

FROM CHECKLISTS TO CHECK-INS: WHY PEOPLE MATTER MOST IN SAFETY

BY EDGAR RIVERA

In the high-stakes world of the petrochemical industry, safety has traditionally been anchored by protocols, procedures, and checklists. These tools are essential—they establish structure, promote consistency, and help mitigate risk. But if we've learned anything from decades of industrial experience, it's this: **compliance alone doesn't create a truly safe work environment. People do.**

"From Checklists to Check-ins" is more than a catchy phrase—it reflects a necessary shift in how we think about safety. It's about moving from a mindset focused solely on rules and routines to one that prioritizes human connection, active engagement, and shared responsibility. In today's complex industrial landscape, **people aren't just part of the safety system, they are the system.**

LEADERSHIP ENGAGEMENT: SAFETY STARTS AT THE TOP

Every culture is shaped by what leadership prioritizes, models, and reinforces. When leaders actively engage in safety—not from behind a desk, but shoulder-to-shoulder with the workforce—they send a powerful message: **safety is not just a priority, it's a core value.**

Whether it's participating in safety walks, initiating daily check-ins, or simply taking the time to listen to frontline concerns, engaged leadership creates a ripple effect. When employees see their leaders demonstrating safe behaviors, asking the right questions, and consistently valuing safety over speed, that mindset spreads across the organization. **What gets modeled gets mirrored.**

At Ohmstede Industrial Services, we hold a daily check-in 365 days a year, bringing together project managers from across the country to align on critical topics like safety, project needs, forecasting, near misses, and best practices—ensuring consistency, communication, and a strong safety culture across every job site. Leadership plays a vital role in the safety culture. When leaders model safe behaviors, prioritize workers' well-being, and engage in safety efforts, it sends a powerful message: **people matter here!**

CULTURE IS THE OUTCOME OF WHAT WE DO EVERY DAY

Safety isn't something we "bolt on" to a job—it's something we build into everything we do. From the first safety orientation to the final job close-out, each conversation, decision, and behavior shapes our culture. No safety program is ever complete. Commitment to safety requires constant attention, adaptation, and learning. Some of the best safety innovations come not from the top down, but from those closest to the work. Listening to our teams, understanding their challenges, and acting on their feedback ensures that we remain agile and responsive in an ever-changing environment. Investing in people—through training, mentorship, and support—reinforces our belief that safety is personal and that everyone plays a vital role in achieving our shared goal: **that everyone goes home safely at the end of the day!**

When we treat safety as a living, breathing part of our daily work—when we check in with our people, not just through the paperwork, we move from compliance to **commitment**; and that's where real transformation happens. While priorities may shift over time, core values remain the foundation of our company culture—they guide us through change and keep us aligned with our purpose.

CONCLUSION: BECAUSE PEOPLE MATTER MOST

At the end of the day, no matter how advanced our systems or detailed our plans, the most powerful force in safety is **the people behind the work.** They are our greatest asset, and they deserve our greatest protection.

It's about making the daily check-ins as important as checklists and recognizing that safety isn't just something we do—it's at the core of who we are. By focusing on leadership engagement, open communication, situational awareness, and human-centered culture, we don't just improve safety metrics—we save lives, build trust, and create workplaces where everyone has the confidence to bring their best, and safest, selves to the job every day.



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At its core, safety isn't just about preventing incidents, it's about honoring the value of human life. By placing people at the center of our safety culture, we don't just meet the standard—we raise it.

At Ohmstede Industrial Services our commitment is a simple but powerful: our people are our greatest asset, and their safety is our highest responsibility.

