

New 'safety tool' could help managers make workplaces safer

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Managers who introduce strategies that aim to help employees focus on risks, stay vigilant, and be more creative about safety are more likely to improve safety behaviour in the workplace, new research involving Curtin University has found.

The research, published in *Safety Science*, analysed the original lead, energise, adapt and defend (LEAD) framework of safety leadership, which was first developed by Professor Mark Griffin from Curtin University. A team of researchers from Curtin University, the University of Queensland and Griffith University has now created a new practical version of the framework that can be used as a tool to help managers introduce more effective safety strategies in the workplace.

Co-author Professor Mark Griffin, Director of the Future of Work Institute based at Curtin University, said organisations need to ensure that their employees are working within safe boundaries, adding that supervisors have the potential to exert the most influence in the workplace when it comes to safety.

"Supervisors or managers have considerable power in how and when they implement safety control strategies, such as organisational-endorsed policies, procedures and practices. Employees also have the ability to shape their co-workers' safety behaviour through communication and support," Professor Griffin said.

"A promising technique in which safety practices may have a [positive impact](#) on safety behaviour is through motivational pathways such as self-

regulation, which relates to how someone controls their behaviour, emotions, impulses, inner resources and abilities.

"By considering this, our team created a more condensed version of the original LEAD framework and found that supervisors can implement a range of different control strategies to achieve safety in the workplace through the use of [self-regulation](#)."

The new framework shows that safety leaders who introduce a range of practices such as helping their employees focus on risks, avoid errors, and stay vigilant for dangers, as well as making sure their employees are creative about safety, encourage their co-workers to be safe and learn from their mistakes, are more likely to see improvements in their workplace.

Professor Griffin explained that the new framework has important implications for [workplace](#) safety, adding it could help supervisors and co-workers consider the breadth of their safety practices.

"Our new [framework](#) can help supervisors identify the most appropriate safety practices, depending on their work situation or the desired goals of the organisation. It may also provide a more credible and engaging approach to communicating [safety](#) concepts to employees," Professor Griffin said.

More information: Tristan W. Casey et al. LEAD operational safety: Development and validation of a tool to measure safety control strategies, *Safety Science* (2019). [DOI: 10.1016/j.ssci.2019.05.005](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ssci.2019.05.005)

Provided by Curtin University

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