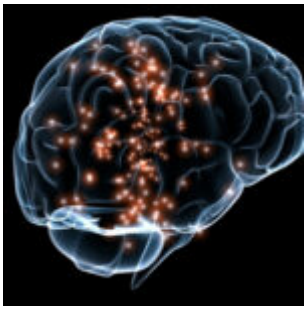
Workplace Culture & Procedures Increase Brain-Centered Hazards



You likely take steps to address the various safety hazards present in your workplace. But have you ever considered the hazards that might exist in your workers' heads and be caused by how their brains work'

DEKRA Insight, a global safety consultant, released a white paper on the role of the human brain in workplace injuries and incidents.

By applying recent neuroscience research to human performance in the workplace, Susan L. Koen, PhD found that existing organizational cultures and procedures aren't aligned with the reality of how the human brain functions. The result is increased risk from what Dr. Koen has identified as brain-centered hazards.

'A great deal of progress in personal and process safety has been made through effective identification of hazards. But what if potential hazards are housed in the human brain' And what if these brain-centered hazards are exacerbated by the fact that critical organizational elements'including work environments, technological interfaces, operating procedures, work schedules and even work cultures'are not aligned with how the human brain actually works,' commented Dr. Koen.

In the whitepaper, 'Brain-Centered Hazards: Risks & Remedies,'

Koen outlines several brain-centered hazards and sheds light on:

- How the brain's dual-process system can hamper human performance reliability
- How brain fatigue impairs reasoning and elevates risk-taking
- Clear examples of how to align organizational systems with the human brain
- The role leaders play in building brain-centered solutions into their safety systems.

Koen adds, 'Companies cannot continue with operations-as-usual that leave brain-centered hazards unidentified or unaddressed. Instead, new brain-aligned operational and safety defenses must be instituted to reduce exposures to these hazards.'

For example, your company culture may drive workers to get tasks done as quickly as possible. But a finished task isn't the same as an error-free performance. Instead, company leaders need to prime workers' brains with messages such as 'You always have the time to do the job right' and 'Take your time so you do the task right the first time.' Such reliability-centered messaging signals the human brain to 'think through' job tasks, focusing on execution of correct'and safe'actions rather than the speed of action.

DEKRA Insight also released a companion eBook, 'Human Performance Reliability,' which addresses the disconnect between modern operations and human functionality. It covers:

- The ways organizations contribute to brain-centric hazards and risk-taking behavior
- Activities that support greater human reliability and improve safety outcomes
- How culture and SOPs impact human performance reliability
- The very real risks created by brain fatigue and

solutions for overcoming them

- What neuroscience says about factions of the human brain and what that means to workplace safety.