



WHITE PAPER  
**THE VALUE OF OPEN REPORTING  
IN A JUST CULTURE**



# **THE GOAL**

To create an environment where REVA has done everything possible to ensure the safety and well-being of our employees in the workplace, and where the employees are confident in our plan.

# **THE CHALLENGE**

Discerning between a system that works smoothly to maintain workplace safety and employee satisfaction and one that fails to minimize risk by utilizing a reactive rather than proactive approach.

# **THE SOLUTION**

Set simple goals, monitor performance, evaluate outcomes and allow employees to assume an active role in creating a safe environment.



*“THEY NEED TO KNOW  
THEY’RE MAKING A  
DIFFERENCE.”*

**EMMA ROBERTS**  
DIRECTOR OF SAFETY

## THE REVA METHOD

At first glance, the two goals seem at odds. On one hand, companies pride themselves on good safety records; on the other, employees desire an environment that readily accepts blemishes on that record.

They need not be mutually exclusive. A business with a sparkling safety record can be home to employees who feel comfortable reporting injury and illness. It takes a proactive, rather than reactive, approach by management, and an honest, responsible approach by employees. According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the goal of any safety and health program should be to “prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and deaths, as well as the suffering and

financial hardship these events can cause for workers, their families, and employers.”

Creating a culture conducive to creating confidence in the freedom to report accidents begins with safe equipment. There is never a time when skimping on quality of equipment is a good idea. A printing business needs a well-maintained press not only to produce the product but to keep operators safe. A medical air-ambulance service needs aircraft kept tuned to fly at a moment’s notice. It’s common sense.



A company may have the best, safest equipment in the world, but – let’s face it – accidents happen. It is essential that a punitive culture, one that inhibits employees from reporting accidents, not prevail. An example is the well-intended safety scoreboard. Many companies keep track

A blind-eye culture also can drive a lack of reporting. Employees need to understand the company wants to know what’s happening on the assembly line, that punishment will not be meted out for getting hurt, and that steps will be taken to not only care for the injured worker, but to

## *“We like to be proactive: ‘How do we stop it from happening?’”*

of their safety record by displaying statistics on a conveniently-placed, easily-read visual display. A fireworks company might hang “Accidents reported through July 4 – 0” on the wall. No employee wants to change that zero to one. The intent of the scoreboard might not be punitive; management may see it as a reward system. However, it is as inhibiting as a boss saying to an employee: “Why did you go and break your arm?” Or, “You fool!”

ensure the accident doesn’t happen again.

A Just Culture is a culture in which front-line operators and others are not punished for actions, omissions or decisions taken by them that are commensurate with their experience and training and in which gross negligence, willful violations and destructive acts are not tolerated. Just culture is neither a “blame” nor “no-blame” culture. The goal is to build a culture in which employees feel comfortable reporting issues. Nobody

wants to tell on his colleague, but if that “don’t-tell-the-teacher” pressure doesn’t exist, then reporting becomes a necessary step rather than a threat of “I’m going to get you in trouble.” That comes with the feeling company management is looking out for workers, not looking over their shoulders while tapping feet. That’s a just culture.

Traditional approaches, OSHA goes on, are often reactive. Problems are “addressed only after a worker is injured or becomes sick, a new standard or regulation is published, or an outside inspection finds a problem that must be fixed.”

At REVA, an air-ambulance service that employs more than 300, workplace safety focuses on the fields of aviation and medicine. “Most of our employees are on aircraft,” Emma Roberts, its Director of Safety, said.

The company uses a three-tiered system to ensure safety and create a comfortable atmosphere for reporting: regular training, a management system that follows Federal Aviation Administration and International Civil Aviation Organization guidelines, and a proactive approach to safety issues.

“Reporting injuries and illnesses is important,” Roberts said. “What we really value most is reporting hazards. If people don’t feel comfortable with a certain situation, they may report something that could happen as a result of what they’re seeing or what they’re working with. We like to be proactive: ‘How do we stop it from happening?’”

