

# Army *Safety* Gram

## Leading on the Edge for Safety *Excellence*

07-14

24 September 2008

### A Belief System for Safety Excellence

What is **Safety Excellence**? Safety excellence is not the opposite of mediocrity. Safety excellence is different. Safety excellence is not generated by more of the same, only faster, quicker, and harder. Safety Excellence is achieved by re-focusing on the drivers of high performance culture and leadership. Relative to safety, this would suggest that traditional safety elements (programs), **although valid and necessary**, are, alone, not sufficient to achieve safety excellence in an organization. These elements need to be empowered by the culture of the organization. There are foundational truths to Safety Excellence that apply to all organizations. These foundational truths comprise those critical beliefs which, when embraced by an organization, can enable it to **Re-define Operational Safety Excellence**, and achieve safety success. These **Covenants of Excellence** are as follows:



- ♦ **COVENANT #1** – **Safety** is not about preventing accidents; **Safety** is all about improving the process.
- ♦ **COVENANT #2** – Employee behaviors **do not cause** accidents; accidents are caused by the reasons for **at-risk** employee behavior.
- ♦ **COVENANT #3** – Accidents are **not** the problem; the problem(s) are the problem.
- ♦ **COVENANT #4** – The **business process** determines all business outcomes, of which safety is but one.
- ♦ **COVENANT #5** – Employees work **in the system**; managers work **on the system**; the system produces accidents; employees sustain injuries.
- ♦ **COVENANT #6** – To increase the bottom line, managers must effectively manage the middle lines, of which, the cost of **L.O. S. S.** (Lack Of Safety Strategy) is significant.
- ♦ **COVENANT #7** – Safety performance is a clear and reflective measure of an organization's **leadership** (values), **management** (competencies), and **operational processes** (systems).
- ♦ **COVENANT #8** – A core truth is deeply embedded within the value systems of organizations that repeatedly generate **poor** safety performance, and it is: 'people don't count!'
- ♦ **COVENANT #9** – Achieving safety excellence is requisite upon measuring and managing the **right things**.
- ♦ **COVENANT #10** – Safety must **never** be the responsibility of a staff function or a committee; safety must always be the obligation of **managers**.
- ♦ **COVENANT #11** – Discipline, in any form and by any name, **does not** increase the level of safe behavior in a workplace.
- ♦ **COVENANT #12** – Excellence is attainable...**now!** All obstacles are self imposed **L.A.M.E.** (Lazy, Antiquated, Mediocre, and Externally Focused) excuses.

**Excellent organizations frequently achieve exceptional safety results in the absence of any visible safety program, and excellent safety performance cannot be attained in a generally poor organization. Safety is nothing more than a byproduct of doing things right.**

