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# **THE EMPEROR HAS NO HARD HAT:**

**Achieving  
REAL  
Workplace  
Safety Results**

Alan D. Quilley, CRSP

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This book is dedicated to my family – my wonderfully supportive and loving wife Marie; my children: Jason, Darren, Alannah, Sean, and Renee; my daughter-in-law Tanya; my grand-daughter Sophie; my father and mother Dave & Joyce; and my sister Cathy, her husband Dick, her two sons Dean & Ryan, and her grand-daughter Kaila. Collectively, they inspire me to create a safer and healthier world.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alan D. Quilley has designed and managed OH&S programs for some of the largest corporations, municipalities, and government agencies in Canada.

Mr. Quilley started his career in 1972 as a Carman Trainee for C.N. Rail, inspecting and repairing railway cars. By 1980, he had completed OH&S Officer Basic Training and became the youngest-ever Occupational Health and Safety Officer on the staff of Alberta Labour's Inspection Team.

Over the years, Mr. Quilley progressed through the positions of Safety Coordinator, OH&S Officer, OH&S Senior Manager, Corporate OH&S Coordinator, and Safety Director in a variety of corporations and municipal & government agencies. He has been a Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP) since 1985.

In 1998 Mr. Quilley became Regional Director of Occupational Health, Safety, and Wellness at the Capital Health Authority in Edmonton, Canada. He has also served as Chair of the Alberta Municipal Safety Association and Director of the Alberta Safety Council. In 1999, he founded Safety Results Ltd., a safety and loss control consulting firm based in Sherwood Park, Alberta, Canada.

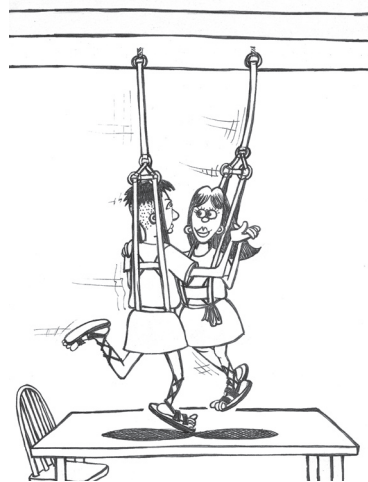
Mr. Quilley feels that one of his greatest assets as a safety professional is his personal experience at all levels of industry, from working on the production floor to sharing decision-making in the corporate boardrooms of both small and large corporations.

Mr. Quilley is a seasoned conference speaker and presenter. His customized OH&S Courses are helping many clients to reach for Safety Excellence. He also develops and teaches Diploma and Certificate Level safety courses at colleges and universities. He's spent twelve years teaching at the University of Alberta, and is currently assisting in the development of the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology's OH&S Diploma Program. Mr. Quilley recently founded the Safety Results Institute Ltd., which will partner with the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology to provide a certificate in "Advanced Integrated Safety Management". He also writes a column on training for the Canadian Occupational Safety Magazine (<http://www.cos-mag.com>).

And outside of work? Alan is happily married to his lovely wife Marie and is the father of five wonderful children ranging in age from 32 to 9. He's a proud grandfather of a lovely grand-daughter.

Al also plays guitar and bass guitar in a popular five piece band. In addition to his guitar work, he sings the *la la la la la's* in the background, and is considering the release of a CD called "Syllables I Have Sung" – his favourite being "Shooby Dooby Do Wop Shang-a-lang-a-ding-dong".

Come hear him play sometime. (Interested? Check out [www.pamproud.com](http://www.pamproud.com) .) Al will be only too happy to join you in dancing on the tabletop. Of course we'll do that safely!



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## FOREWORD

(much more than four words)

*"I am not creating anything by myself. I am standing on the shoulders of giants."*

*Sir Isaac Newton*

Traditional approaches to managing occupational health and safety just don't work.

It's true. Remember the story of the Emperor who was bamboozled by crafty, self-serving tailors? (If you don't, please take a read of the story in Appendix 2.) Well, just like that Emperor, many corporations *don't realize* that their OH&S efforts are just a fairy tale, with no chance of success.

Nobody really wanted it that way. The history of OH&S is filled with dedicated folks who really did want to make things safer. The challenge, as I see it, is that someone (i.e. me) has to tell the Emperor that unfortunately, he's *not wearing any clothes* – or, in our case, no hard hat! Because traditional safety programs are just not working.



If we truly want our OH&S efforts to be effective, we have to do things differently. The key to ensuring that people don't get injured or ill at work is not a 'program'. The key to ensuring that people don't get injured or ill at work rests in taking care of a few crucial – but often overlooked – inter-related factors.

The good news is: we can do it. There are companies, right now, that have world class safety cultures. They produce at high levels, they make profits, and they protect their employees while they're doing it. This book draws on my personal experience and research to show you how an evidence-based OH&S management system can give you similar results. It's not a mystery, just something that many corporations have missed.

Over the years, I've had the wonderful opportunity to observe thousands of companies: some I've worked for, some I've inspected, some I've consulted with, some I've researched. Based on what these companies were doing, and the results they were getting, I've developed a view of OH&S that correctly *predicts* the outcomes of a company's OH&S efforts. This book is about my observations, and the features of outstanding OH&S Cultures. It's about a process for turning safety theory into real results.

It's been almost three decades since I first 'found' health & safety (well, actually, it found me). From the very start of my career, I searched for how to truly do it *right*. People who know me will testify that my passion for making this world healthier and safer is without limits.

I owe a great deal to the many dedicated professionals and leaders in their fields of expertise who have guided my understanding along the way: Dr. Dan Petersen, W. Edwards Deming, Dr. Jim Stewart, Dr. Aubrey C. Daniels, Steven Covey, E. Scott Geller, Frank Bird Jr., H. W. Heinrich, Abraham H. Maslow, and Ivan P. Pavlov, to name but a few.

