



**Special points of interest to discuss
with your staff from this issue:**

- Human Performance Improvement
- Error Traps to Avoid
- OMC Return to Work Requirements

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BROOKHAVEN NATIONAL LABORATORY

Leadership Connection

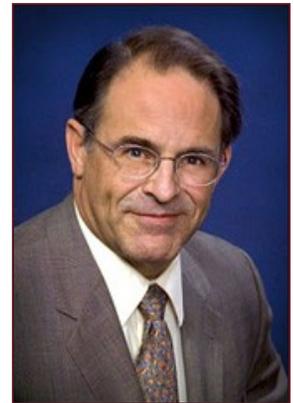
Director's Message

You may recall my memo last year indicating BNL would become involved in understanding and applying Human Performance Improvement (HPI) here at Brookhaven. There's been quite a bit of activity in this area since that time, and since some of you have already received training in HPI concepts and tools and are putting them to use, I thought it would be helpful to share our progress and plans with all Lab managers and supervisors.

Human Performance Improvement uses knowledge of human behavior to help us understand and better manage the interaction of people (our staff), processes, equipment, work environment, and organization to reduce error and improve performance. Several basic assumptions make up the foundation of HPI. They are:

- People are fallible, and even the best make mistakes.
- Error-likely situations are predictable, manageable, and preventable.
- Organizational processes and values influence behaviors.
- High levels of performance can be achieved through encouragement and reinforcement from leaders, peers, and subordinates.
- Events can be avoided by understanding the reasons mistakes occur and applying the lessons learned from past events.

Last fall, the Laboratory developed a plan to integrate HPI concepts and tools into work practices. The details of this plan are covered on the next page. I view Human Performance Improvement as the next step in bringing our performance – as individuals, work groups, facilities, and as an institution – to the next level. I've asked Rob Fisher, our HPI expert resource, to illustrate the effectiveness and benefits of HPI. You'll find an article from Rob in this issue followed by our own example of successful application at Brookhaven. I expect your involvement in making BNL a more productive and safer place.



Laboratory Director
Sam Aronson

The Plan for Human Performance Improvement at Brookhaven

An HPI Steering Team was established last year with representation that includes senior managers and IBEW members, and retained the services of an external expert in HPI (Rob Fisher, Fisher Improvement Technologies). Joe Labas was named the site's HPI Coordinator and 44 BNL staff members were trained to serve as HP Advocates. These individuals, selected from across the Lab's departments and divisions, are responsible for supporting Lab-wide HPI activities and integrating HPI at the local level. Three teams were established from this group of HP Advocates to address communication, training and integration related to HPI.

- The Integration Team is working with subject matter experts to incorporate HPI concepts and tools into key processes, including Work Planning and Control, Experimental Safety Review, Event/Issues Management, Accident/Incident Investigations and Causal Analysis.
- The Training Team is developing a plan and schedule for providing HPI training to all BSA employees by September 2009. To date, more than 400 employees have been trained in HPI principles.
- The Communications Team is working with the Steering Team to develop and implement effective communication tools for Lab staff.

What Leaders Can Do

Organizational values influence individual behaviors, but the smaller, local values of a work group always trump the larger organizational values. Here's what you can do to improve performance in your work group.

Supervisory Behaviors that Reduce Risk

- Facilitate open communication and exchange of information.
- Establish clear priorities, roles, and responsibilities.
- Promote procedure adherence.
- Plan and assign work effectively.
- Conduct pre-job briefings and discuss deviation potentials.
- Observe how work is performed at the jobsite.
- Reinforce and coach desired jobsite behaviors.
- Promote teamwork.
- Value the prevention of errors.

Look for Error Traps!

Error-likely situations are predictable and preventable, but you need to recognize them. Here are some of the most common triggers for error.

- Stress (heavy workload and/or time pressure)
- Vague or poor work guidance
- Overconfidence in work and/or abilities
- Distractions
- Infrequent or first-time task performance (new to job less than six months)
- First working day back from time off (4+ days)
- Fatigue (work performed one-hour after waking up, at the end of a shift, and after meals)

Wake Up!

Fatigue increases risks at work, home, and while driving.
Fatigue permeates through everything you do.



