

STOP DOING SAFETY FOR THEM

LANGUAGE SCRIPTS

Five short scripts for redirecting decisions back to the roles that should own them — without sounding obstructionist. Each script includes the trigger, the redirect, and the follow-up that keeps you on the record without absorbing the decision.

SCRIPT 1 When a supervisor asks you to make an operational call

TRIGGER

"Hey, is it OK if we run this job without the second spotter tonight? We're short-staffed."

YOUR RESPONSE

"That's a call I can't make for you — you own the crew and the work tonight, so this one is yours. Here's what the standard says [cite the specific SOP or reg], and here's what I'd want documented if you decide to proceed. If you'd like a second opinion, I'm happy to walk the site with you, but the go/no-go belongs to you."

THE FOLLOW-UP THAT MAKES IT STICK

Send a brief email within 2 hours summarizing the conversation, the standard cited, and the decision they made. Copy their manager. This is not a threat — it is the paper trail that keeps the accountability where it belongs.

SCRIPT 2 When leadership pressures you to keep an injury off the 300 log

TRIGGER

"Is there any way we can classify this as first aid so it doesn't hit the recordable count before the audit?"

YOUR RESPONSE

"I hear the pressure, and I want to help you land the audit clean. But recordability is defined by 29 CFR 1904, not by preference — and with 1904.41 electronic submission, OSHA sees the raw data directly now. If I make a call that isn't defensible, it exposes you and the company, not just me. Let me show you the criteria for this specific case and walk you through what a defensible call looks like."

THE FOLLOW-UP THAT MAKES IT STICK

Document the conversation, the criteria applied, and the final determination in a recordability decision log entry. Keep this log as your standing artifact — it is the single best protection against retroactive pressure.

SCRIPT 3 When ops says "safety doesn't have to do operations, so why should we do safety?"

TRIGGER

The literal quote, or any variant of it, in a leadership or planning meeting.

YOUR RESPONSE

"I hear that, and honestly it's the exact question we should be answering. Safety isn't a department the way operations is — it's a discipline every operational role participates in, the same way quality is. I don't run production, and I shouldn't. And you don't run safety alone — but every supervisor on your shifts owns the safety of the work they're directing. Can we look at what that actually means for the next planning cycle?"

THE FOLLOW-UP THAT MAKES IT STICK

Follow the conversation with a short one-pager (the RACI in this bundle works) that shows what "every operational role participates" looks like row-by-row. Do not leave the reframe as an abstraction.

SCRIPT 4 When you're asked to run training that supervisors should be delivering

TRIGGER

"Can you come do the tailgate talk with the crew on Tuesday? They listen better when it's you."

YOUR RESPONSE

"I appreciate that — and I'll come if it helps this once. But if the crew only listens when safety delivers it, that's a signal we need to fix, not accommodate. Let me co-deliver Tuesday with you leading, and then I'll hand it back. If you want, I can put together a two-page facilitator guide for the next four topics so you and the other leads can carry it from here."

THE FOLLOW-UP THAT MAKES IT STICK

Deliver the facilitator guide within a week. If you don't produce the artifact that makes the handoff possible, the handoff won't stick.

SCRIPT 5 When an executive asks "where was safety?" after an incident**TRIGGER**

"How did safety let this happen?" — usually in a debrief, often in front of others.

YOUR RESPONSE

"Safety was where safety is supposed to be — in the system, the standards, and the training. What we should be asking is where the operational controls were: who was supervising the work, what the pre-task brief looked like, whether the SOP was followed, and what pressure the crew was under to skip a step. I can walk us through the timeline, and I'd like [name of ops leader] to walk us through the operational decisions leading up to it."

THE FOLLOW-UP THAT MAKES IT STICK

Put this framing in the written incident summary. Every time an executive gets to leave a debrief with "safety let this happen" as the takeaway, the model gets reinforced. Every time they leave with "operational controls failed, and here's what leadership will change," the model shifts.

A NOTE ON TONE

None of these scripts work if they're delivered with resentment. Every one of them is a way of saying "I'm going to help you succeed at the thing you actually own" — not "that's not my job." The redirect only lands if the follow-up is real: the email, the facilitator guide, the RACI, the decision log. Say the words, then do the work that makes the handoff possible.