

Abstract – Pyramid Power

A new view on the traditional safety pyramid



Based on the article “Pyramid Power” Published in the September 2014 issue of *Professional Safety* as the cover story.

In 1931 Heinrich gave us our first pyramid. His work has been expanded over the years by many others. Frank Bird updated it as did Dan Petersen. Studies were done to validate the concept if not the actual numbers as recently as the 1980s.

Since 1931 the pyramid has been worshipped, turned upside down, and had layers added. It has been misinterpreted, misrepresented and maligned. Many companies still use the pyramid as the basis for focusing their efforts on health and safety. It is a simple visual aid and has become a powerful symbol. Some pundits have said it is now meaningless, while others make it the foundation of their beliefs. Somewhere in between lies the truth.

What meaning does the “injury pyramid” hold for us today? What is it really meant to convey? We will explore the origins, meaning and uses for the pyramid in a modern safety management system.