

**PANEL SESSION 17 - Safety Management – Key to Effective Performance Execution**

**Co-Chairs:** Joe Yanek, *Fluor Government Group and EFCOG Chair*;  
Anthony Umek, *Savannah River Nuclear Solutions*

**Reporter:** Judith Connell, *Fluor Government Group*

Panelists Included:

- Ed Foulke, *Fisher & Phillips, LLP*
- William Roege, *US DOE*
- James Hylko, *EC Government Services, LLC*
- Jeffrey Allison, *US DOE, SRS*
- Anthony Umek, *Savannah River Nuclear Solutions (SRNS)*
- Dave Olson, *Savannah River Remediation, LLC*

About 30 people were present to hear this two-part session on the pitfalls to look out for and the practices to adopt to ensure worker safety. Co-Chair Joe Yanek opened the session and described how the session was arranged.

**Ed Foulke** began his presentation by showing some classic visual examples of things not to do, either by being “foolhardy” or ridiculously cautious. He then went on to give the five reasons why paying attention to Safety & Health is important, not the least of which is “it’s the law.” Given that, however, Foulke emphasized that “good” companies put safety first, not just because it’s the law, but because it’s good business. Foulke discussed what’s changing in the Safety & Health world: almost everything – from new legislation and new directives to less cooperation and radical penalty directives. To prove his point on penalties, he cited Secretary of Labor Hilda Soils in a 2009 speech: “Let me be clear, the Labor Department is back in the enforcement business.” Foulke also showed a listing of penalties that had been levied on various businesses. Foulke advocated that discipline is the key element to achieving operational excellence and zero injuries, illnesses and fatalities. His message: “Discipline has a ‘pro-employee’ approach and is the cornerstone of an effective safety management program.”

**Bill Roege** opened his presentation showing a startling graphic of the Deepwater Horizon fully ablaze noting that the day before the accident (April 20, 2010), the rig had earned recognition for Excellent Injury Prevention Performance (TRC/DART). DOE’s goals for Worker Safety & Health, the Environment and Infrastructure were presented along with the outcomes from 2004-2010. Roege displayed data from the Nuclear Energy Institute showing that as Capacity Factors for US commercial nuclear reactors have risen, significant events have decreased. He further cited three main barriers to excellence in DOE: a “compliance” mindset, a blame culture (punish those who “screw up”), and isolationism. The solution(s): adopt risk-informed decision-making; use Human Performance Improvement concepts to move to a “just” culture; and become lifelong learners, which involves collaborating with another, capturing good practices, and learning from mistakes. He also suggested thinking in terms of “risk factors,” not just “leading indicators.”

**Jim Hylko** focused on best practices related to DOE P 450.4, the Safety Management System Policy. He highlighted the importance of communication up and down the management-worker chain, not only during normal operations but after an off-normal event or series of events. His

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main message: 1) establish communication mechanisms early and create opportunities to communicate often; 2) involve the workforce in establishing your program and processes. Hylko gave specific examples of where this approach had success: plan-of-the day meetings led by a management representative; monthly safety meetings led by the safety manager and site safety & health officers; explanations to the workforce of what happens before and after contract renewals or changes to another contractor. Hylko maintained that keeping the workforce informed is just as important as maintaining budget and schedule milestones.

**Jeff Allison** shared his views about achieving good safety performance: you need to have a strong safety culture, 24/7. After giving a brief overview of the production mission at Savannah River, Allison said that DOE-SRS had established a clear vision and expectations for safety performance. One of the major initiatives related to safety is the Integrated Safety Management (ISM) Council comprising representatives from the major contractors across the site. This council focuses on topics such as conduct of operations and responses to emergencies (e.g., pandemic flu). It's also a way to share best practices.

**Tony Umek** spoke about two major safety events at SRNS: an acid spill in August 2009 and an electric arc flash in September 2009. In describing what SRNS had done to prevent similar occurrences and strengthen the project's safety mentality, he noted that "complacency is our worst enemy...in fact, on average, each of us makes five mistakes of some sort every hour." Umek stressed that leaders must reinforce the expectation that people, workers, have a questioning attitude – expect the unexpected. SRNS took immediate action and instituted the Safety Improvement and Compensatory Measures (SICAM) program, conducted hazard-awareness training that included a two-hour interactive video (with Q&As), and engaged DuPont to conduct a safety-focused cultural assessment. The results have been overwhelmingly positive. For example, SRNS had the "safest" TRC FY Rate in FY2010 for Operations and Subcontractors under the current DOE reporting structure (since 1985) and they are ahead of schedule in closing two production reactors.

**Dave Olson** first gave a very brief overview of Savannah River Remediation's (SRR's) complex, high-hazard scope, which includes accelerating the closure of tanks. The effort involves several challenges related to Human Performance: new technology, variable content and chemistry of the tanks, new policies, multiple site-level interfaces, 800 new employees, and a fast-paced schedule...going from closing 12 tanks in 8 years to closing 22 tanks in 8 years. Simply put, this project provides an "error friendly environment" that introduces new techniques, stresses workers, and challenges habit patterns. To overcome these obstacles SRR implemented improved defenses (leading indicators, management field observation, benchmarking), focused on tools for reducing errors (verifying & checking engineering documents) and identified organizational weaknesses (consolidated 9 control rooms using state-of-the-art distributed control systems). The results have been positive. For example, SRR has the lowest TRC rate in more than 25 years, and there are no watch list items or recurring issues.

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