

The Domino Theory - Management Platform for Human Resource Development in the Field of Industrial Disaster Risk Management

Heinrich's Domino Theory states that accidents result from a chain of sequential events, metaphorically like a line of dominoes falling over. When one of the dominoes falls, it triggers the next one, and the next... - but removing a key factor (such as an unsafe condition or an unsafe act) prevents the start of the chain reaction.

What are Unsafe Conditions and Acts? According to Heinrich, all incidents directly relate to unsafe conditions and acts, which he defines as "unsafe performance of persons, such as standing under suspended loads ... horseplay, and removal of safeguards"; and "mechanical or physical hazards such as unguarded gears ... and insufficient light." These have been described in details in human behaviour and errors in Module 7.

The Dominoes Heinrich posits five metaphorical dominoes labelled with accident causes. They are Social Environment and Ancestry, Fault of Person, Unsafe Act or Mechanical or Physical Hazard (unsafe condition), Accident, and Injury. Heinrich defines each of these "dominoes" explicitly, and gives advice on minimizing or eliminating their presence in the sequence.

Fault of Person: The second domino also deals with worker personality traits. Heinrich explains that inborn or obtained character flaws such as bad temper, inconsiderateness, ignorance, and recklessness contribute at one remove to accident causation. According to Heinrich, natural or environmental flaws in the worker's family or life cause these secondary personal defects, which are themselves contributors to Unsafe Acts, or and the existence of Unsafe Conditions.