

Committed Culture

What does great process safety look like? The Center for Chemical Process Safety (CCPS) offers a common vision of excellent process safety performance — Vision 20/20. In this vision, companies follow five industry tenets enabled by four societal themes.

Vision 20/20 was introduced at the Global Congress on Process Safety in 2012, and has been constantly evolving since then. Recent efforts have been directed toward communicating the tenets and themes and developing tools to support the concepts. This column, Process Safety Visions (PSV), is one of those efforts.

We are launching PSV this month to coincide with CCPS's celebration of the 15-year anniversary of its highly successful Process Safety Beacon (see pp. 20–21). This article introduces the first industry tenet — committed culture. Look for our other articles throughout 2017.



What Does It Mean?

Committed culture occurs when all employees and contractors commit to do the work right the first time and have a plan in case something goes wrong.

- Executives personally and visibly lead process safety.
- Operators and mechanics diligently follow procedures and speak up when they suspect a problem or see an opportunity for improvement.
- Supervisors and managers verify that work is executed properly, intervene to correct risky situations, and openly communicate negative news to management.

What Is the Value?

- Doing “the right thing, the right way” shift after shift, day after day, prevents incidents.
- A committed culture supports both safe and reliable operations.

What Can I Do?

- Recognize that “it could happen here.”
- Perform all tasks correctly, every time.
- Support your leadership by demonstrating a commitment to process safety.

What Does It Look Like?

Top management sets the culture through their behavior.

When top management makes process safety a priority, employees know it is important. Having a committed culture requires buy-in from executives and senior leadership, but that does not necessarily require a lot of resources. Hearing that senior leaders are personally promoting process safety or “walking the talk” reinforces process safety as an important initiative of the company.

Senior leaders personally promote process safety. Establishing a positive process safety culture requires a commitment by all levels of management. Unit and plant management should conduct regular walk-throughs of the site, note items of concern or good practice, and personally follow up.

Process safety is always on the agenda. Process safety topics should be standing agenda items at board or executive meetings. A good starting point is simply for management to discuss company or site process safety metrics. Reach out to process safety personnel for specific topics to add to your agenda. Lead a safety minute based on a Process Safety Beacon.

Process safety activities are included in annual operating plans and budgets. Unless you point it out, management may not be aware of the need to include these items. In the next round of budgeting, ensure that budgets submitted include activities supporting process safety. This sends a positive message to facility personnel that process safety does matter.

Operators and mechanics fully follow and properly complete procedural checklists. Nothing drives great process safety like good operational discipline. All this requires is a commitment culture to actually do it. A way to start this journey is through:

- clear communication from management that standard operating procedure (SOP) checklists are to be followed and completed properly
- management assurance that checklists are, in fact, completed properly
- a means for employees to correct and update checklists if they are confusing or incorrect.