

SAFETY LEADERSHIP IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

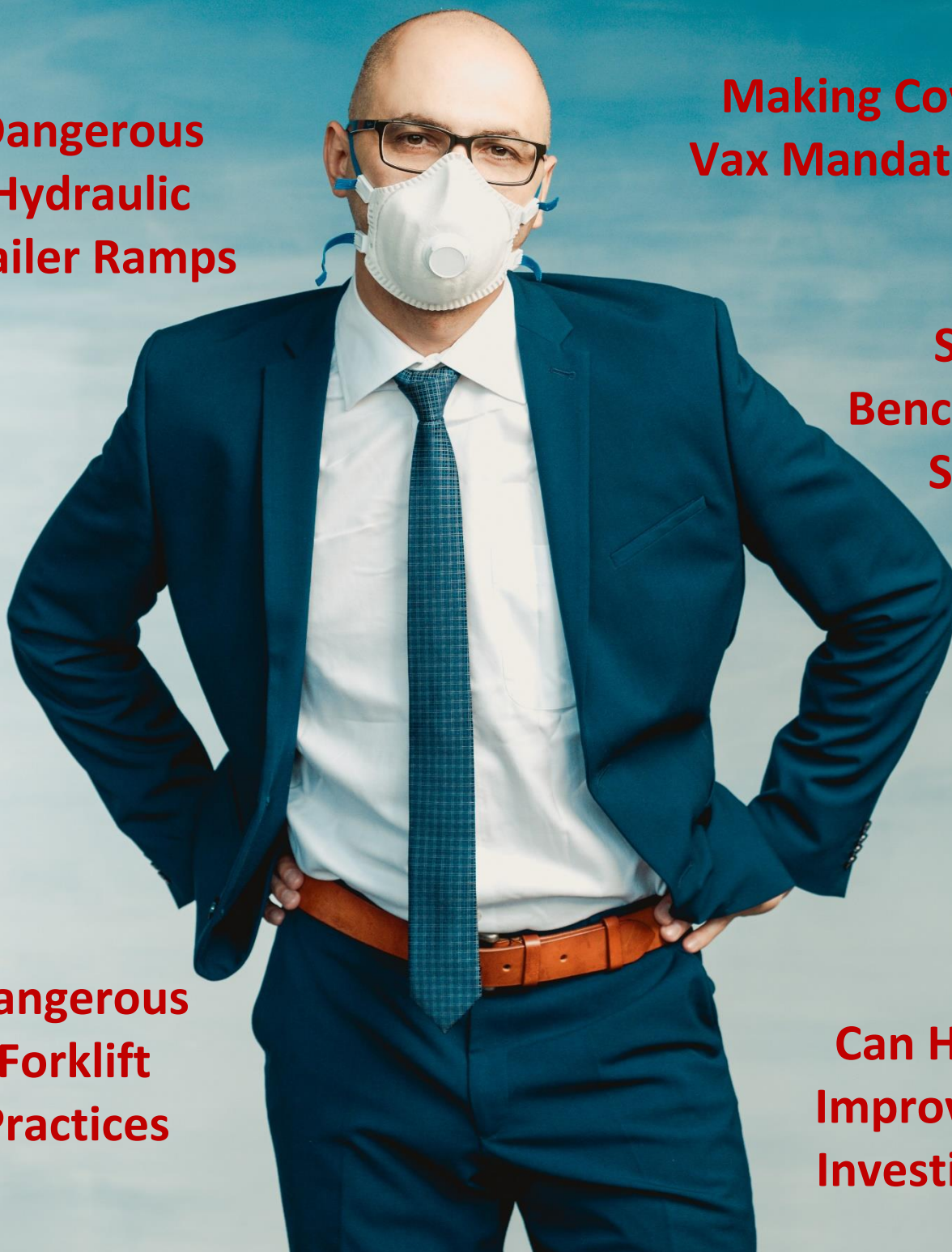
**Dangerous
Hydraulic
Trailer Ramps**

**Making Covid
Vax Mandatory?**

**Safety
Benchmarking
Survey**

**Dangerous
Forklift
Practices**

**Can Hypnosis
Improve Safety
Investigations?**



What's New in September?

Welcome to the September Safety News.

This month Ben Olih explores some of the challenges safety leaders face in these turbulent times, and offers some strategies you can use.

Also this month we share how to prevent hydraulic ramp incidents, whether COVID-19 vaccinations are mandatory for your workplace and discuss whether Hypnosis can help safety investigations.

Thank you to the many leading companies that have completed our 10 minute benchmarking survey. See page 5 to complete it for your company today.



