

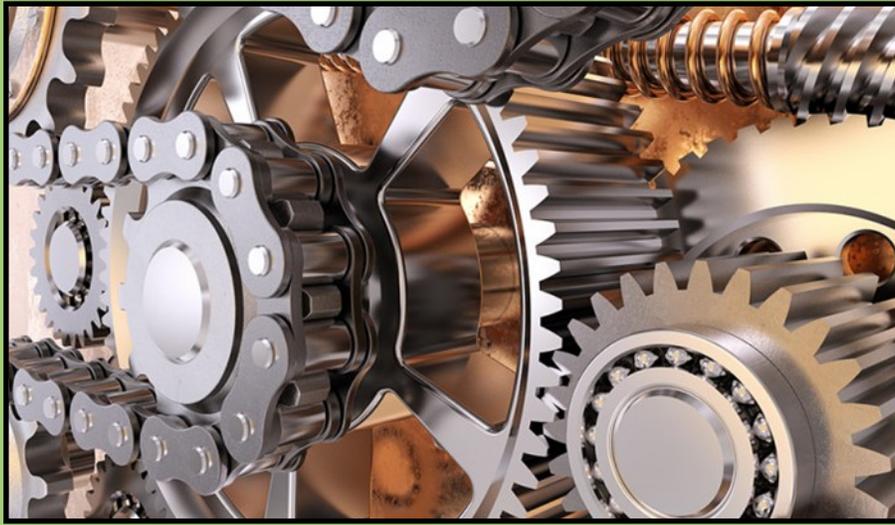
# VOLTS Newsletter

*VALUING OUR LIVES THROUGH SAFETY*

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## *Organizational Accountability—Kirk Stevens*

**Gear**; A gear or cog is a rotating machine part having cut teeth or, in the case of a cogwheel, inserted teeth (called cogs), which mesh with another toothed part to transmit torque. Geared devices can change the speed, torque, and direction of a power source.<sup>1</sup>

There is a phrase that is quite popular in the business world among executives—Organizational Accountability. A quick search on Google will bring up many articles that tout the importance of having an organization whose members feel accountable for its success. Organizations come up with ideas tailored to help their teams mesh together much like gears and cogs work together to improve torque, power, and motion.

The VOLTS process depends a great deal on this idea of organizational accountability. As an organization, VOLTS relies solely on the people in the field who are taking personal accountability for themselves and their coworkers' safety. Without anyone doing observations, the whole process would fail, the gears would jam, and progress would stop in a hurry. It is imperative that we all find accountability and do our part to help each person go home safely. When we perform a safety observation or speak up when an unsafe behavior is observed, we are essentially the 90W gear lube necessary to help change behavior at

IPSC. We are keeping the gears meshed together effectively and efficiently.

So, what can we do to build and improve our accountability to the VOLTS organization? Here are a few ideas that can help the VOLTS process continue to be successful at IPSC.

### **1-A sense of ownership for team results.**

How does team accountability work? How is the team working toward goals and outcomes? Do we feel 100 percent accountable to improving the process? Everyone at IPSC is part of this safety process, and all have a voice in how it can succeed. If you have any questions or any feedback about the VOLTS process, please let anyone on the VOLTS Steering Committee know. We would love to help in any way we can. There are coaches available to help you do observations more effectively.

**2-It isn't about punishment.** No one at IPSC is out to punish people for being unsafe. The ultimate goal is to have people change behavior in order to help us all be a little safer. This should be the main reason to have the courage to speak up when something is about to be done unsafely. We should care enough about our friends and coworkers to help them return safely to their families each day. The only real punishment is self-inflicted when we witness unsafe behavior that results in an injury because we didn't say something.

## Organizational Accountability—Kirk Stevens (cont.)

**3-It's about improvement.** Whether you are a 35-year veteran at IPSC or a new laborer, there is always room for improvement. We are all constantly learning new, more effective ways of doing a job. Obviously, the goal is to have a perfect safety culture (that would be amazing if no one was ever injured); however, the reality is that we are always encountering new situations that threaten our safety. Taking a minute to step back and looking to see if what we are doing needs improvement is an important cog in the gears of accountability.

**4-Integrity counts.** In today's world the concept of integrity seems to be a lost virtue. What does integrity have to do with the VOLTS process?

First, integrity has to do in part with how we treat ourselves and others. Are we being honest when we turn a blind eye to unsafe behaviors in ourselves or our coworkers? I think it would be tough for any of us to sleep at night if we knew we could have stopped someone from getting hurt, but didn't speak up.

Second, safety observations are essential to identify areas at IPSC that may need a little improvement. Data from observations is used to identify behaviors that pose potential safety risks.

Are we turning in safety observations because we want to help the process succeed, or are we turning in observations because we will gain an hour of VC? If we are truly accountable, we want to do everything necessary to help the organization succeed.<sup>2</sup>

The VOLTS organization's success depends in large part on the people who choose to be involved—who choose to mesh their cog with others in the VOLTS process. When everyone is involved and dedicated to the same mission, the torque and power of the VOLTS gearing is optimized and success is achieved. Being accountable to do our part to help improve safe behavior helps ensure everyone's safety. Just a small portion of positive attitude and a willingness to try will go a long, long way.

Thank you for your efforts in making the VOLTS organization a success! **Remember your why.**

### Sources

- 1) <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gear#:~:text=A%20gear%20or%20cog%20is,direction%20of%20a%20power%20source.>
- 2) [https://www.forbes.com/sites/ccl/2012/02/28/7-ways-to-build-accountable-organizations/#4e704d563cd3.](https://www.forbes.com/sites/ccl/2012/02/28/7-ways-to-build-accountable-organizations/#4e704d563cd3)

