

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.

Safety at Work: An Emotional Issue



By [Dan Bookham](#)

For [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

Workplace safety is not merely a physical concern but also a complex emotional issue with far-reaching consequences for

individuals, teams, and organizations. A comprehensive approach to workplace safety must address emotional factors, otherwise it is doomed to fail. A hearts-and-minds approach to keeping your people safe is always going to pay more dividends than folks dutifully checking boxes without investment in the philosophy behind your safety culture.

Should this all seem a bit too touchy-feely, consider the following. Safety at work is undeniably an emotional issue because the very human drivers of connection and fear underpin the decisions we make every day that could potentially imperil life and limb.

On the individual level, this translates to a basic fear of loss. The fear of injury, illness or even death is inherent to human nature. This fear can be paralyzing or motivating, depending on how it is managed. We also worry about teammates, as employees often form strong bonds with coworkers, creating a sense of family and community. The safety of colleagues becomes a deeply personal matter, driven by love and care. More than anything else, the instinct to protect oneself is primal. When safety is compromised, it triggers strong emotional responses related to survival and well-being which can set off a chain reaction of events that can amplify risks as much as lessen them.

Unsafe work environments can lead to chronic stress and anxiety, affecting employees' mental health and overall quality of life, and the experience of trauma – for both an injured individual and their colleagues who were present – can have lasting impacts and cause employees to lose trust in their employer and feel a diminished sense of control over their work environment. This in turn can lead to a doom loop of anger and frustration which fuel reckless behavior, increased risk-taking, and reduced attention to safety protocols.

While negative emotions can spread rapidly through a workplace, creating a climate of fear and distrust which can hinder safety efforts, positive emotions are even more contagious and can boost morale, increase engagement, and promote a proactive approach to safety. When a team feels it in their bones a supportive and collaborative safety culture meets their emotional needs in the workplace, we see improved communication, conflict resolution and decision-making, all of which are powerful force-multipliers when it comes to reducing harm.

Emotions are a powerful force that can either enhance or hinder workplace safety. By understanding the impact of emotions, organizations can develop strategies to create a positive and safe work environment. Exploring and developing specific strategies that help you understand, manage and mitigate the impact of emotion on safety culture in partnership with your workers comp, USLH and P&I insurers is a smart way to benefit from the premium dollars you pay for your policies.

**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

Originally Submitted to [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

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.

Business Income Coverage – It's For Everyone



By [Chris Richmond](#) for [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

You have had a catastrophic fire loss at your boatyard. Your insurance policy responds to the property loss but how does your business survive while you rebuild? This is where your business income coverage becomes very important.

Like loss of use coverage on a vessel, business income coverage is triggered due to a slow down or suspension of your operations caused by a covered cause of loss to your commercial property. A fire in your shop or a burst water pipe which causes damage are just two examples. Business income coverage applies to the loss suffered during the time required to repair or replace the damaged property. It can also extend to losses suffered after the repairs are completed for a specific number of days.

But how many days will it take to rebuild your business property and how many days does your policy provide? Many policies only provide one year of business income. The time period for this coverage would begin shortly after the date of the loss. How long will it take for any claims adjustors or fire marshals to inspect the loss site? And then how long will it take to have all the debris cleared and the site ready to rebuild? And speaking of rebuilding, how long will it take to get a

contractor lined up to start the actual building process? You could be three to five months into your business income policy before the work actually starts.

When looking at business income coverage – also known as business interruption coverage – you should remember to include extra expenses. This is the insurance which pays for additional costs in excess of normal operating expenses – what your business spends to continue operations while your property is being repaired or rebuilt, including, for example, costs you incur to relocate and advertise this new location. Your extra expense coverage begins immediately after your claim occurs. Your actual business income kicks in three days later.

Business income insurance is an essential safeguard for any business. It enables business owners to focus on rebuilding their business without the stress of no actual income coming in. Key to this coverage are adequate limits and timeframes.

Risk Management Tips for a Shipyard: Keeping Things Ship Shape



Chris
Richmond

By [Chris Richmond](#)
For [WorkBoat Magazine](#)

Today's shipyard can be an inherently dangerous workplace. Implementing a sound risk management program is an important part of managing your employee workers compensation and USL&H costs (reducing claims and limiting injuries. There's the added bonus of avoiding possible fines and penalties imposed by safety violations or hazardous waste clean-up. Here are some items to consider.

Implement regular assessments of your safety plan and see if it still reflects your current operations. Your initial plan should be based on a comprehensive risk assessment identifying hazards and the potential for accidents. There are risks everywhere, and they are major and minor: You should keep them all in mind. As your business grows and evolves so should your risk assessment plan. Don't make the mistake of doing the work to create one leaving it to gather dust.

Conduct period safety training with your employees. Insurance companies and governmental agencies have material available but don't be afraid to develop your own manuals outlining specific jobs and procedures. Topics can include emergency response plans, safe work practices and hazard identification. And don't

keep trainings only in the classroom. Real life scenarios and employee involvement, such as demonstrating a proper response to a fire or chemical spill, for example, can increase the learning potential.

