

# Loss Control



FARMERS

## Information Bulletin

### Behavioral Issues

Behavioral issues of your workers impact workplace productivity and safety. These behavioral issues can include complacency, fatigue, frustration, rushing, or stress. By identifying and addressing these issues in your operations, you can manage your productivity and safety standards more effectively.

#### Complacency

After employees have been on the job for a while, complacency may set in. The employee becomes familiar with the job functions and simply gets into a routine rather than maintaining a focus on the tasks necessary to complete the job. This lack of attention to detail can result in production run productivity decline, product or equipment damage, and/or employee injury.

Supervisors must be aware of how each employee is functioning within the workplace. When complacency is noted, action must be taken to help the employee return to a focused effort toward the job. Actions that can be taken include talking to the worker, job rotation as part of the job schedule, and training for some workers.

#### Fatigue

Fatigue can produce devastating consequences in the workplace. Workers experiencing fatigue are more likely to be injured or cause product or equipment damage. The causes can be from worker actions such as staying up to late on a regular basis or from management allowing too many hours to be worked on a shift or in a week.

Management must control fatigue in the workplace. Actions can include sending workers home during the shift

for appropriate rest, reducing an employee's hours worked, or disciplinary actions where warranted for actions that can only be controlled by the employee. Communication is a key in controlling this behavioral issue. The employee must know what is expected and the consequences of their actions.

#### Frustration

Conditions at home or in the workplace can result in frustration. Workers demonstrating frustration need counseling by management to attempt to determine the cause of this action. Work related frustration can many times be reduced or eliminated through communications with the work force or on an individual basis or a need for training may be the resolution.

#### Rushing

While some employees simply work at a faster pace than other employees, it is important to understand that rushing may be a different behavioral result. When a worker gets behind or feels the need to increase production because of schedule demands, they begin to rush their work pace. This causes them to lose focus on the total job picture and focus on a limited set of criteria.

This factor can result in increased potential of workplace injuries or accidents and could lead to catastrophic results in worker injuries, product loss, and equipment damage. Management must carefully control rushing in the workplace. Properly communicate any changes in production schedule to reduce an employee's perception that they need to overly hurry up to complete a job. They need to remain focused on the detail and work safely.

## Stress

Job stress is the number one problem for working people. The causes include juggling work, home and the care of children and aging parents. It creates the “fight or flight” response in the brain and causes the heart to speed up, arteries to narrow and blood sugar to rise.

The result of stress causes physical and psychological problems for the employee and results in reduced work performance on the job, potential of conflict with management or co-workers, and increased potential of on the job injury or accident.

Controlling stress in the workplace involves properly communicating job expectations by management, introducing “funny-bone” type materials into the workplace to assist employees with relaxing, and providing for relaxation and stress reduction breaks where needed.

When it becomes obvious that the employee’s stress is not related to the work environment, management needs to make time available for outside counseling to allow the employee to address the situation. If the factors involved are unable to be resolved, disciplinary actions that include employee termination must be considered.

Allowed to remain unchanged, stress can result in major disruptions in the workplace.

## Handling Behavioral Issues

Management is responsible for handling all disruptions within the workplace including behavioral issues. When handled appropriately, the work environment functions more smoothly and production can run at efficient levels. Letting your employees know that management is concerned about employee behavior is the first step to getting a handle and control of behavioral issues.