

The Crucial Role of Hiring and Onboarding in Safety



Dan Bookham

By Dan Bookham for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

Hiring and onboarding play a pivotal role in establishing a strong safety culture within an organization. By carefully selecting and training new employees, businesses can significantly reduce the risk of accidents, injuries and fatalities.

While the process can seem daunting for small businesses and rote and impersonal at larger entities (and HR work can feel like a potential minefield unless a you are specialist in that area), a well thought out approach to hiring, screening, onboarding and sharing culture can pay dividends specifically in the areas of safety and the reduction of workplace injuries and more generally enterprise-wide.

The first step is to know what you are looking for in a candidate from a safety perspective. Although labor markets continue to be tight, resist the temptation to lower your standards as that marginal candidate might be the one who blows up your workers compensation or P&I experience, or who puts that

work truck into the school bus.

A thorough background check is a vital component of the hiring process, especially in industries where safety is paramount. Background checks allow you to uncover criminal records, substance abuse issues or other red flags that may pose a threat to workplace safety. This in turn mitigates the risk of workplace violence, theft or other harmful behaviors and can ensure that new hires align with the organization's values and commitment to safety.

Obviously, you should adhere to industry-specific regulations and local laws regarding background checks – especially around access and confidentiality. There are firms that specialize in running legally compliant checks for you, so this might be a task to consider outsourcing.

Candidate criteria is the next element. Look for safety-minded individuals and prioritize candidates who demonstrate a strong commitment to safety. Given that your company is unique, ensure that potential new hires align with the organization's safety values and culture and of course verify that candidates possess the necessary skills and experience to perform their tasks safely.

Once the job offer has been made and accepted, an effective and engaging onboarding process allows you to drive home your safety culture. A comprehensive safety orientation will introduce new employees to the company's safety policies, procedures and emergency plans.

Job-specific safety training, tailored training for each role and emphasizing potential hazards and safety precautions, coupled with practical, hands-on training to reinforce safety knowledge and skills, can cement the elements that keep new hires safe from the get-go. Mentorship and buddy systems where

you pair new hires with experienced employees to guide them through safety protocols also helps teach the greenhorn that safety is core to “the way things are done around here.” Finally, regular check-ins by supervisors allow for assessment of the new hire’s understanding of safety and allows them to address any concerns either they or the employee may have.

Not only does building safety considerations into your hiring and onboarding process make for fewer workplace injuries and less impact on your insurance, it also demonstrates to rookies and veterans alike that leadership walks the walk when it comes to ensuring the whole team can enjoy a safe workplace.

Society of Certified Insurance Counselors Honors Martha Wentworth for 20 Years of Dedicated Leadership and Professional Development



[Martha Wentworth](#), CIC, CRM, CPRM, was recently recognized for professional leadership and advanced knowledge by the Society of Certified Insurance Counselors.

Martha was awarded a certificate of achievement recognizing 20 consecutive years of successfully maintaining the Certified Insurance Counselor (CIC) designation. The CIC designation requires an annual continuing education update ensuring that her education is always up-to-date and relevant.

Martha is a business insurance producer who serves clients across Maine from the Allen's Waterville office.

In addition to her CIC designations, Wentworth maintains the Certified risk Manager (CRM) and Certified Personal Risk Manager (CPRM) designations. She recently celebrated her 25th work anniversary with the company.

"The CIC program's unwavering dedication to fostering professional excellence has set a high standard in our industry," said Dan Bookham, senior vice president for business development at Allen. "Martha's consistent pursuit of growth and development is truly inspiring, serving as a model for her colleagues within our company and across the Maine insurance community."

ABOUT THE CIC PROGRAM: The CIC Program is nationally recognized as the premier continuing education program for insurance professionals, with programs offered in all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Headquartered in Austin, Texas, the Society of CIC is a not-for-profit organization and the founding program of The National Alliance for Insurance Education & Research.

Review Insurance Clauses Before Signing



By Chris Richmond

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We are often asked by our insureds to review the insurance clause in contracts they are asked to sign. All too often, unfortunately, the contracts have already been signed before we have a chance to review them. These contracts are often prepared by legal teams or pulled from the Internet. While it is important to have the legalities in a contract correct, it is equally as important to have the insurance aspects correct –and that is why a conversation with your agent is important before you sign on the dotted line.

A contract, when properly drawn and signed, can become an enforceable document. But for insurance purposes, just because you have signed the document does not mean that your insurance policy will react to it. Your insurance policy is also a legal contract, and the insurance company is only going to respond to the limits and conditions written out in your policy. It is important to make sure that the limits and conditions that you are insured for will meet the requirements in the contract you are signing.

