



VITALS

For Medical Transport Professionals

A Weekly Safety Newsletter

Predicting a Safer EMS Workplace

Many EMS providers will agree that unsafe work environments threaten an organization's well-being and financial security. EMS organizations traditionally look to improve patient and employee safety through better equipment, improved ergonomics and comprehensive safety training. However, there is evidence to suggest that a fourth factor may have an even greater impact on safety: assessments that predict safe behavior.

In his article, "Selecting for Safety" (Occupational and Safety Magazine, September 2003), Orlando J. Olivares, Ph.D, suggested that research demonstrates "there are personality factors that predispose individuals to be accident prone." Dr. Olivares' discussion suggests evidence of trait predictors "to which people perceive situations in a positive, alert, and enthusiastic manner or to which individuals display subjective distress."

Behavior-based Assessment Tools

Based on this and other predictive design research, organizations such as Avesta Systems, Inc. have created assessment tools to help identify potential employees with a tendency to better manage their environment, engage in accurate decision-making and recognize situational contingencies. These are all traits, according to most experts, that lead to safer workplace habits.

Validated behavior-based selection assessments can effectively help to identify personality traits that may lead to accidents. These traits include quality of decision-making, distractibility and accuracy in performing specific operations.

Interestingly, the assessments can also predict personality traits that demonstrate a propensity toward other characteristics such as,

- An adherence to rules and procedures
- Willingness to abide by overall corporate policies, procedures, and rules
- A desire to show a high level of detail-orientation, conscientiousness and dependability concurrent with attributes associated with low rates of absenteeism
- The ability to succeed in a fast-paced, stressful work environment



Hiring for Competency in the Midst of a Recruitment Crisis

In the medical transportation industry, Human Resource professionals struggle to find clinically and physically qualified workers capable of working in inherently stressful situations. These candidates must be able to provide medical care in unfamiliar and inconvenient circumstances while being scrutinized by staff, bystanders and relatives. Moreover, candidates must be able to work in an environment of unpredictable safety challenges. Simply possessing the requisite clinical skill does not predict an individual's ability to comply with the emotional and safety demands of the medical transportation industry.

Regardless of the impact, some organizations overlook the value of behavior-based selection assessment tools as part of their hiring process. With such a priority to fill open positions in healthcare roles, the effect of a "bad-hire" can be taken for granted.



Greg Lawton is President of Avesta Systems Inc. in Hudson, Ohio. Avesta is an integrated Talent Management organization for healthcare providers. Avesta is physician-owned and understands the multi-faceted needs of healthcare clients. Avesta helps healthcare clients reduce accidents through the development

of intelligent hiring practices and the creation of comprehensive safety courseware. Please e-mail questions to: glawton@avestacorp.com

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