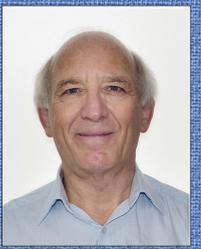


# 'Towards a strong radiation safety culture in medicine' - an IAEA innovation and challenge



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## Bonn Call for Action - Action 8

The **Bonn Call for Action**<sup>1</sup>, which arose from the 2012 IAEA/WHO *International Conference on Radiation Protection in Medicine*<sup>2</sup>, identifies ten actions to improve radiation protection in medicine. **Action 8: Strengthen radiation safety culture in health care**

## Global competition (ten safety traits)

In March 2019 the IAEA launched a global competition<sup>3</sup> **Towards a Strong Radiation Safety Culture in Medicine**, inviting radiation medical professionals and students to create and submit digital media illustrating one of ten safety traits considered essential for improving radiation safety culture in medical institutions.

The **traits**, based on the Nuclear Regulatory Commission 2011 Safety Culture Policy Statement<sup>4</sup>, evolved after the competition and are now:<sup>5</sup>

1. Individual Responsibility
2. Questioning Attitude
3. Effective Safety Communication
4. Leadership Responsibility
5. Decision-making
6. Respectful Work Environment
7. Continuous Learning
8. Problem Identification and Resolution
9. Environment for Raising Concerns
10. Work Processes

## Safety culture

**INSAG**, the International Nuclear Safety Group, coined the term 'safety culture' in 1986 in its first report on the Chernobyl nuclear accident.<sup>6</sup> They expanded on the concept in subsequent publications.<sup>7,8,9,10,11</sup>

### IAEA definition of safety culture:

*The assembly of characteristics and attitudes in organizations and individuals which establishes that, as an overriding priority, protection and safety issues receive the attention warranted by their significance.*<sup>12</sup>

## What is culture?

*The culture of the organization comprises the mix of **shared values, attitudes and patterns of behaviour** that give the organization its particular character. Put simply, it is 'the way we do things round here'.*

INSAG:<sup>9</sup>

## A definition of radiation safety culture

### **Radiation Safety Culture**

*is the core values and behaviors resulting from a collective commitment by leaders and individuals to emphasize safety over competing goals to ensure protection of people and the environment.*

Health Physics Society (2012)<sup>13</sup>

## IAEA training programme

Over 100 entries were made to the 2019 competition.<sup>14</sup> The winning proposals, from Greece, USA, New Zealand, focused respectively on effective communication, leadership, and importance of a questioning attitude and have been included in an IAEA training programme aiming to improve radiation safety culture in healthcare.

This resource is available online. It includes a handbook, *Radiation Safety Trait Talks*<sup>5</sup>, and is structured around ten traits developed from the 2019 competition.<sup>15</sup>

It defines a **trait in safety culture** as *a personal or organizational presence such as a pattern of thinking, feeling and behaving which results in implementing measures that prioritizes the 'safety first' principle.*

The programme contains 10 digital presentations, from radiology, fluoroscopy, radiotherapy & nuclear medicine settings, each illustrating how medical facilities can address improvements in safety culture.

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