REVA offers multiple ways to report: online, a telephone hotline and email. “The most important piece is trust in

**Here, according to OSHA recommendations, are steps to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace:**

**Set safety and health as the top priority.** Tell your workers that making sure they finish the day and go home safely is the way you do business. Assure them that you will work with them to find and fix any hazards that could injure them or make them sick.

**Lead by example.** Practice safe behaviors yourself and make safety part of your daily conversations with workers.

**Implement a reporting system.** Develop and communicate a simple procedure for workers to report any injuries, illnesses, incidents (including near misses/close calls), hazards, or safety and health concerns, without fear of retaliation. Include an option for reporting hazards or concerns anonymously.

**Provide training.** Train workers on how to identify and control hazards in the workplace.

**Conduct inspections.** Inspect the workplace with workers and ask them to identify any activity, piece of equipment, or material that concerns them. Use checklists.

**Collect hazard control ideas.** Ask workers for ideas on improvements and follow up on their suggestions. Provide them time during work hours, if necessary, to research solutions.

**Implement hazard controls.** Assign workers the task of choosing, implementing, and evaluating the solutions they come up with.

**Address emergencies.** Identify foreseeable emergency scenarios and develop instructions on what to do in each case. Meet to discuss these procedures and post them in a visible location in the workplace.

**Seek input on workplace changes.** Before making significant changes to the workplace, work organization, equipment, or materials, consult with workers to identify potential safety or health issues.

**Make improvements.** Set aside a regular time to discuss safety and health issues, with the goal of identifying ways to improve the program.

the system,” Roberts said. “People have to know they’re in no jeopardy when reporting. We do everything we can to maintain confidentiality. And we get back to them. We let them know they’re making a difference.”

Those are vital elements to the free exchange of safety information between employee and management.

“For me, responding in a nonpunitive way to someone, once they give a report, makes a big difference,” Roberts said. “It’s important for an employee submitting a hazard to know their concerns are taken seriously.”

In other words, a pact is reached. The company’s safety agenda is clear: a basic program with simple goals and a focus on achieving goals, monitoring performance, and evaluating outcomes. The level of responsibility accepted by employees also must be clear, with a focus on high performance, pride, and the knowledge that an accident unreported is an accident that will happen again.

Together, they describe a path the workplace can take toward higher levels of safety and health. If both management and employees are invested in the policy, a strong reporting policy can strengthen the Just Culture, which will then in turn increase participation in the open reporting programs.

### **ABOUT EMMA ROBERTS**

Emma Roberts joined the REVA management team as Director of Safety in April, 2017. Prior to joining REVA, Emma spent the last nine years at Spirit Airlines working in several different positions within Flight Operations and Safety, gaining experience in Voluntary Safety Programs, OSHA Compliance, Risk Management, and Safety Management System implementation. Emma received her

Bachelor’s degree in Aviation Management from Lynn University and an MBA in Aviation from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University.

Emma is passionate about implementing a comprehensive Safety Management System at REVA, and truly believes in the benefit of a positive safety culture at an organization.

### **ABOUT REVA**

REVA, Inc., owner-operators of a fleet of 19 medically-configured aircraft, including small and mid-size jets, employs over 300 air-ambulance-service professionals who deliver caring, efficient, fully-accredited medical care from bases throughout North America including the Caribbean. REVA, Inc., has completed more than 25,000 medical transports that include time-sensitive organ deliveries, trauma response, and intensive-care connections in addition to private charters associated with medical tourism, cruise-line passenger emergencies, and philanthropic efforts. REVA, Inc. has earned over a dozen top industry honors and recognitions from NAAMTA, EURAMI, International Assistance Group, ARGUS Platinum as well as the AAMS Fixed Wing Award of Excellence, ACE Safety Award, ITIJ 2015 Air Ambulance Provider of the Year Award and ITIJ 2016 Air Ambulance Provider of the Year Award Finalist.

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