Ben Olih

Stay Safe!

Safety Webinar – Friday 10th September 10am

We invite you to join us at **10am on Friday 10th September** for our free monthly webinar to keep you up to date on workplace health and safety. Gary and the team present short informal sessions of only 20 to 30 minutes on topical issues and answer your questions. * [Please note our monthly webinars are now on Fridays.](#)

Register [here](#)

Missed our last webinar? View them [here](#)

SAFETY ACTION TEAM



Gary



Andrea



Stephen



Katie

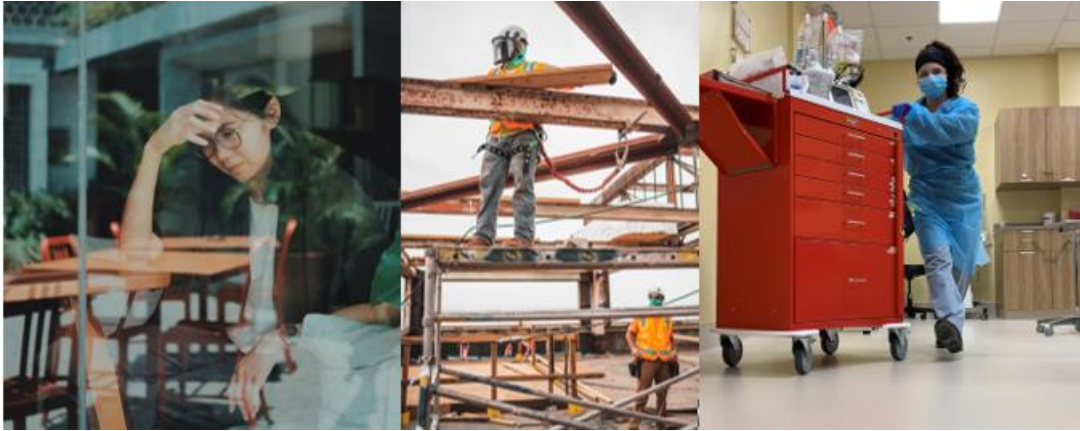


Miriam



Sarah

Safety Leadership in Unprecedented Times - Part 1



The last 2 years has seen significant changes in the way we work. More people work remotely, and work processes including supervision is done differently.

Research tells us that stressed employees are more likely to cause or be involved in accidents. We are living in more stressful times, I think you will agree, hence safety professionals are faced with new challenges in managing safety in the workplace.

First, we have to identify we can motivate our workers to continue working safely despite the challenges in our world today. Next, we need to deal with emerging risk arising due to changes in work process and routines. For instance, nobody wants a colleague working on a power line while worried that they may be laid off. This may result in them not following prescribed safety protocols to appear efficient and saving the business money. If this happens the likelihood of them or a member of their team been involved in an accident is increased.

It is important to note that this type of circumstance may be an emerging risk in the workplace that is not identified in the risk register. Hence, safety leaders must adapt and adopt pro-active measures to mitigate risk and if necessary get additional support to fulfill their duty of care.

Below are 4 of the Essential Strategies you need to know:

1. Authenticity

When workers are stressed about a task or a new process, they want their concerns addressed genuinely. Safety leaders must understand that regardless of how insignificant a change might seem it could have a negative effect on an employee. Good safety leaders are empathetic and not dismissive of the workers concern, they find a way to resolve the issues in a manner that is safe and efficient.



Being authentic and transparent helps your team trust that their safety and wellbeing is priority while the business remains profitable. Even if there are gaps in the safety system, knowing that the safety leader is actively working to close the gaps helps the team to religiously adhere to short and mediums term controls to manage their safety and wellbeing in the workplace.

2. Support from Experts e.g. consultants

Managing new and emerging risk and hazard in the workplace can be very challenging. This is especially true when the safety leader though proficient in some aspects of safety, might not have experience in others.



What makes a good safety leader a good is having the understanding that in some cases an expert opinion is required to keep the workplace safe. They seek out very good and experienced consultants to support their safety initiatives. They do not generally look for the cheapest option, rather they consider which consultant will help them achieve their set outcome. These consultants should not just be able to give generalized advise but their advice should be tailored in a manner that is practical and easily implemented within the local business.

3. Building a Sense of Community in the Workplace

When workplaces have a sense of community workers feel a sense of importance and belonging to the business. According to studies this leads to job satisfaction and the overall increase in worker productivity hence resulting in the business posting better profit margins.

While facing uncertainties, worker who feel valued by their team tend to cope better compared to workers who feel isolated.



