

HUMAN BEHAVIOR AND INDUSTRIAL SAFETY

Stress in the work situation is a cause for high accident rates. Some researchers, in fact, have attributed a major portion of accidents to unhealthy psychological climates. Since management creates the psychological environment for its employees, it should do everything possible to make workers feel secure and free from stress.

Management has always been interested in eliciting from all workers loyalty to the company. Every company would like to have its employees be good contributing employees. Those who feel that they have been truly accepted, in the sense here used, will be loyal workers.

If, however, a worker feels that he is but one cog in a machine, he will have little desire to be loyal to a company and may seek employment elsewhere if it is available. If he remains on the job, he will tend to be hostile to everything proposed by the company, including the safety program.

The same principle applies to the safety manager and his program. If he expects loyalty to a safety program, he must also contribute to the satisfaction of this need for loyalty on the part of the worker.

One cannot expect others to recognize his achievement unless he is willing to give recognition to the achievements of others. He must do everything in his power to satisfy the needs of others for in this way he will satisfy his own. The safety program will have greater chance for success because it is really working through people, utilizing their motivations for the good of all. Anyone desiring affection, belonging, knowledge, participation, and recognition must be ready to give it to others.

Safety directors and supervisors must ask, "What causes an individual to do what he is doing?" It may be difficult to find the answer, but not impossible. A concern for workers and a sensitivity to them will aid understanding.

Complexity of motivation

The motivational problem is perhaps the most complex one in the field of human behavior. It is not possible at the present stage of development to give clear-cut, concise answers to all the questions that would be asked about other people's motivations. Rather, attempts are made to set forth some basic factors and point out where the complexities exist. Continuing need, multi-

ple motivation, hierarchical motivation, and conflicting motives must be considered.

Continuing need is more obvious when one thinks of the biological needs. However, people often assume that in the psychosocial needs, satisfaction at one time should suffice for the future and thus they need not be concerned any longer with giving recognition, or affection, or social approval.

For all people, these needs continue throughout life. Satisfaction is always sought for these needs, but not always attained. It should be apparent also that the satisfactions sought by individuals will not necessarily be for the same needs. At one time, the drive motivation may be for social approval while at another time the need most requiring satisfaction might be affection. Thus, in dealing with people, one must recognize that what was effective yesterday may not work today, although the satisfaction-seeking behavior is to some degree similar.

Being aware that these needs continually want satisfaction makes it somewhat easier for the safety man or anyone else to deal effectively with people in the work situation. There may be variance from day to day so the safety man must therefore cultivate his own ability, and the ability of foremen, to work with people, so that he can sense which needs require satisfaction at a given time.

Since they spend so much time together and with workers, the safety man and foreman (or supervisor) come to know each other and the workers very well. This should provide the key to determining what a worker's behavior at the moment means in terms of need satisfaction. This key is based on little cues in the individual's behavior which they have learned over the years to recognize, if they have taken the time and made the effort to know their people. Careful observation is required. Safety men should make certain that any foreman training program includes methods of effective observation of workers.

Multiple motivation is the second facet that complicates the analysis of behavior. People are seldom motivated by just one thing—many forces operate at any single moment. For example at lunch time, one may eat because he is in need of food, or just because it is the usual time. However,