (offsetting) and costs for programs. The components of safety neutrality model is shown in Fig 3.

of a list of suggested improvements, with results documented and reported, so that experience gained is shared with those who can put it to good use.

Finally, with all that completed, the Safety Neutrality cycle starts all over again, only this time incorporating the lessons learnt. Science and technology move on, regulations become tighter, the standards employees demand go up. So the second cycle will go further than the first, and the process will continue, each successive phase building on and improving on what went before. Being WSH neutral, companies should be increasingly seen as good corporate responsible.

So when do we say a company is "safety neutral"

Safety neutrality can be measured by a combination of different parameters such as WSH outcomes, culture perception indices, cost of risks versus company's turnover, and sustaining a system of management. Other parameters that can be considered are leading indicators such as percentage of training, number of near miss reported, number of electrical hazards.

In general, safety neutrality is best achieved when risk is at lowest, and other parameters are high; such as commitment, communication (including safety culture), counting and analyze, action and system are at the highest. It should be noted that lowest and highest are qualitative words and will vary depending on the workplace maturity levels. Fig. 4 briefly shows the relationship model between the parameters to evaluate safety neutrality.



Fig. 2. Risk reduction versus cost for controls

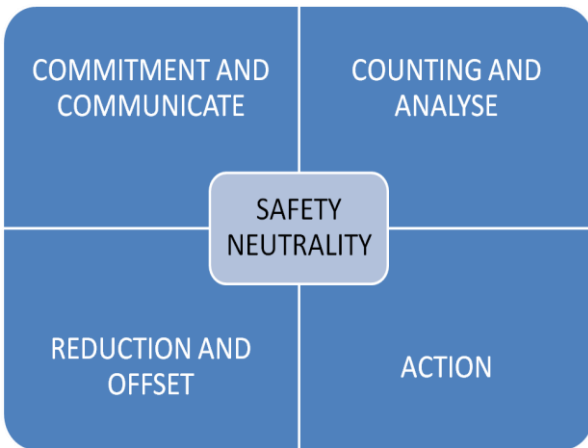


Fig. 3. Details the relationship between Safety Neutrality and various elements

Evaluating

Another step in the process of Safety Neutrality is the evaluation system. This evaluation [10] includes results and compilation

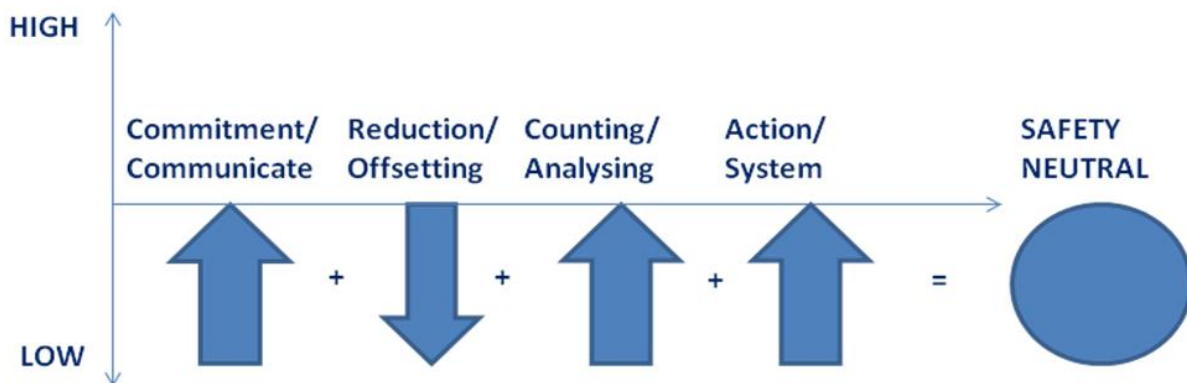


Fig. 4. The relationship between the parameters and safety neutrality

Conclusion

Safety neutrality begins with leadership, commitment and communication besides addressing risks, consideration for offsetting risks, evaluation and analyzing the system. Once the elements of neutrality are addressed, the next step will to improve on existing performances. Safety neutrality is not just risk but involves culture, commitment, analyze and improve. All these helps in improving the safety and health outcomes.

Conflict of interest

Authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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