



## Creating a culture for mining employees to speak up - myths and realities

We know that our employees servicing equipment are at high risk of getting injured. Recognizing this, SMS Equipment is creating a culture where our employees feel safe to discuss behaviours that lead to incidents before they happen. We celebrate and share these stories across SMS Equipment and the shift in culture will have a positive impact on our employees physical health and mental well-being.

For this edition of Experts' Corner, we checked in with three of our team members who contributed to making the program what it is today and providing the necessary resources for our teams:

- Jonathan Soper, General Manager, OHSE
- Jen Sutter, Manager, Health and Well Being
- Rhonda Clarke-Tobin Benefits & Well-being Advisor

Between them, they share some of the myths and realities about keeping mining employees safe and healthy.



We are working to reduce the number of hand injuries in the workplace as it continues to be our number one reported injury, at 32% of all injuries sustained at SMS Equipment.

**Safety Tip:** Actions to prevent hand injuries includes training on selecting the proper gloves for the task, taking an investigative approach to ensure all affected parties understand “why” an employee put their hands in the line of fire, and ensuring everyone is accountable to “see it, own it, and report it,” so we can share key learnings

**Myth:** Health and safety should be left to specialists.

**Reality:** In mining, health and safety are central to each employee's relationship with the company, and consequently, everybody's business. In fact, our entire program rests on company-wide engagement in behavioural conversations and constant reinforcement that SMS Equipment cares about its employees.

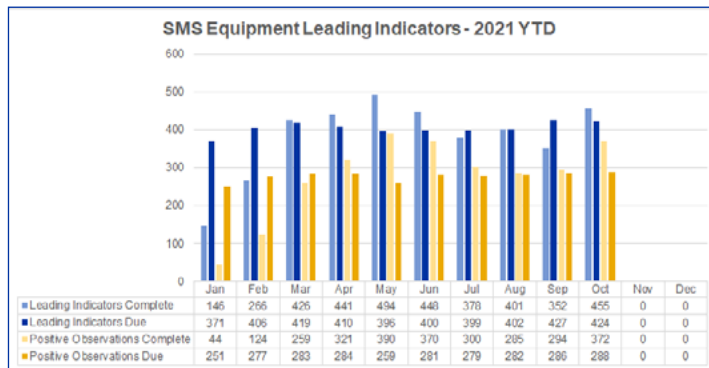
**Jonathan:** Many companies are looking to drive safety conversations down to the worker level, and we believe it's essential to do just that. We are creating a culture where courage is not required to discuss behaviours in the workplace that lead to near misses, unsafe acts and conditions. Also, taking the time to recognize positive behaviours to reinforce “what good looks like.” These leading indicators are discussed and formally recorded into our system, where there's accountability for taking action and reporting back to an employee on the progress.

**Myth:** Past incidents and trends tell managers what they need to know about health and safety risks.

**Reality:** While past incident histories are important, they don't provide adequate warning

**of accidents about to happen.** On the other hand, leading indicators- including near misses, unsafe acts and conditions - tell a much more immediate story.

**Jonathan:** We have an aggressive process for encouraging employees to report leading indicators. Operational General Managers review the submissions every month and select a safety champion for each category: Intervention, unsafe act or condition, and positive observation. The winners are highlighted through our internal communications, and they are presented with a letter from their General Manager, including a \$100 gift certificate. Our goal for this program is to have every employee report leading indicators and share them amongst their peers.



Leading indicators shown in dark blue are reports such as near misses, unsafe acts or conditions.

Lagging indicators shown in yellow are recorded when we experience injuries, property damage, equipment damage, and environmental events.

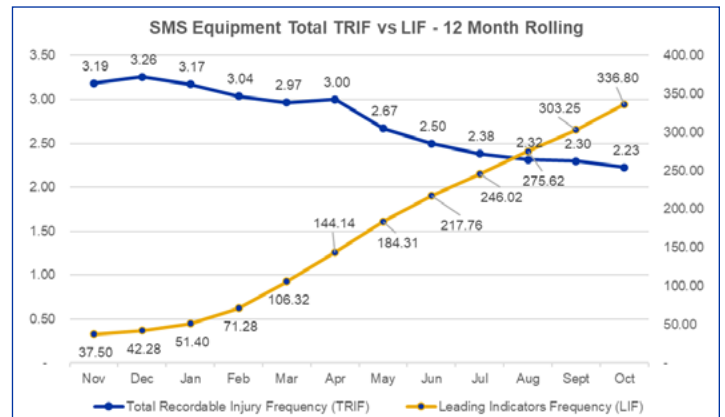
**Myth: Health and safety programs are a necessary expense that weighs against the bottom line.**

**Reality: Health and safety programs are good for employees and the business because they confirm that the company cares about its people, increasing productivity and reputation.**

**Jen:** Employers must invest in health outside of traditional benefits for employees and their family. When employees feel we care about their overall health, they will feel psychologically safe and engaged—productive employees will often go above and beyond for their co-workers and SMS Equipment.

