

into account all the circumstances surrounding the particular job

Safety observations serve to °

- 1 Check adequacy of past training
- 2 Promote on-the-spot correction
- 3 Provide opportunities to compliment
- 4 Develop cooperative safety attitudes
- 5 Help supervisors learn about workers, and to identify problem workers
- 6 Sometimes suggest better job methods

The kinds of special-problem employees who warrant such observations are

- 1 Inexperienced men
- 2 Accident repeaters
- 3 Chronic unsafe workers
- 4 Physical or mental cases

In fact, all employees, even experienced workers, should be checked once in a while

One reason why safety observation has not been more fully utilized is that safetymen and supervisors seldom develop or improve their power of observation. Another is that planned safety observation involves a little more effort than the incidental safety observation.

There are several factors necessary for effective safety observation. The inspector must

- 1 **BE SELECTIVE** An inspector might look over a department first for safety, second for improvement of operations, third for training needs, and so on
- 2 **KNOW WHAT TO LOOK FOR** The more a supervisor or safetyman knows about a job and a worker's responsibilities, the better an observer he will be
- 3 **PRACTICE OBSERVING** The oftener a person looks with the conscious intention to observe, the more he will see at each fresh trial. Like all skills, observation improves with practice
- 4 **KEEP AN OPEN MIND** One way to increase open-mindedness is not to judge facts in advance. The inspector must not deny the fact, no matter what conclusion it may seem to lead to. The inspector must keep his mind open, at least until he has all the facts
- 5 **DO NOT BE SATISFIED WITH GENERAL IM-**

PRESSIONS A clean shop, or a careful routine, may still contain hidden hazards

- 6 **GUARD AGAINST HABIT AND FAMILIARITY** Asking the questions What, Where, When, How, and (especially) Why will often help uncover the real meaning of the situation
- 7 **RECORD OBSERVATIONS SYSTEMATICALLY** All notes should be dated, with space for comment on action taken and on results of the action. The notebook can serve both as a reminder and as a record of progress
- 8 **PREPARE A CHECKLIST** A systematic check for litter, obstructions, handling of flammables, condition of fire-fighting equipment, and so on, will uncover tangible problems that can be corrected. (Making a checklist was discussed earlier in this chapter)

Here are a few pointers that might help

- 1 Be firm, but friendly
- 2 Explain what and why
- 3 Review the safe alternative
- 4 Make your contact private
- 5 Get his reasons for acting unsafely
- 6 Get agreement on future practice

It is sometimes necessary to watch men at work, not casually in passing, but closely. This can be embarrassing to the men under observation—and one of the reasons for having a small inspection team. When it is necessary to observe a man closely, a member of the team should talk to him and explain what is going on, then ask his permission to watch him as he works. Usually, the man will continue his work naturally after such an introduction. If, however, he is nervous or uncooperative, it is better to postpone the observation.

When a person is observed performing an unsafe practice or act, the supervisor is faced with a problem in human relation skills. The worker should be left with the feeling that he has been corrected in a decent way.

Scheduling inspections. In large plants, where constant observation by supervisors or members of the safety team is impossible, supervisors should set up an observation

° A. T. Waad, 1963 Congress Transactions