Rob Fisher, Fisher Improvement Technologies

Human Performance in Action by Rob Fisher

When I'm conducting human performance training, I often get asked for examples of human performance principles in action. One example I often share involves three workers who had completed the training and were shortly thereafter sent out to do a job in a cable chase area that required them to crawl thru a low-hanging area for about three minutes to get to the work zone. The supervisor, who had also completed human performance training, had made special efforts to help this crew be set up for success on a task that the facility had trouble with every time they tried it. It was just one of those tasks.

When the workers got to the work zone and commenced the task, they eventually got to a section of the procedure that seemed a bit vague, and found themselves asking questions like "This is how we did it last time wasn't it?" and "Don't you think we should proceed this way?" One of the workers, a 30-year pipefitter, noticed that some of the conversation very closely matched some of the phrases, or triggers, they were told to watch out for in the human performance training. When he brought this up, the other two workers made comments like "Yeah, we remember that, but we have it covered, we know what we want to do." The pipefitter said, "Well, if you weren't using the exact phrases we were told to watch out for, it would be different, but since you are, maybe we should use those tools they told us about, and seek some outside help."

The other two members of the crew reluctantly followed the pipefitter out of the cable chase to the supervisor's office. The supervisor, who was busy at the time, initially responded to the questions in a manner similar to the two crew members. The pipefitter informed the supervisor that now he was using the trigger phrases, and that the pipefitter remembered from the human performance training that the answers shouldn't contain the phrases "I think" or "I'm pretty sure."

The supervisor, almost reluctantly, pulled out some drawings and some other documents, and to the surprise of all, determined that the path that the two workers had planned on going down was not correct. They determined the correct path together, based on solid information. The three workers returned to the work zone and successfully completed the task, in less time and with fewer problems than ever before!

This would be a great story if it ended there, however, the supervisor, whose interest was now piqued, decided to look deeper into the documentation and determine what would have happened if the workers would have stayed on their chosen path. He discovered that three steps into their chosen path, a deluge would have flooded the cable chase they were in with water in about 15 seconds. Even the most conservative analysis showed that none of the three workers would have made it out that day.

It is important to understand that ONE person, in this case a 30-year pipefitter, can make a difference if he or she pays attention to the triggers taught in the classes. Had the workers disregarded the triggers and continued, they may not have been around to tell this story. One person can make a difference.

"One person can make a difference."

HPI at Brookhaven

The following is a real example of how HPI concepts and tools are being successfully applied at BNL as told by BNL Motor Vehicle Maintenance Supervisor Richard Allingham.

The Motor Pool had to repair a pick-up truck that belonged to the Water Treatment group. The bed of the truck had rotted over time due to chlorine exposure. We planned to replace the bed of the truck, which we have done before on other trucks. This is usually a simple task but this time we faced a different concern: the vehicle was a Compressed Natural Gas (CNG) vehicle and the gas tanks were mounted in the bed of the truck. We talked about a work plan because we would normally be working in skill-base mode for this type of job. We identified this as a first time task, and realized we would be working in knowledge-based mode. We discussed our options. The plan we decided on was to have a rigging crew remove the gas cylinders from the truck bed, and then replace them when the new bed was installed. We contacted the Rigging Supervisor who sent a crew over to talk to us about what we wanted to accomplish, and they told us they could handle the job without any concerns. They asked that all the gas lines were disconnected, secured, and all the mounting brackets and hardware be removed, and they would do the rest. The removal went like clock work. The rigging crew was tremendous. I took note that as they were performing their part of the job their communication was excellent. Nothing was moved until everyone gave the ok, every step of the operation. When they were finished with the removal, we replaced the bed of the truck and called the riggers back to reinstall the tanks. We clearly identified *before* we started this job that there was a part of this task we had never performed. We decided on a work plan that was expanded to include another work group. They were in skill-based mode while they performed their task. The HPI training helped us look at our jobs in a different light and in doing so is helping us to increase our safety awareness.

