

## TOOLBOX TALK – EXECUTIVE SERIES

Toolbox Talks promote a sense of personal accountability and help to build a sustainable culture of safety excellence at all levels in a business. To access more Toolbox Talks, visit [CAT.COM/SAFETY](http://CAT.COM/SAFETY)

### Building Accountability

Managers and leaders the world over know that excellent safety requires a culture of employee accountability. Making demands, setting KPIs and implementing incentives assist in mobilizing activity toward accountability, yet they fall short in achieving engagement that results in world-class performance.

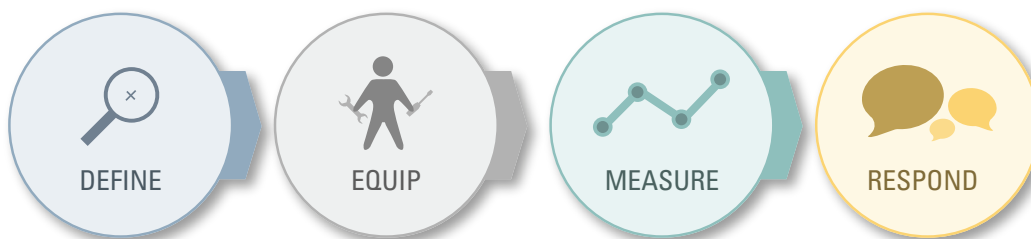
### Why does 'accountability' get such a bad rap?

Accountability often comes with a negative reputation, often seen as a blame game. True, accountability does mean that the "buck stops" with the person in question, but there is another piece to the puzzle. It means creating a context where that person knows what is expected, has the ability and resources to do it well, and involves someone taking an interest in the work getting done.

Often the negativity we see associated with accountability is related to people not feeling supported in resources, knowledge or expectations. Sometimes the ill feeling comes from employees only hearing about their performance when things have not gone according to plan, with assumptions being made about their intent.

### How can you make accountability a possibility?

Accountability comes with two layers – a practical layer and a cultural layer. On the practical layer, there are four fundamental ingredients that must be met to set someone on the path to accountability:



1. **DEFINE** – create a clear definition and shared understanding of what safety accountability is and what it looks like through the activities, behaviors and conversations that take place
2. **EQUIP** – ensure that people are equipped with the tools and skills to 'do' accountability successfully
3. **MEASURE** – develop a series of quality and quantity metrics that are designed to capture accountability taking place
4. **RESPOND** – ensure that people are provided with feedback, coaching and recognition for delivering on accountability expectations, so they understand how their effort is making a difference





On the cultural level, accountability is built on trust and empowerment – with leaders getting out of the way so people can do their jobs. It also involves leaders believing that everyone does things with the ‘best intent’ – with a desire to serve and do well – rather than with an intent to harm or do wrong.

## **What is ‘safety accountability’ and what does it look like at the executive level?**

This discussion often centers on making others accountable. Before focusing attention on others, take a moment to reflect on how accountability looks at the executive table?

- When we speak about being accountable for safety, what do we mean by ‘safety accountability’?
- What does ‘safety accountability’ mean for executives?
- What support do we need to be accountable for safety, and to create a context where people feel trusted and empowered to do their jobs well?

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