**Jonathan:** Remember, it comes down to the license to operate on a mine site. The TRIF (Total Recordable Incident Frequency) rate is steadily being lowered, by mine operations, to access and work at a mine. Mine owners want companies with a low TRIF rate on their site. These scores are also a large part of the bid process for contracts. Companies with low TRIF rates

are considered more organized, resulting in reduced risks, and are essentially more profitable.



The evolution of our TRIF benchmarks and targeted proactive safety initiatives has allowed us to make significant progress in identifying and reducing TRIF rate and other risks.

**Myth: When you don't hear from employees about health and safety issues, that's a sign that things are under control.**

**Reality: There are always safety risks in mines, and no news is often bad news. To stay informed on these issues, companies have to actively solicit employee feedback and show that the company is listening and ready to act.**

**Jonathan:** One of the things we've worked hard on is creating a culture where you don't need to be courageous to speak out. For example, when somebody reports an unsafe condition, we'll act on it immediately, even if it involves stopping work. Where possible a leader will thank the employee personally.

Bradley was recognized as a proactive safety champion in July for reporting an unsafe condition.

While wrapping a corner group with plastic for storage and shipping, Bradley noticed a large crack in a wheel stud. Bradley then inspected all of the other wheel studs, and the cracked stud was changed out. If the crack stud had been left undetected, the component would have been delivered to a customer.



Bradley Collins  
Labourer, Acheson

Reporting leading indicators, such as Bradley's, helps ensure our people, product, and customers are kept safe.

**Myth: An employee's work and personal life are two separate issues.**

**Reality: When it comes to root causes of physical and mental health issues, a person's work and home experiences are inseparable. Therefore, health and safety programs need to look at the whole person, not just what happens when that person shows up for work.**

**Rhonda:** You have to pay attention to more than the work when interacting with employees. Often personal issues outside the workplace can have a significant impact on their performance and work relationships.

**Jonathan:** The holiday season is when people are most distracted, leading to one of the highest risks of injury. We've found that leaders initiating personal conversations with employees at this time of year is meaningful and works. Maybe an employee wants to share something job-related or perhaps wants to talk about what they'll be doing with their kids over the holidays.

**Jen:** When you're changing the culture around health and safety, it is important employees know they have resources and support for when they need it, which could be weeks, months or years down the road. We have a variety of programs in place to help manage these additional stressors for our mining employees who do shift work and are potentially away from their families.



Based on our employee total well-being assessment completed in early 2021, 78% of participants agree that SMS Equipment is committed to ensuring employees' psychological safety.

**Myth: Senior managers don't belong on the shop floor.**

**Reality: Management presence on the floor is a powerful enabler for building a company culture.**

**Rhonda:** We want our managers to connect on a personal level with employees. For example, if a worker

has been talking about their son's upcoming hockey game and the next time they see them, they ask how the game went, it changes the dynamic and builds a positive relationship.

**Jonathan:** Our leaders don't realize how much impact they have on employees when they walk on the floor and have a couple of candid conversations.

**Myth: Workplace design issues should be left to the engineers.**

**Reality: Employees often have the most innovative ideas for solving problems in their work area. The key for management is encouraging employees to share their thoughts and then taking action when the improvements they suggest are valid.**

**Jonathan:** Typically, what I ask is, "what would you do differently in your work right now?" or "is there anything you'd like to see improved?" Or if I'm watching somebody, I'll ask, "what did you put in place to do this job or this task, and why did you do it?" It's essential to have these conversations to get them engaged and open up communication. For example, the other day, an employee using a grinder had set up a shield to prevent passers from getting hit with sparks. Nobody had asked them to do it - they took the initiative. So that's the kind of thing I look for, and those are the kinds of behaviours that we want to reinforce.

**The Bottom Line:** A robust health and safety culture cannot be dictated but requires employee engagement at every level in the organization. The good news is that when you respect your employees and recognize that they don't purposely come to work to experience stress or get injured, they will respond positively, giving your program the energy it needs to succeed.

**Next Steps: Do you want to know more about our proactive safety program? We would be happy to share the knowledge and best practices we've learned along the way.**

