

2/8/19

**GIVE A SAFETY PROFESSIONAL A KIND THOUGHT**

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Look around. See any safety professionals? Look carefully; the safety professional can be almost anyone. You may be able to recognize such a person as the one who looks for the EXIT signs and fire extinguishers upon entering a building or room. Otherwise, they look like a regular person. Their job is not an easy one, however. It requires effort to thwart events that hurt people, or damage property or the environment. **A couple of their difficult tasks are trying to convince others to behave in a safe manner** and justifying the allocation of resources for safety.

**Safe Behavior** - Getting others to behave in a safe manner is a large undertaking. Parents are always trying to teach their children to be safe, and it's much the same for safety professionals, except they're working with adults who have gotten accustomed to certain behaviors and habits. Workers may not always want to wear protective equipment, even if they realize the risks involved. Sometimes the workers are not aware of the risks or the need for protective measures. This is where the safety professional often springs into action. They can inform workers of the hazards involved with a process or equipment, and they can identify what's needed to protect workers from those hazards. This, of course, means that the safety professionals have to know how to identify hazards and be aware of what types of protective measures are available and effective.

**What it takes** - To identify hazards, safety professionals may use qualitative and quantitative analysis of products, systems, operations, and activities. With this information they can then evaluate work situations and identify any possible hazards. They have to consider the odds of an incident or injury occurring, how severe the incident/injury might be, the risk, and what an incident/injury might cost. With this information, the safety professional can move on to identifying appropriate ways to eliminate or control the identified hazards. They have to consider costs and effectiveness of each control, and often make suggestions to their boss as to which control or controls would be the best choice. These controls may be engineering in nature, such as machine guards and other barriers, or administrative in nature, such as those found in the form of policies and procedures. Since they deal with people, safety professionals must have good communication and interpersonal skills. They also deal with equipment, so they have to be familiar with mechanics and physics. Often, there are chemicals involved, so they have to be aware of chemistry and the risks. Their knowledge must often venture into areas of biology, physics, math, business, adult education, and environmental science. They also need to be well versed in the particulars of the industry in which they work. In addition to all this, safety professionals have to know the laws that apply to the activities of the workers in their company. If, for example, there is a confined space in the facility, safety professionals need to understand the requirements if an employee were to enter that confined space. They would have to be familiar with not only federal OSHA's regulations, but any applicable state or local laws, as well as their own company policies. The safety professional must do all these things without spending too much time and/or money, as well.

**Resources** - Unlike programs that have something to show for the allocation, safety professionals strive to have nothing to show — no incidents or injuries.

**Respect** - **The bottom line of a safety professional's goals is to keep everyone and everything safe**. In return for their efforts, they are often treated with a measure of disrespect. People often don't like to be told to wear their safety equipment or not to approach an unknown spill. These folks like to live dangerously, not listen to others, and rely on their own instincts and knowledge. However, the safety professional is dedicated to keeping these, and all other people as safe as they can, and for those efforts, they deserve a bit of respect, and a kind thought once in a while. They really aren't out to get you, but rather to protect you, sometimes from yourself.

***WHAT UNSAFE OPERATIONS DID YOU FIND ON YOUR JOBSITE THIS WEEK?*** \_\_\_\_\_

***What Corrective action was taken?*** \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting Attended By \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Signature \_\_\_\_\_