Behaviour Based Safety — study guide

Behaviour Based Safety (BBS) is an approach that changes safety by observing and correcting what people actually do, rather than blaming them after an event. This guide covers the ABC model, the design team and the key ideas behind it.[1]

What BBS is for

The main goal of a behaviour-based safety approach is to ensure that unsafe behaviours are **corrected, not punished**. Feedback is given in a BBS programme specifically to **encourage a change of behaviour**.

The ABC model

The ABC model stands for **Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence**: what triggers the behaviour, the behaviour itself, and what follows it. In the academic field of applied behavioural analysis, behaviour is understood as the result of a **stimulus–response mechanism**.

Designing a BBS programme

When implementing a BBS programme, the BBS design team should include **both management and front-line employees**.

Why behaviour matters

Incident reports overall show that as many as **80–90% of serious injuries and accidents** have been attributed to human error. Research also suggests that the more experienced you are in doing your job, the **more** likely you are to be prone to accidents — routine and familiarity can breed complacency.

The Bradley DuPont Curve

The Bradley DuPont Curve is a graphical representation of how an organisation can transition from an unsafe to a safe organisation, moving through stages as safety becomes embedded in the culture.

Personal responsibility

A person with a strong sense of personal responsibility has strong communication skills, organisation, courage and persistence. Crew members should comply with the incident reporting requirements in place on board their vessel.

Key facts to remember

- Goal of BBS: correct unsafe behaviours, not punish; feedback encourages behaviour change.
- ABC = Antecedent, Behaviour, Consequence. Applied behavioural analysis:

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stimulus–response.

- BBS design team: both management and front-line employees.
- 80–90% of serious injuries attributed to human error.
- More experience is associated with greater accident-proneness (complacency).
- Bradley DuPont Curve: transition from an unsafe to a safe organisation.
- Personal responsibility = communication, organisation, courage, persistence. Comply with incident reporting.

Sources

1. ISM Code (SOLAS Chapter IX) — safety management, human factors and incident reporting (the framework within which behaviour-based safety programmes operate).