

## Behavior-Based Safety

Safety is a choice. Let's explore that idea a little further. Safety is a series of choices made by workers each day, choices involving behaviors in the workplace. It's in how you train, what precautions you take when performing tasks, and your level of awareness to external factors that may jeopardize your wellbeing. You might say that 'safety' is in how you confront the sum total of different considerations with the potential for negatively impacting personal health.

There are three factors that influence personal safety choices: the ability to **recognize hazards and evaluate risk**, the **motivation to be safe**, and the ability to **focus while performing the current task safely**.

Behavior Based Safety is a program designed to influence employee actions toward safer outcomes, ideally by **preventing an accident or injury before it occurs**. Implementing a behavior based safety program is the most comprehensive way for companies to promote safety, eliminate hazards and prevent injuries.

When implemented correctly, a behavior based safety program can provide positive rewards to change unsafe behavior, reduce job-related injuries, minimize lost production hours, and improve workplace morale—essential ingredients for creating a strong safety culture. Behavior Based Safety matters because upwards of 80% of all accidents occur due to the choices we make and how we act—that is, our behavior. Safety is to a great extent under our own control. Unsafe acts, rather than unsafe conditions, are the root cause of most incidents.

Accidents and injuries have, first, a human cost, so it is advantageous for employees to practice safe behaviors in the workplace. It is the human impact—personal injury, loss of livelihood, the wellbeing of others—which brings us cause for concern about behavioral choices in the workplace.

But unsafe behavior also affects a business's financial bottom line. Whether it's a minor cut requiring stitches or a broken back, if the injury happens at work, employers are impacted. Poor safety performance makes it tougher for businesses to remain competitive in the marketplace. Businesses are impacted in additional ways when their workers become injured or ill. Lost productivity is the most commonly cited indirect cost of systemic safety failure.

So, the absence of safe working conditions can create significant additional costs. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2012 there were over 1 million cases of non-fatal occupational events requiring days away from work, with a median average absence of 9 days.

Striving to make the workplace safer by eliminating hazards and preventing injuries requires a partnership between the company and its employees. For a company, its safety culture has the greatest impact on this partnership. Companies with the best safety records have a strong safety culture. For employees, motivation has the greatest influence on the worker-employer safety partnership. To succeed, the employee must feel that the employer really cares about their well-being, and the employer must feel that the worker is committed to the company's safety expectations.

Training prepares you to identify unsafe behaviors and actions, and then make good decisions to work safely. The challenge is to deliver training that is memorable and relevant. The training that "sticks" will keep you safe.

**Source:** <https://vividlearningsystems.com/courses/osha/behavior-based-safety>

## January Vivid Courses:

**All:**  
Bloodborne Pathogens  
Behavior-Based Safety

## Bloodborne Pathogen Safety in the Workplace

Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP) are viruses carried in human blood and other body fluids that cause disease in people. There are many different bloodborne pathogens, including malaria and syphilis, but the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), hepatitis B (HBV), and hepatitis C (HCV) viruses, which can each lead to liver cancer, pose the most serious threat of workplace exposure.

Perhaps no other profession is more at risk of the hazards posed by bloodborne pathogens (BBP) than the medical profession, but that's not to say that awareness and prevention measures shouldn't be prevalent in all workplaces, because the price of ignorance can be very costly and simple understanding of some bloodborne pathogen basics, really can save lives.

The primary means of transmission is through unprotected sexual contact with an infected person, sharing contaminated needles or syringes, transfusions from infected blood, and contact with open sores or wounds of an infected person. Infected mothers can also transmit these diseases to their babies during pregnancy, birth, or breastfeeding.

In the workplace, transmission is usually through injuries from contaminated sharp objects that penetrate the skin, such as needles, knives, broken glass, or from splashes into the mucous membranes of your eyes, nose, or mouth, or through exposed openings or abrasions in the skin from scratches, cuts, bites, or wounds.

### Number One Rule

***Treat all blood and body fluids as if they were infected.***

### Prevention

- The primary prevention tool against hepatitis B is vaccination before and after any exposure.
- For mitigating potential exposure hazards to bloodborne pathogens (BBP), the most desirable approach is to implement engineering controls that minimize or eliminate exposure to a risk at its source, such as physical barriers which can include sharps containers, biological safety cabinets that lock, self-sheathing needles, and containers specifically designed and labeled with color coding that identifies them as contaminated waste.
- Practice controls is another line of defense from spreading bloodborne pathogens (BBP). Making folks wash their hands following an exposure incident or mandatory use of an appropriate antiseptic if there is no hand wash facility, are examples of work practice controls.

Proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is another line of defense from exposure. This can include disposable gloves, masks, and eye protection such as goggles or glasses with side shields, and face shields.

Most companies with occupational exposure furnish biohazard spill cleanup kits, or should be doing so to minimize risk—if that isn't the case where you work, you might consider checking into it.

Some standard first aid kits now include disposable one-way resuscitation mouth pieces because in an emergency scenario where Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation CPR is required, people act fast and often without recognizing the risk of bloodborne pathogens. If blood is present during a first aid response, the responder should use the appropriate personal protective equipment to prevent direct contact with blood.

### Key practices to help prevent the transmission of Bloodborne Pathogens (BBP):

- Always wear disposable gloves whenever there is a potential for exposure to blood, body fluids, or other potentially infectious materials.
  - Keep cuts and/or sores covered.
  - Wash hands or other affected body parts anytime there is contact with blood or body fluids, or other potentially infectious materials. Even if there's a shred of doubt about exposure, scrub the suspect area.
- Dispose of needles in puncture and leak proof, medical hazard containers, and disinfect surfaces visibly soiled with blood or body fluids.

**Source:** <https://vividlearningsystems.com/courses/osha/bloodborne-pathogens-bbp>