

# **Safety Performance Measurement: Identifying Prospective Indicators with High Validity**

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**Description:** R. Scott Stricoff examines the viability and validity of “upstream” and “downstream” measures available to safety professionals.

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**Introduction:** “Measurement is a current ‘hot’ issue in safety. Safety professionals, union leaders, regulators and managers are all dissatisfied with the status quo—reliance (almost exclusively) on recordable and lost-time injury rates as safety performance measures.

“The wisdom of seeking ‘upstream’ measures has been recognized since total quality management concepts swept the U.S. more than a decade ago. In the field of quality management, Deming, Juran, and other quality pioneers offered practical leadership regarding which quality factors should be measured upstream; they then provided consensus about the worth of doing so.

“In safety, however, little guidance is available on how to move upstream. For example, many recent articles on TQM and safety sound like wishful thinking, as though the authors are saying, ‘Well, so much overlap exists between safety and quality, there must be some way to do safety like quality.’

“This article offers a survey of upstream and downstream measures currently available to safety practitioners and evaluates these indicators in terms of whether they are prospective or retrospective, and whether they have high or low validity as indicators.”