

Climate, Safety Leadership, & Critical Risk Management in the Australian Mining Sector

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ABSTRACT

This presentation will cover (1) the importance of high-quality safety leadership, (2) insights from a Safety Climate Survey that includes responses from 7,903 employees working at 19 Australian mining organisations, (3) the results of a critical control verification coaching intervention, and (4) recommendations for improving safety leadership in high-risk work settings. Safety climate is a representation of the deeper culture that exists in an organisation. Safety climate is predictive of behaviour, performance and reporting in organisations. Leaders play an important role in the establishment and maintenance of culture. Perceptions of safety climate were collected from 19 Australian mines ($n = 7,903$ employees). These results indicate that the Australian mining sector is doing well in team support for safety, and supervisor safety commitment. There were negative perceptions of willingness to report errors, employee involvement in safety initiatives, psychological safety, and emergency readiness. Perceptions of safety leadership were in the fair range, with recognising behaviours perceived lowest, falling in the poor range. The underreporting rate was at 25% indicating that 1 in 4 incidents are not being reported. Analyses exploring climate, leadership, safety behaviour and wellbeing will also be discussed. The integrity and success of critical risk management systems is often determined by the quality of safety leadership. Leaders need a mix of technical safety knowledge and interpersonal skills to be able to support the workforce to build critical control knowledge that invites open and collaborative discussions to find new or improved solutions. Forty leaders completed training and 5-weeks of coaching focused on developing critical control verification competencies. The follow up evaluation demonstrated significant improvements in relationship building, observation of controls and overall capability. Overall, insights from multi-organisation climate data and a pre-post coaching intervention will be discussed and recommendations and practical guidance for leaders will be provided.

