

## Five Principles of Human and Organizational Performance



### WHAT IS HOP?



Human and Organizational Performance (HOP) is a science-based approach focused on understanding how humans perform within complex systems and organizations. It's based on the inevitability of error as a natural part of human behaviour and how errors are symptoms of deeper issues within organizational and operational systems.

In general, HOP is used to improve safety, reliability and performance by designing systems better suited to the people operating within them and fostering an organizational culture that values learning and resilience over blame.

### The Five Principles

**Error is normal, people make mistakes.** Errors are a normal part of human behavior and should be anticipated.

**Context drives behavior.** The conditions under which work is done greatly influence worker behaviour. Good systems and processes help manage the uncertain operational outcomes always present in organizations.

**Blame fixes nothing.** Blaming individuals for mistakes does not improve operational efficiency. Instead, it discourages the disclosure of important operational data and hinders learning and improvement.

**How you respond to failure matters.** Leaders can choose to use failures as opportunities for learning and improvement, or they can choose to punish those involved. The former encourages disclosure of failures while the latter discourages disclosure, hindering improvement.

**Learning and improving is vital.** Organizations have two choices when responding to failure: learn and improve or blame and punish. Choosing to learn from failures is a strategic choice towards improvement.

According to Brent Sutton and Bobby Cowger in their book titled, *HOP Beginners Guide to Doing Safety Differently Volume 1: Introduction to HOP*, "HOP Principles are a desire to improve safety and reliability in organizations, and a shift in thinking about how people behave and organizations function".

They also emphasized how HOP principles can guide development, implementation and improvement of your safety systems, procedures, worker engagement practices and organization's safety culture.

## HOP Misconceptions and Mitigations

HOP is a relatively new approach in many industries, and several misconceptions can arise with its introduction. Here are few common ones and ways to mitigate them:

**HOP is only about individual behavior:**

HOP looks at how work is organized, managed and led to understand system designs and organizational influences on behaviour, not just individual actions.

**HOP eliminates accountability:**

Rather than eliminating accountability, HOP focuses on learning and improving by surfacing these system conditions so they—and the workers operating within them—can be understood and improvements can be made.

**HOP is a program or a set of tools:**

HOP is a way of thinking that informs actions and decisions; a set of principles that guide organizational culture and process, not a one-size-fits-all program.

**HOP means procedures and rules are less important:**

HOP recognizes the importance of procedures as part of the system but also acknowledges their limitations. Procedures should be well-designed, regularly updated and informed by the people doing the work.

**HOP is too soft on human error:** HOP takes a realistic view of human error. Rather than expecting perfection, it focuses on creating systems resilient to errors.

Effectively mitigating these misconceptions requires education and training on HOP principles, sharing success stories, involving all levels of organization in the HOP journey and continuously communicating the value of a systemic approach to safety and performance.

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### How ESC can help

Energy Safety Canada is available to help organizations wishing to educate their workforce on this innovative approach to operational excellence and safety.

ESC staff can deliver presentations ranging from a 1-hour basic introduction to a full day seminar. Those interested can send an email to [Safety@EnergySafetyCanada.com](mailto:Safety@EnergySafetyCanada.com)

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### Resources

- ESC: [Human and Organizational Performance](#)
- [Human Performance Oil & Gas](#)
- Book: HOP Beginners Guide to Doing Safety Differently HOP Volume 1: Introduction to HOP (available on Amazon)