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The Ripple Effect

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The Ripple Effect

Have you ever tossed a stone into a body of water and observed the impact and subsequent ripples? The size of the stone will often determine the impact and size of the ripples. A large stone has a greater impact and larger ripples, while a small stone will have a lesser impact and smaller ripples. No matter the size of the stone, ripples will always follow the impact and can have far reaching effects.

The Ripple Effect and Safety

When applied to safety, the ripple effect can either be positive or negative. The negative effect is based on the concept that any unsafe event or action has a pervasive, usually unintentional, effect or influence. The positive effect is based on the opposite, that any safe action or event has a pervasive intentional effect or influence. Changing unsafe behaviors influences those around us and causes a positive ripple effect. Our impacts are the safe or unsafe events or actions that occur and the ripples are the effects and influence.

The word pervasive means to spread widely throughout an area or group of people. We influence others by the way we work, the way we act, the decisions we make, and our job performance. When we commit unsafe acts or cut corners, we may be influencing others to do the same. We can argue that we have done a particular task hundreds of times and never been injured, but it only takes once for the effects of our actions to catch up to us. One simple action or decision that leads to a negative event can have far-reaching, long-term consequences.

The Ripples

It is easy for us to rationalize that taking shortcuts or putting in less effort is warranted. However, we all have an obligation to ourselves, coworkers, and families to work safely and do our best work. Our job performance,

decisions, and actions affect more than just ourselves. When someone decides they do not care and are willing to take risks, the individual needs to understand that his/her coworkers and families are depending on him/her and the paycheck that comes from the company. Our personal character and the reputation of the company hinge on performing our best work every day.

We should strive to create a larger more positive impact and ripple effect within our company by challenging those around us to have a positive effect and influence that reaches far past the immediate job. Encourage everyone to find a way to make a positive impact and see just how far the ripples go. Start by asking yourself:

- What kind of impact do I want to make?
- What kind of ripple effect will it create?
- Is it pervasive in a good way?

