



A Safety Professional's Risk Assessment Journal

Dave Walline, CSP



The American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) has assembled a Risk Assessment Committee for the purposes of communicating to the business community the importance of the risk assessment process; improving the risk assessment competencies of safety, health, and environmental professionals; providing cost-effective solutions as business partners; and taking a leadership role in developing risk assessment policy. The product of this committee has been the development of a Risk Assessment Institute.

A key focus area of the Risk Assessment Institute is the study of corporations and safety professionals with successful Risk Assessment Programs in an effort to learn from their experiences and assist others in the development of their own risk assessment program. The case studies examine their experiences as they developed and implemented their risk assessment program, their lessons learned, and their suggestions to others who may be getting started on their own risk assessment program development.

Case Study Subject

Safety Professional	Dave Walline, CSP Global Safety Leader
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Background

Dave Walline, CSP, is the Global Safety Leader at Owens Corning, working in the Corporate EHS and Operations Sustainability Organization in Toledo, Ohio. Prior to joining Owens Corning in 1995, he spent 23 years with General Dynamics Corporation. While at General Dynamics, he held various roles of increasing responsibility in occupational safety and health at both manufacturing sites and division headquarters in Detroit, Michigan.

Dave has been a Certified Safety Professional (CSP) since 1985, and he is a 35-year Professional Member of American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE). He received his BS degree in Industrial Technology and Safety from the University of Wisconsin – Platteville.



Dave Walline has enjoyed a 41-year career as a safety professional.

Safety – A Personal Perspective

Dave's personal interests in safety include prevention through design; risk assessments; serious injury prevention; and environmental, health, and safety (EHS) talent development. Early in his career, Dave understood the important role he would play, as a young safety graduate, in preventing serious injuries and saving lives. At that time (1970s), the Occupational Safety and Health Administration was just coming on the scene, and formal safety-in-the-workplace programs were in their infancy.

As a new safety engineer, Dave was called upon to investigate some workplace fatalities and serious injuries. He made a personal commitment to reduce the frequency and severity of these incidents, and he determined that hazard prevention, risk assessments, and safety-in-design were the three keys to making this happen. He made the decision that he would concentrate on developing the skills to maximize these three key core competencies.

Dave strongly believes that hazard prevention, risk assessments, and safety-in-design are skills that all safety professionals must develop in order to be successful in creating a safe work environment within their organization.

Putting Risk Assessment and Risk Control to Work in the Workplace

In the past three years, Dave and his safety peers at Owens Corning have been on a personally rewarding and exciting journey as they have redirected their focus to hazard recognition and control. As part of that journey, Dave conducted a detailed review of all recordable incidents that occurred over a three-year period. It was during that process review that he discovered that a properly constructed data collection system is critical in accurately identifying and assessing causal factors directly linked to the presence of existing hazards and determining effectiveness of controls in preventing injuries and illnesses.

What I have learned is that most company-wide databases do not highlight critical cultural or risk factor data that is required for your safety performance to move from good to great.

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Dave believes that in order to be effective in their role, all safety professionals must take the time to personally do a “deep dive” into their own organization’s incident causal data, including hard copies of incident and root cause reports. He believes that others will find, as he and Owens Corning did, “startling new answers.” Some of the “key learnings” that were realized are:

1. Organizations must place strong focus on both hazard identification and control.
2. The Hierarchy of Control decision-making is required to mitigate risk to acceptable levels.
3. High frequency, low severity incidents had very different causal factors than low frequency, high severity cases.
4. Abnormal conditions elevated risk substantially.
5. Predictive (leading) metrics could be developed for leadership to act upon in absence of injury.
6. Leveraging hazard and risk based data from within the organization fuels the culture change from one of just *injury rate focus* to *risk focus*.

Program in Practice

Dave reports many positive changes in the safety process and safety culture at Owens Corning in the past couple of years. Some of the most transformative ones have been:

1. Owens Corning developed a Training and Certification Process for those who are tasked to conduct hazard identification and control (Risk Assessment) work. This has raised the importance of and value to those who perform this work globally for us.
2. Leadership communication about risk in absence of injury and all plant leadership teams knowing and acting upon their top risks.

There is a new common language spoken through-out Owens Corning – terms like Acceptable Risk, Effectiveness of Control, Top 5 Risks, Injury Severity Potential, and Risk Assessments.

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3. Development of risk-based dashboards in addition to traditional lagging metrics (e.g. injury rates).

4. Employees working with trained and certified specialists in proactively identifying, assessing, prioritizing, and controlling risks on a formal basis.

5. Most importantly, his organization has achieved its 11th consecutive year of safety performance improvement and significant reduction in injury severity.



Passing it Forward

Dave reports that the leadership teams within Owens Corning are constantly on the lookout for more risk-based guidance and coaching. He says the new risk-based approach has been energizing – not just for the entire EHS team across the company, but also for their corporate leaders as well. And, he believes that safety professionals can have a much more credible, richer, and action-driven discussion with their leadership teams when armed with this critical risk-based information.

Owens Corning is stepping outside their own walls to share their safety journey and risk-based approach with other organizations, customers, suppliers, and professional organizations such as ASSE, NSC, and others. Dave has been a big part of that effort in sharing his experience and expertise through ASSE. His participation has included:

1. Being a contributor and on review committee for ANSI/ASSE Z590.3-2011 Prevention through Design Standard.
2. Chairperson of ASSE's new Risk Assessment Committee and supporting the launch of ASSE's Risk Assessment Institute at the PDC in June.
3. Both on the planning committee and a session presenter for the first ever ASSE 2-Day Prevention through Design (PtD) Virtual Symposium held in February 2013.

Dave sums it up this way:

The pace of injury/illness prevention improvement during our lifetime is directly linked to the speed of change led and driven by the safety profession. PtD and Risk Assessment must be at the forefront of our efforts. As a safety community we have the responsibility, creativity and power to cause injury-free lives around the world. This must be our legacy