In addition to limits there are often other stipulations that

need verification with your agent before signing. Waiver of Subrogation and hold harmless clauses are often inserted. While these can be very beneficial to the party making the request these types of requirements need to be approved by your insurance company beforehand. Contracts often include the words “any and all” when referring to risks covered. Your insurance policy most likely will not react to “any and all” claims made against it. Again, have these clauses reviewed beforehand.

If your contract only involves a vessel then any General Liability and Workers Compensation limits that are required will most likely not apply. Your hull and protection & indemnity policies will react to claims made against the boat. Getting the party who is requesting these limits to understand this can often be futile. This is when you should get your insurance agent involved to help sort out the wording and coverage issues.

Contracts are required for many reasons. A boiler plate contract most likely will not fit your unique situation. Contracts are also negotiable. It is wise to involve your insurance agent in this process before signing any contract.

Checklist for Property Owners: Protect Your Business From Frozen Pipes

Bitter temperatures can freeze pipes, creating catastrophic property losses and havoc in your life.

With proper winter weather preparation, you can minimize the impact of severe weather on your business.

Before winter weather occurs:

- Add emergency contacts to your emergency plan. Post the list at all telephones, and make copies for all employees to keep with them.
 - Plan for maintenance personnel to properly monitor buildings during cold snaps, upping site visits and checking unoccupied areas of buildings.
 - Properly mark the location of hydrants and sprinkler system post indicator valves for easy clearing after heavy snow.
 - Inspect all areas along the building's inside and outside perimeters to ensure they are sealed.
 - Provide heat for dry-pipe sprinkler system enclosures.
 - If space heaters are used as this heat source, keep them in good operating condition and away from combustible or flammable materials.
 - Maintain roofs; repair leaks, secure flashing, clear debris from the roof's surface, drains and overflow scuppers.
 - Check that gutters and downspouts are secured to buildings and clear of leaves and debris. If they iced over during a previous winter, consider properly installing heat trace to prevent major icicles and dams. Consult with a professional roofer to properly assess your situation.
 - Make sure all building openings are weather-tight so they do not admit cold.
- During winter months:
- Maintain building temperatures above 55 degrees, with adequate airflow to prevent freezing.
 - Make frequent visits to unoccupied and often overlooked areas: mechanical rooms on an outside wall, closets, space above a finished ceiling, stairways, open warehouse areas

with large doors, pipes near glass windows and walls, vestibules and atrium areas.

- Thaw piping, equipment or building systems that become frozen using extra heat and airflow.
- Have qualified sprinkler contractors ensure that your sprinkler system is properly repaired and operational before normal building operations are resumed. Never thaw pipes with open flames.
- Verify that all fire protection equipment is operating effectively and, if it is brought offline or damaged, have a qualified fire protection contractor repair and place the system back into service.

Arctic temperatures can have a dramatic effect on your building – and your livelihood. Regular maintenance and a winter weather plan can help you avoid its negative impact.

Via Cincinnati Insurance Companies.

The Significant Implications of the Dali Bridge Accident Have Only Just Begun



By [Dan Bookham](#) for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

As I sit down to write this, I'm still shaking off the jet lag from a week of meetings at Lloyd's of London. Lloyd's was buzzing with a range of issues: the pending North Atlantic hurricane season, tensions in the South China Sea, the potential for increased interference with shipping off Iran, and the ongoing conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza and the implications thereof for coverage in the Black- and Red Seas. The number one topic- by a country mile- was the Dali bridge accident and the significant ramifications that are already falling into place following the collision between the 9,971 TEU container ship and Baltimore's Francis Scott Key Bridge.

Anyone with even a rudimentary grasp of how my industry works can guess the first issue: this incident will result in substantial insurance claims. Experts estimate that insurers may face claims of up to \$3 billion. This figure is double the largest-ever protection & indemnity (P&I – liability relating to vessels) claim to date, which was the \$1.5 billion collective loss from the 2012 Costa Concordia disaster. One excess P&I underwriter I met with put the potential loss in context by pointing out \$3 billion would wipe out 20 years of underwriting profit across Lloyd's.

Another big topic was the complex insurance structure around this incident. The marine insurance sector operates with a

complex and layered structure of insurance and reinsurance designed to minimize, transfer, and offset financial risk. While it's too early to definitively say whether this structure will be breached, the Dali incident has raised concerns about its limits.