Safety leaders must be intentional in their approach in building a sense of community in the workplace. Note that this should not be restricted by geographical location for example:



- Organise short game times during lunch and make it accessible to workers working remotely. This will help the team bond and feel more connected and comfortable with others in the business.
- Encourage managers to schedule catch ups with their team to find out how they are coping with the difficult season. It is important to note that this does not have to be formal, it could be the manager walking around the office in the morning asking the team how they are doing.

4. Having a Contingency Plan

While when and or work processes continues to change at a huge pace, many businesses are not ready for that change. A contingency plan does not always have to be complex or overly complicated, however it requires careful consideration, planning and input from all stakeholders. *Designing an effective contingency plan may require the input of a safety consultant with expertise in that area.*



Every worker needs to be trained in the contingency plans, as well as simulations or drills organised to review the effectiveness of the plans and the required changes implemented.

Failure to have or train workers in safely implementing contingency plans, for example in their work process, may lead to more accidents in the workplace.

Overall, in Part 1 of this newsletter we have addressed why authentic safety leadership is essential, the importance of have a team of safety experts support the safety leaders on risk and hazard they are less familiar with, how having a strong community in the workplace can help build worker resilience and wellbeing and finally the role of a good contingency plan in managing safety in challenging times.

By Ben Olih, Safety Action

Leading Companies Participate in Survey

A number of Australia's leading organisations have already submitted their data for our safety performance benchmarking survey including; Toyota, GSK, Scania, Alimak, Australian Red Cross, Melbourne Water, Monde Nissin, CCL Secure (RBA note currency printer), Melbourne Racing Club, Asaleo Care, and many more.

Progressive organisations are interested in what safety initiatives work, and which don't, and how they rate against similar Australian companies and broader industry.

Participation is quick and easy, just go to www.safetyaction.com.au and click on link to the survey.

Don't worry if you can't answer all the questions, just provide whatever you can as it all helps to build meaningful benchmarks for everyone.

The data provided is kept confidential and not linked to any particular organisation.

Participants receive a free copy of the benchmarking report.

Dangerous Hydraulic Trailer Ramps

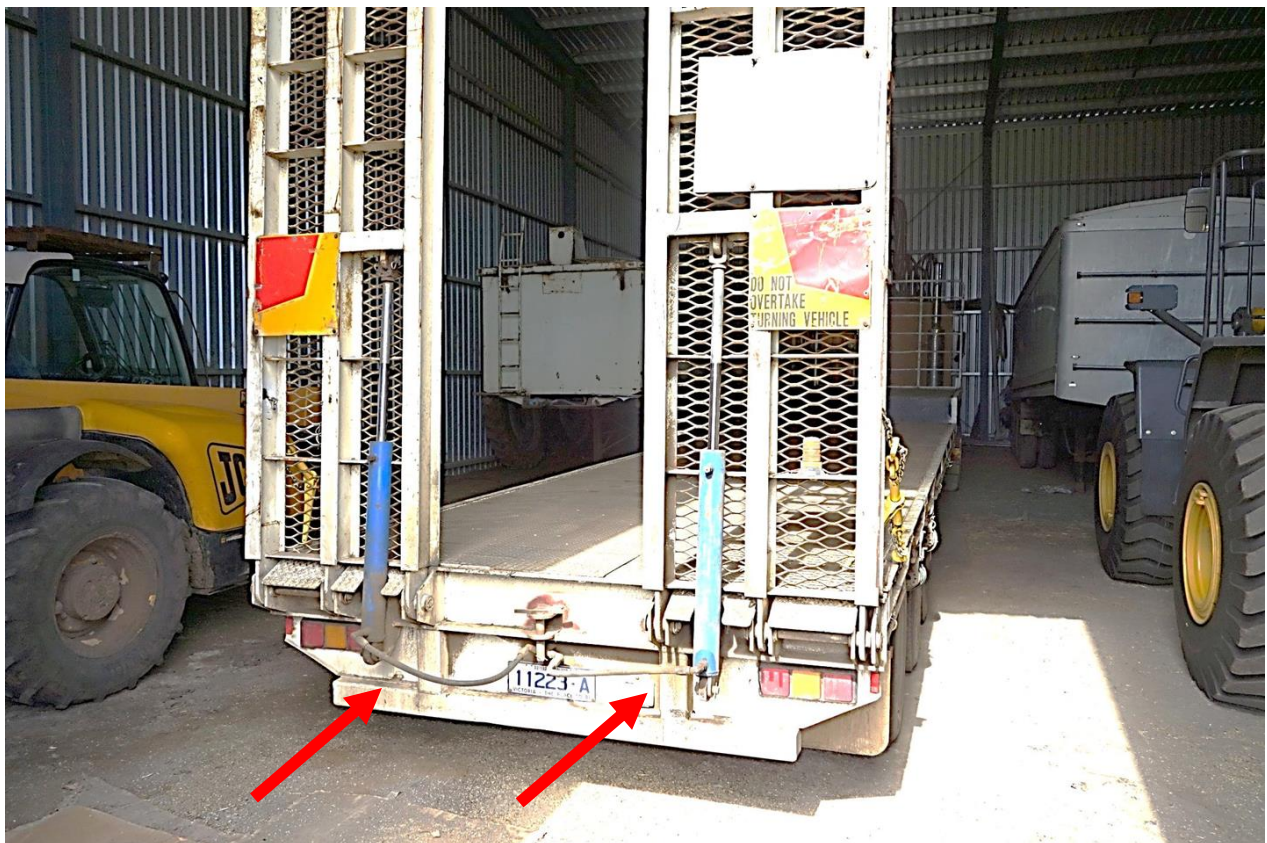
Heavy trailer ramps continue to cause serious injury, as demonstrated in a recent prosecution where a worker was performing duties in the “drop zone” of a low loader trailer when the 230kg ramps suddenly fell and struck him.

