



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF
SAFETY PROFESSIONALS

Gulf Coast Chapter



Gulf Coast
LOCAL SECTION

GULF COAST SAFETY & HEALTH SUMMIT

**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM - BREAKOUT
SESSION #2A**

**ETHICAL DECISION-MAKING TOOLS
FOR
ENHANCING ORGANIZATIONAL
SAFETY CULTURE**



**DR. ROBERT EMERY,
CHP, CIH**

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THURSDAY, APRIL 16TH, 2026

11:15AM- 12:15PM

Recent investigations of several tragic events have repeatedly identified the absence of a culture of safety as a common contributing factor. An organization's safety culture is a collective reflection of the ethical implications of individual decisions made by its workforce. Safety culture, good or bad, is the sum of many individual ethical decisions, yet the notion of ethical safety decision-making is rarely discussed. This presentation will describe ethical dilemmas safety professionals can encounter and how the decisions they make can impact an organization's overall safety culture. A set of ethical decision-making tools will be presented, along with a suggested path forward for actually improving safety culture within an organization.



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**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM - BREAKOUT
SESSION #2B**



**THE HIDDEN LINK:
FATIGUE, MENTAL
HEALTH, AND SAFETY
PERFORMANCE**



DR. SCOTT CHERRY, MPH

DR. LES KERTAY, PH.D.

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Fatigue remains one of the most under-recognized yet costly risks in the workplace, contributing to nearly 13% of injuries and billions in claims annually. Beyond delayed reaction times and impaired judgment, fatigue interacts with behavioral health factors such as depression, anxiety, and substance use. This session combines occupational medicine and behavioral health perspectives to reveal how fatigue and mental health overlap, amplify safety risks, and impact long-term worker well-being.

Drawing on case studies from various industries, Dr. Scott Cherry (occupational & preventive medicine physician) and Dr. Les Kertay (clinical psychologist and behavioral health consultant) will outline practical frameworks for identifying fatigue-related risks and connecting them to mental health drivers. Attendees will learn evidence-based mitigation strategies including schedule optimization, microbreaks, fatigue screening protocols, and approaches to reduce stigma and encourage open reporting of behavioral health concerns.



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**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM - BREAKOUT
SESSION #2C**

**THE IMPACT OF EMPLOYEE
ENGAGEMENT ON SAFETY
PERFORMANCE**



TOM KNODE

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Employee Engagement in a company's safety program is critical to the reduction of risk and incidents. Data from researchers and anecdotes demonstrate the positive impact that can be gained from engaging your employees in the efforts to improve safety. Experience shows that this is easier said than done, and that the Safety Culture and leadership will determine if you are ready to fully engage employees. These efforts go beyond the traditional tools for engagement such as observation and reporting programs, to truly driving co-ownership of risk and ultimately safety performance.



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**11:15 AM - 12:15 PM - BREAKOUT
SESSION #2D**

**WHY HIGHLY HIGH CONSEQUENCE
INFECTIOUS DISEASE RESPONSES
NEED AN INDUSTRIAL HYGIENIST
AND PREPARING THE INDUSTRIAL
HYGIENIST TO RESPOND**



**SHAWN G. GIBBS, PhD,
MBA, CIH**

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This presentation will provide background on the High-Consequence Infectious Disease (HCID) that has elicited domestic response over the last five years (e.g., MERS-CoV, Nipah virus, Ebola, Lassa Fever) and our industrial hygiene research in the area, including but not limited to: current U.S. levels of preparedness to address HCID and domestic infrastructure, considerations for the selection of decontamination products and procedures at the Nebraska Biocontainment after The treatment of 3 evacuated Ebola-confirmed patients, air and ground transport considerations to prevent occupational exposure, Category A waste handling, laboratory considerations, and risk communication. We will also discuss the invaluable role industrial or occupational hygienists can have in this area.



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