Something else that cannot be ignored is the incident's location and our well-deserved reputation for aggressive and expensive litigation here in the States. The collapse of the bridge, the loss of life, and impact on US East Coast trade and the Port of Baltimore all contribute to the complexity of the situation once it reaches the courts.

Operational impacts and trade disruptions continue also, even with the impressive (and often innovative) efforts underway to clear debris, channels, and terminal backlogs. The collapse of a vital regional transport link will continue to affect trade for some time to come, and as we've seen in recent memory with the Ever Given incident in the Suez Canal and general disruptions caused by COVID a supply chain rupture only exacerbates existing pressures and can have an outsized influence on regional and national economies.

The incident is also prompting a lot of searching questions about ship maintenance, tug assist, and why the bridge wasn't better protected. These are broader than Baltimore. I don't pretend to have any of the answers (my armchair NTSB investigator badge never being issued) but I do know that any incident causes underwriters to break out the microscopes and examine impacted industries and sectors in fine detail.

In summary, the Dali bridge accident poses challenges to the marine insurance system, and its impact will reverberate for many years. And in what won't be a surprise to anyone, marine insurance rates are likely to increase as a result.

Why Every Business, in Every Industry, Needs Cyber Coverage



By [Chris Richmond](#)

For [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

Today's marine industry relies on computers, smart phones and the Internet to operate and is just as vulnerable as any other industry for cyber attacks. An attack can have a significant impact on your employees, your customers, your reputation and can bring you serious financial loss. A cyber liability policy can provide risk management services useful to you before, during and after a data breach.

There are two important types of cyber liability to know about: First party and third party.

A first party cyber liability occurs when your own data is stolen. This can include your own employees' personal information or information about your customers. A cyber liability policy will provide credit monitoring services to assist the affected individuals which could help minimize the risk of identity theft. Included in the category of first party cyber liability are:

- **Funds Transfer Fraud** is an intentional, unauthorized instruction transmitted via email to a financial institution to transfer funds. If your computer system is compromised, a hacker can have access to your banking information and initiate fraudulent electronic wire transfers.
- **Lost Business Income** due to cyber theft, (a hack or data breach), is not covered unless cyber coverage is in place. Your regular business insurance policy covers you for things like fire, theft and wind, but not anything cyber-related.

Third party liability coverage can provide protection for damage caused by your business to third parties due to a hack. This could be confidential client information that you store in your system. Coverage included in this category are:

- **Breach of Privacy:** A client's personally identifiable information has been accessed by an unauthorized party.
- **Misuse of Personal Data:** Personal data is stolen or misused and they suffer financial damages.
- **Transmission of Malicious Content:** Failure to stop the transmission of virus, malware or other malicious content.

Computers, smart phones and the Internet are as important as any other business tool. They also leave you vulnerable to losses. It is very easy to sit back and say your facility is too small and assume no one would ever want your data and think a hack could never happen to you. But since that is exactly what the hackers want you to say, best to consider adding cyber coverage to your insurance policy. Have a talk with your agent and learn more about this important coverage.

Tracking Near Misses and Building a No-Blame Culture of Safety



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By Dan Bookham for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

An accident near miss, also referred to as a close call, or near accident, is an event that happens in a shipyard or on board that has the potential to cause injury or damage, but luckily doesn't. Imagine someone almost getting hit by a swinging crane hook – that would be a near miss. By recognizing and recording these close calls, shipyards and vessel operators can learn from them and prevent future accidents.

The best in the business track accident near misses for a very important reason: Prevention. Near misses are warnings, pure and simple. By tracking these close calls, you can identify weaknesses in safety protocols before an accident happens. These brushes with disaster reveal root causes. Was it a faulty procedure? A communication breakdown? Uneven training? By

understanding the why, you can take corrective actions to prevent similar situations from happening again. Talking openly about near misses is also a feature of a proactive safety culture. This can lead to a more vigilant workforce and a safer work environment overall.

Employers in shipyards and on vessels (and any workplace, really) can encourage near miss reporting through a two-pronged approach: Fostering a culture of safety and making the reporting process itself convenient and positive. This takes leadership commitment to prioritizing safety and being visibly involved in safety initiatives, as well as a willingness to address concerns.

Making the most of near misses also requires a no-blame environment. Employees should feel comfortable reporting near misses without fear of punishment or being seen as incompetent. Emphasize that near misses are valuable information for improvement, not opportunities to assign blame. Recognize and appreciate employees who report near misses. This can be done through public praise, rewards programs (avoiding rewards based on quantity of reports), or simply by expressing gratitude. Encourage open communication about safety by regularly discussing safety procedures, hazards and near misses in safety meetings or training sessions.

