HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE SAFETY BULLETIN BOARD

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As we routinely walk our command spaces, we are surrounded by caution signs and posters with educational material, health tips and various safety-related items. These posters are frequently crafted into busy collages that are difficult to focus on and have become so common the messages in these materials are often missed. These same messages may have occupied that space on the bulkhead for many years without ever having reached their target audience. How often have you stopped and read the data to see how it applies to you, your fellow shipmates and Marines, and how you conduct business? Admittedly, I can think back to many display boards in several of the commands I served in without having ever read the material.

Creating an effective safety bulletin board is arguably one of the easiest ways to raise safety awareness and reduce work-related injuries and mishaps. Although many of these messages are required to be posted, to simply tape a poster to the bulkhead and call it done is doing a disservice to your team and may result in a critical mistake. I guarantee – if these messages reach your fellow Sailors and Marines, they can and will influence decisions and actions and, in turn, prevent mishaps and save lives. So, what is the message here? Simply put, make your safety bulletin boards count! Here are some tips to help ensure messages are hitting the mark. Think **ROLE:** relevance, organization and appearance, location, and effectiveness.

Relevance:

Apart from the required postings, make additional posters and messages relevant to the audience, platform and command you are assigned to. For example, squadrons should have an aircrew safety board, aviation maintenance and ground operations safety board, and an off-duty safety board. Furthermore, identify and include hazards specific and common to the area and platform as well as injury prevention. Keep your boards updated with new safety grams and other new material as it comes out. If the same tired poster or safety gram remains, the safety bulletin board becomes ineffective and Sailors and Marines will no longer pay attention. Don't forget about the intangible safety aspects as well, such as stress, fatigue and complacency. Stress can be a major safety issue, whether physical or mental, and should be addressed on the safety board along with resources to help alleviate stress.

Organization and Appearance:

A cluttered safety board is one way to ensure members will not read the information. Organization plays a key ROLE in this. Take the time to organize different aspects of your safety board and display them so they are easy to identify and read. Use colors and spacing to make it aesthetically pleasing. Ensure the messages on the board relay not only a problem but a solution as well. For example, if one of the topics is lifting safety, show illustrations of proper techniques. Make it fun by using pictures, memes and other illustrations.

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Location:
 Place your safety boards in high-traffic areas, such as main passageways and quarterdecks, ensuring they are visible to all hands. Think about places where the members will spend more than a brief second of their time. Some good examples would be surrounding a copier, in a conference room, geedunks, scuttlebutts and smoke pits. Experience has also shown that placing safety magazines, such as Approach and MECH, as well as lessons learned and sanitized safety investigation reports (SSIRs), or mishap reports, in pockets inside restroom stalls typically promotes increased reading and therefore increases safety awareness. In addition to physical spaces, don't forget to take advantage of virtual space to share information. Creating a safety presence on the Teams quarterdeck via Flank Speed is one more way to increase awareness and educate the fleet on the importance of safety.

Effectiveness:
 Encourage members to read the safety board and safety magazines by awarding a safety professional, or professionals, of the week or month and list what the team or member did. Have your commanding officer or officer in charge ask Sailors and Marines about the contents of the safety board and reward them if they answer correctly. Be sure to include best practices for the identified issues.

Here are some additional resources to ensure your safety bulletin board is serving its ROLE! For your convenience, there are several downloadable and printable safety materials for your boards on the Naval Safety Center's website under the resources tab. Lessons learned, SSIRs, aviation and aviation maintenance mishap statistics slides, best practices, as well as links to a wealth of risk management, human factors and safety promotion aides are available via the Naval Safety Center's common access card-enabled website, which is accessible via a link on the Naval Safety Center's public website. Posters and other safety material can be printed locally through your command or by using Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) Document Services.

For more information on DLA's printing services, visit here.
For downloadable safety posters and other content, visit here.