The worker suffered spine, pelvis, ankle, leg, and rib fractures and severe soft tissue injury. He died five months later.

This type of accident arises all too frequently in numerous industries, and appears to start with a lack of awareness of the risk eg heavy ramps can fall “like a rat trap” when the safety transport chains are released.

Once the ramp passes the balance point (vertical) they can fall with great force if the hydraulic system fails or is disconnected.

One such case involved a single-acting ram, where hydraulics raise the ramp, but rely on gravity to descend. If installed incorrectly air can remain in the hydraulic lines and compress allowing the ramp to fall down forcibly.



Trailer with single-acting hydraulic rams eg only one line per ram to raise ramp and gravity to descend



Trailer with (RH) ramp in lowered position and "drop zone" highlighted

How to Avoid Trailer Ramp Accidents?

The precautions will vary for different equipment and circumstances, but below are the key points:

1. Train all workers to recognise the "drop zone" for all trailer ramps.
2. Treat the "drop zone" as a hazardous zone and stay clear unless the safety chains are correctly installed.
3. Use 2-way hydraulic rams where practicable, instead of 1-way where ramps descend under gravity and can do so suddenly, especially if there is a leak or air in the lines.
4. Ensure all trailer ramp hydraulic lines are fitted with a flow control / burst valve to limit descent rate, including if lines rupture or leak.

For a summary copy of the recent court case [email](#) or call Safety Action on 03 8544 4300.

Making COVID-19 Vax Mandatory at your Workplace?

Workers in some industries are now legally required to be vaccinated for COVID-19. Depending on your state, mandatory COVID-19 vaccination orders are in place for: residential aged care, early education, care facilities, disability support, quarantine, airports and transportation. [See the list of requirements per state here.](#)

Employers outside of the above industries can decide to mandate COVID-19 vax for employees if the direction is lawful and reasonable. Each workplace needs to consider the risk factors and benefits for their circumstances.

Fair Work Australia (FWA) uses 4 broad tiers as a general guide to work types that may be helpful here. FWA considers it likely to be reasonable for employers to require COVID-19 vaccination for Tier 1 and Tier 2 work. But less likely for Tier 3 and 4 work.

- **Tier 1 work**, where employees are required as part of their duties to interact with people with an increased risk of being infected with coronavirus eg hotel quarantine or border control.
- **Tier 2 work**, where employees are required to have close contact with people who are particularly vulnerable to the health impacts of coronavirus eg health care or aged care.
- **Tier 3 work**, where there is interaction or likely interaction between employees and other people such as customers, other workers or the public in the normal course of employment eg stores providing essential goods and services.
- **Tier 4 work**, where employees have minimal face-to-face interaction as part of their normal employment duties eg working from home.

Employers considering mandatory vaccination for their workers should; consult with workers and their representatives, assist obtaining vax eg time off work, provide training and awareness, and provide reasonable lead time to comply before implementation.

Regardless of whether vaccination is mandatory, employers must continue good practice including: social distancing, contact tracing, testing if symptomatic and requiring isolation if a person is in contact with a confirmed positive case.

Fine for Dangerous Forklift Practice

The Victorian County Court has refused to discount the \$375,000 fine on a company and its director, despite the director being semi-retired and 82-years-old.

The director raised a person, at their Clayton facility, on a loose pallet on forklift tines, without a forklift licence, and the person fell and died.



