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Incident Reporting

Company A strongly promotes the practice of having their employees and contractors report all incidents. Everyone is trained on how to report all types of incidents from medical treatments to close calls. They understand the benefits from finding the causes of incidents and taking action to make sure they don't happen again. Everything is going great; the company has more incident information than they have ever had before.

However, one day a senior manager sees the high number of reports from particular contractors and employees and determines that there must be something wrong with those operations. After all they seem to be having more incidents than the rest. The contractors and employees are brought in for a serious meeting to figure out how to improve their performance and the consequences if they don't.

Very quickly, the number of incidents reported starts to decline and the manager is happy with the safety improvement and reduction of incidents. Right?

Wrong.

This is not fiction. Companies everywhere choke off incident reporting by taking actions that are seen as negative by the people doing the reporting. To be clear, if you want to achieve continuous improvements in safety performance and increase incident reporting, especially those valuable close call reports, there needs to be positive reinforcement <u>every time</u> a report comes in. If there are any real or perceived negative consequences from the people doing the reporting, soon you won't get any information at all.

How to Promote a Culture of Incident Reporting:

- Focus on why and how it happened. Not on who did it and what they did wrong.

- DON'T use to discipline or discriminate against the reporting employee. There should be rewards for reporting, not penalties.

- DO lead by example. Do your own reporting.

- Emphasize that the company wants to know. Reporting benefits all workers and the company.

- Communicate with workers about close calls and follow up actions. Show how you are using their reported information to improve workplace safety.