



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Mountain Valley Chapter

Keep holiday safety in mind this season with these tips!

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CALL FOR SPEAKERS

YOU ARE OUR BEST EDUCATORS

As we plan for the months ahead in 2025, we would love to fill the calendar with presentations from our roster of chapter members. Additionally, if you have suggestions for presenters, either colleagues or those you have seen as recent events we would love to hear them. We welcome a broad range of safety, industrial hygiene, and emergency planning topics. Those that count towards CEUs are not mandatory but would be a bonus. Please contact us through our chapter email moutnainvalleyasspcomm@outlook.com with suggestions including contact information.



UPCOMING EVENTS

REGISTER AT [MOUNTAINVALLEY.ASSP.ORG/EVENT](https://mountainvalley.assp.org/event)

Jan 15	Executive Committee Meeting
Jan 22	ASSP Free Webinar



GOLD LEVEL CHAPTER
2023-2024

MONTHLY MEETING

DECEMBER CHAPTER MEETING

December 09 2024

This year Mountain Valley ASSP decided to give back for our annual holiday celebration! The main event was held at the Feeding Southwest Virginia Salem Quality Assurance facility located behind the food bank. President Glenn Hargrove, Treasurer Jesse Phillips, Secretary Amanda Engstrom, and volunteer Larry Day were in attendance. The day was filled with fun and laughter as boxes were filled with donated goods and checked for quality and care before being sent off to the next stage in the process.

We highly encourage you to sign up at a food pantry or kitchen that is close to you if you were not able to attend. We look forward to future volunteer events.



UPCOMING MEETINGS

EC PLANNING MEETING

January 15, 2025: 12-12:30pm EST

Address: Virtual

Details: The executive committee will be holding a virtual planning meeting to discuss upcoming events and chapter business for 2025. This will include future meetings open to the full chapter to be posted into the January newsletter.



UPCOMING EDUCATION

FREE WEBINAR: MOVING FORWARD IN HSE LEADERSHIP

Date: January 22, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. To Noon CT.

Format: Webinar

Credits: 0.1 Continuing Education Units

Register at https://my.assp.org/nc_upcomingevents

Course Description

As we move into 2025, Health, Safety, and Environmental (HSE) leaders face a rapidly evolving landscape driven by strategic shifts, emerging technologies, and changing operational realities. In this webinar, we will explore the five leading trends leaders must connect to drive impactful change in their organization-strategic Value of HSE, Impact Metrics, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Systems Thinking.

What You Will Learn

- Gain deeper understanding of how HSE fits within the broader business strategy to enhance value creation and drive organizational success
- Identify ways to move beyond traditional safety metrics to incorporate well-being, mental health, and leading indicators that provide deeper insights into organizational performance.
- Explore ways to leverage artificial intelligence to enhance human interaction, improve decision-making, and create safer workplaces
- Assess how to integrate safety into organizational systems to create holistic, adaptive solutions that promote long-term sustainability and resilience.

Speaker(s)

Scott DeBow, CSP, ARM, Director of Health, Safety & Environment, Avetta



Scott DeBow has more than 19 years of progressive leadership in risk management and occupational safety. He aligns people, teams and industry resources within the joint-employer community, emphasizing critical risk mitigation, particularly related to serious injuries and fatalities. His unique perspective as a safety professional in nontraditional work settings drives his focus on system improvements for safer environments and his belief in the transformative power of safety leadership. DeBow is a director-at large on ASSP's Board of Directors and is he also a member of the ANSI/ASSP Z10 Committee for safety management systems.

SAFETY MINUTE

STUDENT ARTICLE – LEAN ERROR-PROOFING IN EHS



Hazards are everywhere in the workplace. Whether they endanger workers, the public, or the environment, it falls to EHS to address them; but many employees find safety procedures cumbersome. If cumbersome, the procedures may be “unofficially dispensed with” when workers are unsupervised or when a deadline is tight, circumventing safety protocols and creating dangerous situations. To address this issue, look no further than the Lean toolbox. One of the tenets of Lean – a business methodology focused on efficiency and eliminating waste – is the concept of error-proofing or “poka-yoke” (from Japanese: “mistake-proofing”). In Lean, error-proofing strategies reduce waste in processes by making mistakes impossible. Applied to EHS, error-proofing is a way to build safety into processes, to weave it into the fabric of the workplace, to prioritize safety while not sacrificing simplicity. The application of poka-

yoke to safety can be reduced to a simple framework: eliminate hazards, facilitate safety, and improve visibility (ASQ, 2024). Error-proofing supports the responsibility of EHS to mitigate hazards and create a culture of safety.

The Lean framework aims to create a culture in the company of efficiency and continuous improvement. Lean uses poka-yoke as a tool for improving processes, and it can also be applied to revitalize EHS procedures. The Lean approach starts with good communication – engaging with workers to find unsafe processes and brainstorm solutions. Once identified, the hazard can be mitigated with error-proofing. The poka-yoke framework points to three approaches: First, determine if the hazardous step of the process can be eliminated or replaced to reduce the risk. This could mean getting rid of an unnecessary step, replacing a piece of equipment with a safer one, or moving a control switch out of a dangerous area. If a hazard cannot be eliminated, the next approach is to make following safety procedures easier. This could include providing easy storage for large tools that could be tripping hazards, placing safety equipment in convenient areas, or ensuring containers for environmental waste can be easily utilized. Finally, if the hazard cannot be eliminated, it should be made as obviously visible as possible, using clear warning lights on live electrical equipment, bright paint for hot surfaces, and clearly marked safety margins around moving machinery. The poka-yoke framework builds safety into the process, prioritizes cooperation with workers, and empowers them to work safely and efficiently.

Lean culture also emphasizes continuous improvement: whatever the hazard and whatever the solution, workers should be involved in the process. As Terry Mathis writes for EHS Today, “Lean thinking would point to the worker as the customer of the safety process. As such, the process should seek to better understand and meet the needs of the worker rather than seek to install safety programs through command and control” (2012). The Lean approach considers workers’ ideas and feedback, involving them in the process to gain valuable insight into the process.



Although EHS can be difficult to incorporate organically, Lean offers a plan and tools to ensure quality and efficiency along with safety. Poka-yoke is one Lean tool that EHS professionals can use to eliminate hazards, build a culture of safety, and ensure that safety is not neglected in favor of efficiency. In cooperation with workers, error-proofing can help make EHS easier for all. -

Benaiah De Leon, School of Engineering, Liberty University

References

ASQ (2024). What is Mistake Proofing? American Society for Quality. <https://asq.org/quality-resources/mistake-proofing>

Mathis, T. L. (2012, June 18). What Can Safety Learn from Lean? EHS Today. <https://www.ehstoday.com/safety/article/21918376/what-can-safety-learn-from-lean>

FREE WHITEPAPER

SUPPLY CHAIN RISKS: ENSURING COMPLIANCE & MITIGATING DISRUPTIONS



Managing the tangled network of contractors and subcontractors is a complex, time-consuming challenge. Multiple locations and dozens of contractors create a need for consistent oversight. Learn how to manage subcontractor risks and ensure compliance in complex supply chains. Explore best practices for risk mitigation, communication and accountability. [Download whitepaper](#)

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