



Compliance From the Top Down

While safety and compliance in the handling and transportation of dangerous goods or hazardous materials should be a top priority for every organization, the importance of and emphasis on these things varies from organization to organization. As a sales representative at the Bureau of Dangerous Goods, I've been disheartened to discover the lack of priority when it comes to safety and compliance with the regulations. From one perspective, I understand why this phenomenon occurs across the dangerous goods industry. Regardless of the reason, whether it be due to a lack of understanding about compliance or that it's viewed as a financial burden, this seems to happen all too often.

Some of the best organizations that I've come across in my 5 years as a sales representative of compliance products—are ones where there is an emphasis on safety and compliance, which all begins with management. When I say that they are the "best," what I mean is that they are not only extremely easy to work with, but they incur minimal risks and penalties. Managers who prioritize safety and compliance promote the importance of it down to the employees who are involved in the day to day dangerous goods operations. Employees will naturally adapt to their upper managers' practices and philosophies.

On the other hand, in an organization where safety and compliance are not a priority, problems are likely to occur. I've spoken to many dangerous goods shippers and handlers who have trouble getting the funding approved for compliance services such as training, software, and consulting. This in turn leads to the staff not being adequately trained and lacking the necessary resources to perform their job functions related to dangerous goods shipments. When management does not set high expectations related to a dangerous goods program, their hazmat employees may be susceptible to adopting the philosophy and misconception that safety and compliance are not priorities. In the worst case scenario, neglecting safety and compliance can cause devastating accidents and put lives at risk while transporting dangerous goods.

While compliance and safety can be seen as overhead expenses and unnecessary, it's important to allocate funds to an annual budget for training, software, and consulting services as needed. A prime example of a poor decision-making process is opting for a cheaper, shortened version of dangerous goods training programs to save time and money in the short term. What's not realized when making this decision is the long term consequences. Hazmat employees must receive adequate training for them to properly, efficiently, and safely perform their job functions.

The Bureau of Dangerous Goods is known for being one of the top compliance companies in the world. We often hear comments such as, "I now feel prepared and confident to apply what I have learned in the training to perform my job." Many of the organizations that seek out BDG's services prioritize safety and compliance, because compliance is a primary concern that will later translate into safety. We are extremely thankful for management and their teams that we work with who practice what they preach. Compliance and Safety always come first!

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