My thanks to Glen McDonall, whose artistic talents have helped visualize the much needed characters in this book. Thanks also to William Street for his extensive proofreading.

The process of making this book into a reality included the extra-ordinary efforts of Benna Michaels, who inspired me, challenged me, taught me, organized me, brought her unique sense of humour to the process and, above all, made it possible for me to get these random thoughts into an organized text. I am deeply grateful to Benna for her dedication to this project and for her assistance and creativity in making this dream come true.

Helping humans to be safe and healthy is a real challenge. Although my studies will never stop, I believe I finally have a vision, a model that I can share with others who want Outstanding Safety Results — not just results that are better than the competition, but results that are World Class! Best in Show! Top of the Heap! I'm sure you get the picture....

It's my hope that these ideas, presented in a way that's often humorous and entertaining, will help you to think about OH&S in a different light — and see that although the crowd is cheering about how great the Emperor looks in his new safety gear, we really do have to tell him that he's not wearing any hard hat!

So be you an OH&S Professional, a Line Manager, a CEO — or even an Emperor! — sit back, kick off your shoes (or sandals), and take a trip with me to a not so strange land not so far away... (personally, I'm humming the opening theme to 'Star Wars'...how about you?)

Alan D. Quilley  
August 2005

### **A NOTE TO OUR U.S. FRIENDS**

Welcome! Just so you know, the principles and ideas in this book are independent of any legislative system, so you'll get just as much value from them as the folks up here in Canada. Aside from the Canadian spellings in this book, the main difference you'll notice is that up here we call it OH&S, while you use OS&H (I say to-*may*-to, you say to-*mah*-to....) If it really bothers you, just pretend we're dyslexic.

—Al

## LEGALITIES & SELF-JUSTIFICATIONS

Although the tone of this book is lighthearted and irreverent, the central ideas in it are not. I've had the unfortunate experience of attending too many fatality investigations to *not* recognize the very serious nature of this undertaking.

Although my aim was to make this book entertaining, please do not think for one moment that I take safety lightly. I believe that people have the right to work in an environment and culture where their safety and health is valued and protected by both their employer and their fellow employees.

But we can learn by smiling, can't we? The technique of teaching kids via 'edutainment' – entertaining while educating – has mushroomed in the last decade. Well, this book is edutainment for adults. Even though some of these issues are extremely serious, I've tried to make it an easy read, so we can have a bit of fun while we're learning how to protect everyone's health and safety.

If you ask me, the biggest barrier to the effective transfer of health and safety information is that many books on OH&S are really hard to read. My apologies to some of my learned colleagues, but I've got to say it: "You're brilliant, but *very* difficult to read; you're just plain *boring!*" I've tried to remove that 'hard to read' barrier through the use of humour. If there's any residual doubt at all in your mind about my intentions, let me just say:

**I take safety seriously. Big time. You should too.**

Please be aware that the information in this book is not a one-size-fits-all recipe. It's not a cookbook. It's a discussion of the issues you need to think about while building the safety culture and support system that's right for you and your company. So please don't just blindly copy – think deeply, then design something that's right for you.

And now, the dry legal stuff:

The information presented in this publication is intended for general use and may not apply in every circumstance. It is not a definitive guide to government regulations and does not relieve persons using this publication from their responsibilities under applicable legislation.

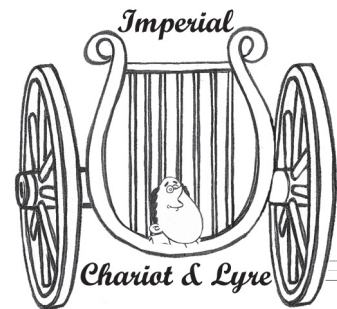
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## ABOUT THE IMPERIAL CHARIOT & LYRE COMPANY

*Lyre (pronounced 'liar'): an ancient stringed musical instrument that resembled a small harp. Common in ancient Greece, where it was used to accompany singing, dancing, and poetry recitals.*

Most of the examples in this book are stories and mini-dialogs involving the employees of the fictitious Imperial Chariot & Lyre Company (IC&L).



Yeah, I confess—the anecdotes are supposed to be entertaining. But they also serve a deeper purpose: in my OH&S consulting, I keep hearing the same thing from managers and OH&S professionals. “We get taught the *theory* of OH&S,” they say, “but nobody ever shows us how to actually *do* the stuff.”

Whoa! Theory without practice? Dicey. So for this book, we’ve dreamed up a fictitious company (Benna helped a great deal) and staffed it with some colourful, and sometimes hopelessly stubborn, characters, who will interact with one another and actually *do* the stuff.

The examples aren’t meant to be a formula. They’re not the only way, they’re *one* way. They’re meant to give you some general ideas about what you might say, and how you might say it. And sometimes how you *shouldn’t* say it.

Another reason I invented IC&L is to protect both the innocent and the guilty. After thirty years in OH&S, working with thousands of companies, I can’t afford all the lawyers’ fees that would pile up if I actually dished the dirt and named names. Some of the IC&L situations have actually happened... but you won’t hear from *me* who they happened to. I’ve taken them so far out of the modern world that nobody could ever point at any specific company/person and say, “That was you.”

So unless you’re an Emperor who builds chariots and lyres, your chances of suing me are slim to none. There is, however, a sealed envelope in a safety deposit box somewhere in Canada that, 300 years after my death, can be opened to reveal... oh never mind... But just to cover my butt, here’s the dry legalese:

All the individuals and companies depicted in this book are the sole product of the author’s imagination. All resemblance to actual individuals or companies, both living or dead, is entirely coincidental and unintended.



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