Recruiting Tools - ERAP (\$) and Fit-Friendly ♥



Good Health and Quick
Cash are Effective
Recruitment Tools

ERAP stands for Employee Referral Award Program. ERAP is a program that rewards an employee with either \$500 or \$1,000, if the employee refers someone to fill an open job position at the Lab that has been deemed ERAP eligible. This program, used by many large corporations, is recognized as one of the most powerful recruiting tools available.

Brookhaven gets firsthand references for prospective new employees, and can award existing employees at the same time. To find out more about how to make your postings ERAP eligible, contact any of the recruiters from the Employment Office.

For the second year in a row the American Heart Association has honored Brookhaven National Laboratory as a “Fit-Friendly Company.” According to American Heart Association criteria, fit-friendly employers “champion the health of their employees and work to create a culture of physical activity in the workplace.” So when interviewing candidates, don’t forget to plug all the ways that Brookhaven promotes good health. Some of the items noted that make Brookhaven a fit-friendly employer include:

- ♥ On-site trails for hiking and biking as well as a gym, pool, tennis courts, and numerous sport leagues and classes that promote fitness.
- ♥ Free annual on-site physical for all employees provided by the Occupational Medicine Clinic, as well as the availability of health-risk assessments.
- ♥ A cafeteria that offers heart-healthy choices, and a registered dietitian that runs a monthly nutrition group.
- ♥ An Employee Assistance Program that offers individual counseling, support groups, and lectures.
- ♥ A fire-rescue group that provides 24/7 response.

OMC Procedure Questions and Answers for Supervisors

Are supervisors really supposed to accompany staff to the OMC if injured at work?

Yes. Supervisors should accompany staff who are injured on the job to the clinic—even if it appears to be a minor injury. It's always better to err on the safe side and help your employee get to the clinic safely. In some cases, injuries end up being more serious than they appear. (And often employees will downplay the extent of the injury due to embarrassment.) So you never can be confident that they're okay until they're checked out. For instance, an employee who trips and appears to have a harmless scrape that doesn't seem to warrant your escort, may also have high blood pressure that has been aggravated by the mishap, so they shouldn't be traveling alone.)

In addition to making sure the employee safely gets to the OMC, by accompanying the employee you are there to communicate with OMC medical staff directly about the nature of the injury and actions needed, such as any work restrictions. If you are not in the immediate vicinity of the injured employee, request that another employee transport them to the OMC and meet them there. And when out of the office, make sure that someone is in charge to act in this capacity.

If the injury is more serious (or you're not sure), don't hesitate to call ext. 2222 for expert help in transporting an injured staff member.

Can you explain the “five-day” rule when an employee has been out sick?

Sure. There are two parts to the “five-day” rule that supervisors must know—both of which relate to when an employee has been out sick for five consecutive days.

- 1) Once an employee has been out sick for five consecutive days, supervisors are to contact the OMC and let them know of the employee's absence. OMC staff will then communicate with employees as needed to monitor how they're doing and when they'll return.
- 2) Once an employee has been out sick for five or more consecutive days, he/she has to be cleared for return to work through the OMC in accordance with Federal Regulation 10CFR851. If an employee shows up at work without a back-to-work slip, direct them to the OMC, so he/she can be examined to ensure that he/she is well enough (and not contagious) to be back at the office.

Let us know what information is needed to help Supervisors do their jobs!

Please email questions, comments, suggestions to: supervisornews@bnl.gov or send to Bldg. 400B.

Resources, Contacts, and Links for Supervisors

Please provide feedback on the supervisors' meetings or any other issue using the form at <http://intranet.bnl.gov/hr/supervisorsmeeting.asp>

Contacts for more information about topics from this issue:

- Human Performance Initiative — Joe Labas
- OMC Procedure Questions — Joe Falco
- Recruitment Tool: ERAP — Nancy Sobrito
- Fit-Friendly AHA Award — Michael Thorn

Bookmark these Resource Sites

- [Supervisor Resources Site](#)—contains management course schedule, information and presentations from the Director's quarterly supervisor meetings, and other supervisor resources.
- [Procedure for Occupational Injuries](#)—contains steps to follow in the event of an occupational injury.
- [Back to Work Procedure](#)— Back to Work information.
- [BNL's EAP](#) and [Cigna Behavioral Health](#) (Enter Member User ID: bnl; Password: employee).