Personal protection equipment should be readily accessible to your employees and its use should be as common as putting on a pair of pants. Steel-toed shoes, hard hats, hearing protection, safety glasses, respiratory masks and gloves are all great examples. And don't stop with just making this equipment available. Conduct proper fit test for masks – and make replacement filters available as well.

Have you reviewed procedures for potential pollution threats? Prevention is obviously the best response, so have proper handling procedures in place but in the event of a misfortune have a proper response plan in place. Maintain proper waste management practices and don't forget about storm runoff. Keeping up with compliance with environmental regulations and standards will not only save you the headache of a pollution claim but can also save you the fines and penalties associated with them.

A risk management program is only as good as the employees who are adhering to it as well as the management team enforcing it. Regular reviews can identify areas of success as well as areas of improvement, but don't make the mistake of taking the time to create a plan and then having it languish on a shelf in your office. It needs to be used in order for it to be beneficial.

Legal System Abuse and its Impact on Insurance



Dan
Bookham

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

Legal system abuse, the exploitation of the legal system for personal gain or to create unfair advantages, has become a significant concern across various sectors, particularly the insurance industry. For this month's "Insurance Watch" I'm going to delve into the nature of legal system abuse, its far-reaching consequences, and the strategies being employed to combat it.

Legal system abuse manifests in various forms, including fraudulent claims, exaggerated damages, frivolous lawsuits, abuse of the discovery process and third-party litigation funding. These practices not only burden the legal system but also have profound economic and social implications.

The insurance industry bears the brunt of legal system abuse. The fraudulent claims, exaggerated damages and frivolous or drawn-out lawsuits inflate costs, leading to higher premiums for policyholders. The complex legal environment fostered by abusive practices further burdens insurers with increased legal fees and

reputational damage.

I've heard it argued that because insurance companies are the ones dealing with the front lines of this issue this is somehow a victimless crime. Setting aside the troubling implication that it is somehow OK to defraud an entire sector of the economy, it is important to remember that the insurance industry is underpinned by what we pay for our coverage, so if costs climb so do our premiums. When it comes to legal system abuse, we are all suffering.

Additionally, the repercussions of legal system abuse extend far beyond the insurance industry. Legal system abuse distorts the economy, leading to higher prices, reduced economic growth and job losses. The legal system itself suffers from eroded public trust, overburdened courts, and weakened deterrence. Moreover, individuals and businesses face increased anxiety, reduced access to justice and a diversion of resources from critical social needs.

A relatively new – and currently entirely legal – phenomenon driving expenses and claims in addition to more fraudulent practices is third-party litigation funding, where outside investors finance lawsuits in exchange for a share of potential awards.

To give some context, the largest third-party litigation fund in the U.S., funded in by both private equity and overseas sovereign wealth funds among others, has a \$6 billion war chest to help push lawsuits to as expensive a conclusion as possible. In essence, there's a massive thumb on the scale against businesses facing lawsuits and claims.

Addressing legal system abuse requires a multifaceted approach. Legislative and regulatory reforms, such as tort reform, stricter fraud penalties and increased transparency are

essential. Judicial reforms, including stricter case management, sanctions for abusive litigation and promoting alternative dispute resolution are also crucial.

While the challenges posed by legal system abuse are substantial, a collaborative effort involving insurers, legislators, lawyers, courts, industry stakeholders and the public is essential to create a legal landscape that is fair, efficient and just for all. It's going to take all of us working together to fix this increasingly serious problem.

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.

Reviewing Marine Coverage With Your Agent



By [Chris Richmond, CIC, AAI, CMIP](#)

For [WorkBoat Magazine](#), April 2024

At a recent conference I was speaking to a new owner of a commercial passenger vessel. He had stayed with the former owner's insurance company and after reviewing coverages with the agent realized there were multiple gaps. While this was a beneficial meeting for the new owner, it revealed serious gaps in coverage for the previous. Here's a short list:

- **Changes in operation.** When the original policy was written, the vessel operations consisted of just day cruises. As the business grew so did the operations. Multi-day overnight cruises were now standard. However, the policy warranties expressed day cruises and not overnight.
- **Changes in navigation.** While the vessel's normal cruising area had not changed, one thing that had changed was that the vessel was traveling to a festival in a city outside of its warranted navigational territory. Had there been a claim while en route to or while at this port, coverage would have been denied due to a breach of navigational warranty.
- **Propulsion** When the original policy was written, the owner had additional coverage for the small boat that he used in conjunction with his larger boat. The policy had a stated value and a description of both the tender as well as the outboard. When it was time to replace the tired old

outboard with a brand new unit, the owner failed to pass this information along to his agent. While the tender was still insured it did not reflect the increased value of the new motor.

- **Extra crew.** The operator's policy has coverage for a stated number of crew. When the owner took the vessel on longer trips, he increased his crew count to better man the boat. What he didn't do was update his crew coverage on his policy. Had there been a crew claim and it was determined that there were more crew on the vessel than stated in the policy, he could have faced a penalty based on the percentage he under reported.

Insurance is one of the larger expenses that you have with your vessel and operation. You want to do all you can before a claim occurs to ensure that you get paid in the event of an accident.

Insurance claims should not be a roll of the dice: Take the time to review with your agent what you currently have and make sure to keep him or her up to date with any changes.