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Maintenance: Rewarding the right — routine — behavior

May 5, 2011 by Jim Giuliano

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You have an equipment breakdown. An employee rushes in and fixes the problem, and gets rewarded for coming to the rescue. If that sounds familiar, you may be focusing on the wrong problem.

Maintenance and safety experts, such as James Reyes-Picknell, writing for the maintenance publication [“PEM,”](#) warn that maybe it's OK to reward the to-the-rescue employee. But that approach can be counterproductive if you don't similarly reward employees who do the day-to-day stuff that prevents breakdowns from happening in the first place.

To put it another way, and to focus on safety, would you lavish a reward on the person – the “hero” — who prevents a serious injury by catching the employee who slips on a wet spot? And then ignore the person who reliably cleans up the wet spots every day?

The point is that solid routine behaviors that ensure good maintenance and safety need to be recognized and reward.

As the saying goes, “You get the behavior you reward.”

Tags: [James Reyes-Picknell](#), [maintenance](#), [PEM](#), [safety](#)



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