Examples of people standing on tines or pallet on tines – both dangerous and illegal

Television Bad Role Models

Unfortunately, we see this type of behaviour regularly on television. For example, on some overseas car restoration shows, and even Australian gold and opal miner programs.

This type of television exposure, which often portrays it as fun, is part of the problem and contributes to otherwise “good” people thinking the practice is common and OK for brief jobs.

Safe Alternative Available - Not Used

Incredibly, WorkSafe found two scissor lifts were in the Clayton factory at the time of the incident, and one of these could have been used to safely perform the task. Clearly, a tragic failure of judgement on the part of the director.

The company was fined \$250,000 for breach of S.26 eg duty of persons with management control of a workplace. The director was fined \$125,000 for breach of S. 144 eg officer’s liability.

Special work at height equipment is preferred eg scissor lifts or boom elevator platforms.



However, if forklifts are to be used for lifting people they must meet minimum standards, including:

- Pedestrian cage properly constructed to AS 2359, with manufacturer’s plaque and user instructions.
- Only used for short duration tasks.
- Safe load capacity placarded on cage, and forklift weight and balance on dash.
- Pedestrian cage secured to forklift eg safety pins or chained to mast.
- Handrailing with top rail (1m), mid-rail and toe-board, and possibly mesh in-fill.
- 2m high back-frame meshed-in to protect people from mast mechanism and any over-head obstructions.
- Inward opening self-closing gate eg sprung-loaded gate.
- Forklift hydraulics fitted with control valve(s) to prevent free-fall in the event of hydraulic pressure failure.
- Training and rules for users eg driver not travel with people in cage, apply handbrake and in neutral while people raised, only arms allowed over handrails and no climbing on rails to reach higher.
- Wear a safety harness if work requires body reaching over the handrails.



Can Hypnosis Improve Safety Investigations?

Many incidents occur when workers momentarily forget to follow a well-established procedure or special precaution, but when interviewed can't remember the training. When accident investigations are conducted, we in OHS tend to give undue weight to eyewitness statements, even though studies show many are inaccurate. Doubt this? Then take your friend's watch and ask them to provide you with 12 unique features to positively identify it. Most people will not remember 8 features, let alone 12.

Crime & Mystery Fiction

It has been suggested, by some in the psychology arena, that hypnosis could help maintain or restore memory of previous events eg training for critical tasks. This notion has been popularised by many mystery movies and the proliferation of television crime programs.

The problem with popularising use of techniques like hypnosis in mystery fiction programs is that over time many people start to believe they are true events, because they have seen it represented many times in a variety of circumstances. They forget the programs were created for entertainment, and are not documentaries. This can even permeate into legal circles, as exemplified below.



I recently came across an article* on research into remembrance of past events, which also addressed some popular myths about memory.

* Hypnosis and Retrieving Memories, p69-73, 50 Great Myths of Popular Psychology, Lilienfeld et al, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010

A couple of famous myths about human memory include:

***“Human memory is like a tape recorder or video camera, and accurately records the events we’ve experienced”, and
“When someone has a memory of a trauma while under hypnosis, it objectively must actually have occurred.”***

Scientific Research on Hypnosis

In short, numerous scientific studies have shown people's recall of past events while under hypnosis is not more accurate than normal recall.

In fact, hypnosis in some circumstances can create more recall errors or false memories, and even worse can create virtually unshakeable conviction that false memories are true.

Interestingly, one of the criminal cases (against a US Cardinal), which unravelled after it was found a witness's false memories only emerged after hypnosis with an un-qualified therapist. Thirty years later we had the Cardinal Pell case in Australia.

"Hypnosis can foster false memories in some people" is indisputable

Conclusions

Hypnosis has been shown to positively help treat pain, some medical conditions, and habit disorders such as smoking, but it is indisputable that it can foster false memories in some people.

I think the lesson for us in workplace safety is to stick to scientifically proven techniques and be wary of popular new things which promise unrealistic improvements.

Our Safety Leadership courses and workshops are based on well-proven processes and techniques. For more information on this subject call us on 8544 4300 or [email](mailto:gary@rowe.com.au) Gary Rowe.

XXII World Congress on Safety and Health at Work Online Event

20th to 23rd September 2021



The World Congress on Safety and Health at Work is on this month.

The congress was originally planned to be in Canada in 2020 and the event is now reinvented as an interactive online event for the first time in its 66 years' history.

Andrea Rowe will be presenting in the stream:
"OSH and the Digital Economy"

Andrea will be talking about the safety of robots.
Register here: <https://www.safety2021canada.com/>