Provide an easy-to-use reporting system, whether it's paper forms, a mobile app, or an online portal to allow for ease of reporting and different styles of communication. Make sure it's accessible both during and outside work hours for better recall of events. Offer options for anonymous reporting if employees prefer it. This can help those who are still hesitant to come forward as you build your safety culture. Minimize the amount of information required to report a near miss while still capturing the necessary details. Finally, be sure to communicate the

results of near-miss investigations and the corrective actions taken and display gratitude for the heads up. This shows employees that their reports are valued and acted upon, encouraging future participation.

By combining these approaches, employers can create a safe space for employees to report near misses, ultimately leading to a safer work environment for everyone in the shipyard or on board. In essence, tracking near misses is like catching a fire before it engulfs the whole building. It's a proactive approach to safety that can save lives and prevent costly accidents.

DOL Issues Independent Contractor Final Rule

In early January 2024, the U.S. Department of Labor released a final rule, effective March 11, revising the agency's guidance on how to analyze who is an employee or independent contractor under the Fair Labor Standards Act. This new rule restores the multifactor, totality-of-the-circumstances when determining whether a worker is an employee or independent contractor under the FLSA. We have a PDF offering you more details, including a description of the 2021 rule and the new rule issued in 2024.

The final rule analyzes all six economic realities test factors without assigning a predetermined weight to a particular factor.

[Click here for the PDF.](#)

[And here is a link to the Maine Workers' Compensation Board web page – with additional resources and an FAQ page.](#)

Mental Health: An Area of Focus in Loss Prevention and Workers Comp



Dan Bookham

By [Dan Bookham](#) for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

We are hearing more and more about mental health in all aspects of daily life these days, and while this new openness about a once taboo subject is to be welcomed it can still cause squeamishness for employers and concerns about intrusion and privacy that a cut or a burn may not. Even so, it is an important enough risk factor for workplace injuries and vessel & yard accidents that it behooves all of us to pay attention to it.

First, the why. Mental health is a workplace safety issue because if issues aren't recognized or challenges aren't addressed, it can lead to a number of negative consequences. Mental health problems can impair an employee's ability to focus, concentrate and make sound decisions. This can lead to

terrible outcomes, both for the employee and for others. Mental health problems can result in an increase in injuries and accidents, decreased productivity, absenteeism and turnover. This can cost employers a significant amount of money. In addition, mental health problems can lead to decreased morale and increased stress levels. This can create a negative work environment, which is not conducive to safety. All of these are drivers of stress on people and systems, and in turn these increase a company's risk exposure.

There are several things employers can do to address mental health in the workplace. By taking the following steps, employers can help to create a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

- Provide proactive mental health awareness training to employees. This training can help employees understand mental health issues and how to identify and support someone who may be struggling. Your workers comp/P&I insurer will likely have resources they can refer you to, as will occupational health clinics and local health care providers.
- Create a culture of open communication about mental health. This means encouraging employees to talk about their mental health and to seek help if they need it. The military are real leaders in this area and offer proven, concrete examples of functioning programs for populations where talking about feelings and mental health may not be a default setting.
- Offer mental health resources to employees. This could include providing access to mental health professionals, offering on-site counseling or providing financial assistance for mental health treatment.
- Promote healthy work-life balance. This means encouraging employees to take breaks, to get enough sleep and to have

a life outside of work. Remind your people that toughness is not always analogous to pushing yourself to a breaking point.

- Address workplace stressors. This could include identifying and reducing sources of stress, such as unrealistic deadlines, heavy workloads or bullying.

By taking these steps, employers can reduce the risk of mental health issues driving injuries and accidents, improve quality of life for their people, reduce insurance claims and help to create a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

Welcome, Sam Grinnell



Sam Grinnell of Lincolnville has joined Allen Insurance and Financial as an account manager in the company's business insurance division.

Grinnell is a graduate of Colby-Sawyer College and before starting his insurance career as an employee-owner at Allen, he has worked as a carpenter, home inspector and aquatics director

at the Penobscot Bay YMCA in Rockport.

Said Grinnell: "I like that I can use my experience to provide a critical service to our customers. Having worked for myself, I understand what goes into it and navigating risk is a big part of that. I enjoy working with a group of talented and thoughtful and caring team members, it makes every day more fun and encourages me to be the best I can."

Grinnell will be based at Allen's office on Elm Street in Camden.