

VOLTS News

Valuing Our Lives Through Safety

May 2023—Volume 114

VOLTS Data Report for April

Total Observations:	360
IPSC Emp. Contact Rate:	1.12
Total Safe Behaviors:	3,130
Total At-Risk Behaviors:	23

Protected Exposures

- **Required PPE (302)**
- **Focus on Task (301)**
- **Walk/Work Surfaces (223)**

At-Risk Exposures

- **Required PPE (7)**
- **Walk/Work Surfaces (5)**
- **Respiratory (4)**

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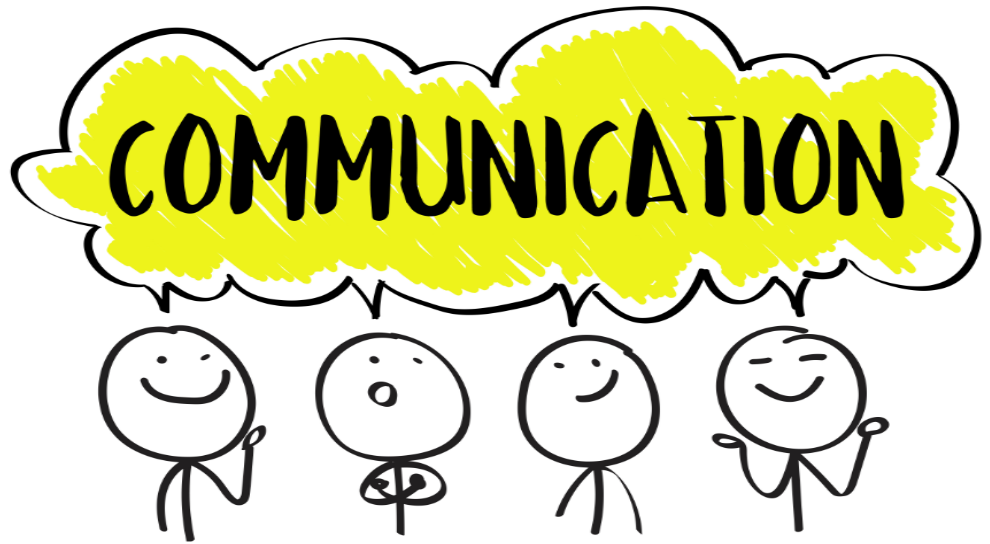
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Communication is Key

by Casey Draper

In many of life's situations, good communication is essential. Think about the contrast between the situations when poor communication has caused you or someone else anguish and when communication has brought your plan together. What were some of the contributing factors? Were the difficulties of poor communication related to an environmental cause such as loud, ambient noise or poor line of sight? Did it have something to do with another person being distracted or not fully understanding the directions that were given? How about situations where someone was unfamiliar with the task, the process, or even the language? All of the described circumstances can add up to some of the many ways good communications can be disrupted.

Over the years, I have been part of several construction, operations, and emergency services crews and have been fortunate enough to have worked around many great communicators. I can recall key components that separate the good communicators from the ineffective ones as I reflect on some scenarios from my experiences.

Good communication can be an illusion

I recently read a quote by George Bernard Shaw, "The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place" (n. d.). What an accurate statement! Just look around and see all of the situations where you assume accurate information is being communicated. One instance that stands out in my mind was when I almost killed my father-in-law in a near-miss situation.

Using a tractor, I was moving a large concrete slab to a nearby cattle manger. At the same time, my father-in-law was welding near the travel corridor. As I started to make a right-hand turn, he stood up and began walking across my path toward his truck. I was under the impression that he saw me in the tractor and would give me the right of way. However, he walked directly into my path and I narrowly missed hitting him with the edge of the large concrete slab.



Communication is Key by Casey Draper (cont.)

Communication is a two-way street

One important aspect of communication is understanding that good communication is both given and received. For instance, have you ever been asked a question that you thought was either dumb or obvious? If so, rethink the question, because you might not have provided a clear enough explanation resulting in the listener needing to ask for clarification.

Using clear, concise language

Often times, people hear multiple messages and react to what they feel is the most urgent situation. During some recent Emergency Medical Services (EMS) training, an employee from the Millard County Sheriff's dispatch center requested that emergency responders report their information in a clear, concise manner using terminology that is easy to understand. In stressful situations, people have a tendency to speak rapidly in hard-to-understand tones. The trainers recommended that people intentionally pause for a moment to collect their thoughts and speak clearly over the radio. In their experience, using clear and concise language can help avoid miscommunication on both the giving and receiving ends.

Never assume anything and question everything

Recently during this spring's outage, I was talking with one of IPSC's maintenance mechanics about a potentially serious injury or fatality (SIF) event that he witnessed. He told me that some workers were

What's your why?

Do an observation today!



disassembling a valve component which they assumed was blocked and supported from below. However, the valve assembly was not secured underneath. The mechanics below hollered the stop command to the mechanics disassembling the component so they could secure the assembly and correct the unsafe situation. While talking with the mechanic about the specific event details, he helped me understand the severity of the situation. He described the potentially severe pinch points and line-of-fire risks associated with the event, including the worst case scenario—the possibility of the valve itself falling from the level above and crashing through the metal grating below. The solution and desired safe behaviors were discussed as to how to prevent this situation from occurring in the future. To him, the solution was simple, “We needed better communication beforehand to make sure there were no gaps that could create confusion” (Personal Communication, April 2023).

Communication drives engagement

Communication is essential for any successful business. Without communication, it's difficult to share ideas and get everyone aligned with what needs to be done. Moreover, good communication helps when it comes to finding solutions to the issues or problems that arise during a task. Communication is the key to building and maintaining strong relationships, as well as keeping everyone engaged and minimizing the risk (or possibility) of injuries, disruptions, or delays. It is truly a component of how we Value Our Lives Through Safety.

STOP WORK FORM

should be applied in the following circumstances:

There is a danger exist to any persons, property or environment that cannot be mitigated;

Regulatory standard will be breached.

Date