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Safety leading indicators are measurements in areas that underlie many of the root causes for injuries and incidents. The list of leading indicators is endless. There is no incorrect leading indicator. After the March 23, 2005, explosion at the BP Texas City refinery, which resulted in 15 deaths and 180 injuries, the U.S. Chemical Safety Board asked the Center for Chemical Process Safety (CCPS) for a list of agreed upon safety leading indicators. The CCPS provided an excellent list of leading indicators. The many companies involved, however, could not reach consensus on one list for several reasons, none of which are related to this Executive Insight.

If one is to use safety leading indicators, (some ideas can be gleaned from the list provided by the CCPS) to be truly effective, however, leadership in organizations needs to work with their safety teams and develop their own list that is tailored to that organization and safety culture.



## Conclusion

One challenge in using safety leading indicators is to have the same discipline and management attention paid to the minutiae of what the leading indicators represent and have that level of attention be equivalent to that given to financials. If this were the standard, it would be much easier to prevent a serious injury or fatality rate than trying to improve the lagging indicators by telling everyone to work safely after the fact. It is also much cheaper.

## About the Author

Deborah Grubb was elected to the National Academy of Construction in 2013. She is owner and president of Operations and Safety Solutions, LLC, a global consultancy that works with various industries. She is a former member of the NASA Aerospace Safety Advisory Panel and worked on the U.S. Chemical Weapons Stockpile Demilitarization. She also serves on numerous advisory boards.